



Dirty Daddies

2023 Anniversary Anthology

USA Today and International Bestselling Authors

Laylah Roberts | Kate Oliver | Pepper North | Golden Angel
Stella Moore | Chloe Maine | Leslie Ayla | Rogue London
Cooper McKenzie | Lizzie Day | Ellie Rose | L.G. Knight
Emily Tilton | Vivian Murdoch | Lucky Moon
Honey Meyer | Maggie Ryan | Kara Kelley | Becca Jameson
Bayleigh Rae | Maren Smith | Allie Belle

DIRTY DADDIES 2023
ANNIVERSARY
ANTHOLOGY

VARIOUS AUTHORS



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*For the readers, thank you for loving Daddy books as much
as we do.*

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If you like Daddy books, and enjoy this anthology, you can hang out with the authors every day in the Dirty Daddies Party Room on Facebook.

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Daddy's Little Imposter
by Maren Smith

A MF story by Maren Smith

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Chapter 1

Perched atop his deep brown thoroughbred, Everett Garrison, the fifth son of his father, the previous Duke of Ross—not that titles meant anything in these modern times—kept his Glock unwaveringly trained on the two men who held his dazed and injured fiancée, Vetta Carr, between them via a leash of her own auburn hair.

Hoodlums, Everett thought as he stared them both down, taking in their grubby, well-worn clothes and judging them both to be solidly within England’s lower-to-middle class income levels. Thieves, in other words, and how politically incorrect it was of him to make such assumptions based solely upon appearances.

Well... that and their joint grips on Vetta’s long hair.

He’d feel guilty about it later, maybe, he decided. For now...

“Attacks on the nobility,” Everett wryly intoned, “are still punishable by hanging, as was proven not eighty years ago by one William Joyce, otherwise known as Lord Haw-Haw. Barbaric, I know, but let her go or I will personally champion bringing executions back. In specific, drawing and quartering, just for the two of you.”

Licking his lips, the shorter of the two men tipped his head, his eyes narrowing as he glared back. “Not if we shoot you first, mate.”

The taller but visibly more nervous of the thieves edged half a step back, as if fighting not to bolt from the entire confrontation. “I told you someone would see us,” he hissed at his short companion. “I told you!”

“What was I supposed to do, eh?” Shorty snapped back, barely taking his eyes off Everett to shot him an irritated glance. “Wait until they pulled up to the house and do it there?”

“He’ll get us hanged!”

“England doesn’t execute anymore, idiot!”

Nervous fretted and sharply jerked Vetta in closer to him as if trying to use her as a shield, but Shorty quickly yanked her back in front of him. Nervous skittered away, clearly feeling exposed, and hissed, “Give me the gun!”

“Ain’t nobody giving *you* a gun,” Shorty irritably told him.

Nervous glanced at Everett next.

“I’m not giving you my gun, either,” Everett clarified, because of course not.

And so there they all stood, amidst the smoking three-car wreckage that Everett had just discovered on the southernmost driveway access to Brookshire, his country estate. That he wasn’t the only one with a gun surprised him. Such firearms, while not rare, were harder to get in England than America, for instance. That Shorty also had one, trained right back on Everett was an interesting feeling. In all his life, he didn’t think he’d ever felt anything more gut-curdlingly cold. And yet, Everett was nothing if not his imperial father’s son.

His voice didn't shake, and the Glock he held remained steady as a rock as he stared down the two men.

Of the three cars involved in the accident, two belonged to Everett—tangled and twisted together at the head of a thirty-foot debris trail of broken glass, twisted metal, and plastic debris starting where the collision had obviously occurred. The BMW for the bodyguard he'd sent was a total wreck. The 1990s red Ford Fiesta hatchback Corvette that he'd bought just for Vetta hadn't fared much better. It had rolled, and poor Vetta looked exactly as he imagined one would after an accident this horrific.

Clothes, luggage and two motionless bodies—his trusted driver, Archie Williams and the brand-new bodyguard his estate manager, Emerson, had hired just last week—lay in the ditch, side by side. There was no way this accident had planted them together like that. They had been alive at one point and the only way Everett could imagine they got where they now lay was if they'd been dragged alive from the wreckage and then shot execution-style. Had Everett not decided to go riding this morning, hoping he might catch a glimpse of his soon-to-be bride as she first arrived at Brookshire, he wouldn't have known this had happened—on his own property, by god—or been in time to catch red-handed the two men who'd been rummaging through the wreckage when he first rode onto the scene.

Suitcases were tossed in the ditch, their contents thrown across the neatly-trimmed grass. As if they'd been searching for something. As if the thieves—murderers—had known he'd be sending *these* cars on *this* exact route to the airport and back with his long-awaited marriage prize in tow. As if this had all been planned, by someone somewhere with far more

intelligence than these two idiots were capable of scrounging together.

That Vetta was still alive, her white dress dirty and torn, her hand cupped to the bleeding cut on her forehead, Everett knew meant something. It meant she wasn't just his prize alone. She was a ransom and he was the actual target, he was sure. He also knew he'd be boiled in oil before he let anyone waltz onto his property and take what belonged to him. His 'mail-order' bride, his babygirl fresh from America with just the right amount of neediness to pique his Daddy Dom interest, but no knowledge on British royals and no interest in targeting one for a husband just to marry into a title, even one as useless as his 'Lord', bequeathed as it was upon the fifth son of the Garrison family line.

In other words, she was someone who'd fallen in love with him as a man, and these two men had targeted her as a source of income.

"What'll we do?" Nervous whimpered to his companion.

"Shut it!" Clearly the leader of the two, Shorty retreated a half step, but that was all. He stiffened his arm, his attention diverting from the injured woman at his feet back to Everett. He immediately switched the aim of his pistol from Everett to Vetta, then smiled, a cold, mean stretch of his lips. "You can't shoot me, not what I don't shoot her first. And if you miss, mate..." Shorty tsked, even as he nudged the end of his gun into the side of her ear.

Dazed as she was, Vetta barely flinched, but she did reach for the gun, blinking in confusion, as if touching it might help her realize what it was. She didn't seem to understand the danger she was in. When Shorty yanked the gun away, she reached for it again, only reacting when he smacked her hand

with the barrel. Her whole body flinched and, hugging her chastened hand to her chest, she burst into tears. “Owie!”

Shorty and Nervous both looked at her in surprise. Shorty rolled his eyes, snapping, “Jesus, woman. Get your shit together, yeah?”

“Don’t do that again,” Everett coolly cut in, every Daddy Dom instinct he had instantly and angrily ready to throw hands.

“I barely touched her,” Shorty scoffed back.

Vetta bowed over on her knees, crying and rubbing her hand. Her Little was right there, parked just beneath the surface of her outwardly adult self, desperately crying for the reassurance only a Daddy would recognize. That she seemed unable to control it, Everett was ready to blame on her obvious head injury.

Don’t fall apart yet, babygirl. Daddy’s almost got you.

And yet, for him to move now would be to risk her life.

“Exactly how many bullets do you have left?” he asked instead. “Having killed my driver and bodyguard, I don’t imagine you had time to reload before I got here.”

“You think my pistol’s spent, eh?” Shorty scoffed again. “Tell you what. Turn your horse around and leave, and I won’t make you count how many slugs I plug into your head, right between your fucking eyes, yeah?”

Growing more anxious by the second, Nervous shot his companion a horrified stare. “We really will hang now!”

“No death penalty,” Shorty sing-song reminded him, then rolled his eyes again.

“Oh, but I’m nobility and we have our own set of laws,” Everett lied. “I can bring anything back, including public executions. Especially since I intend this to be the first and last time anyone ever lays hands on my—“*babygirl*”—wife.”

A glint of dark calculation flitted through Shorty’s narrowing eyes. “She ain’t your wife, Noddy. She’s gone and married someone else, and he wants her back. So... sorry, love.”

The shift of Shorty’s hand on the hilt of his gun was Everett’s only warning before the other man abruptly took aim. They both fired.

They both missed.

Everett’s horse startled, but already Everett had his leg up over the saddle. As he leapt off, the murderers bolted, dashing off the road and into the surrounding woods with Everett in swift pursuit. He didn’t follow far. Stopping just off the road, he listened to the men’s receding crashes through the underbrush until the sound was so distant, he knew they wouldn’t be coming back. Racing back to Vetta, he dropped to his knee and wrapped her in his arms.

“Shh, shh, my little duck.” Pulling her in closer, he got his first good look at the bruising bump and cut on her head. “Shh,” he murmured again, wincing at the nastiness of it. “It’s okay, babygirl. Daddy’s here.”

She turned her head into his shoulder, but something in her expression made him think she really meant to turn away. The entire left side of her head was matted with blood, turning the shiny auburn of her hair an ugly reddish-mud hue. Her fingers trembled when she raised her hand, looking first at the flushed back where Shorty had struck her, and then at her palm and bloody fingertips.

Everett had to catch her hand to keep her from touching the oozing head wound again.

“Wh-what happened?” she slurred, her American accent heavy.

“I don’t know,” he told her honestly. Snapping his handkerchief out of his breast pocket, he pressed it to the lump. “Where else are you hurt, lovey?”

She tried to shake her head until he clasped his hand on the back of her skull, holding her still.

With her other hand, she rubbed the back of her neck instead.

“Little bit of whiplash, eh?” Slipping his bigger hand under hers, he gently rubbed it, too. “We’ll get it looked at right soon. Anything else hurt?”

Hesitating only a moment, Vetta shyly offered up her hand. Which was strange, because for the last ten months that he’d been conversing with her back and forth across the pond, shy was the last word he’d have thought to describe the woman he’d proposed to. Still, the back of it was barely pink, but the woe of her expression was all too real for him to so much as crack a smile.

“They weren’t nice blokes, were they?”

She had a nice bump on her head, some bruises and scratches, but otherwise, she seemed unharmed.

“Come on.” He gave her hand a careful squeeze. “Let’s get you home so the doctor can look you over.”

Blinking, she looked at him directly, her green eyes the greenest he’d yet seen. God, how easy it would be to fall into

those lost little emerald pools and just lose himself for the rest of his life.

“Who are you again?” she asked.

“It’s Daddy, little one. Daddy Everett. Sit still, please.” He gave her hand another squeeze, trying to impress upon her that his command was not an idle request. “I’m going to fetch my horse. Stay right here, understand?”

He hoped she wasn’t too injured for a minor trip on horseback to the sprawling country estate he’d renamed Brookshire on the day he’d bought it. While he couldn’t hear so much as a twig snapping in the woods that flanked his driveway, that didn’t mean their assailants had gone, so he didn’t want to move too far from her side. Despite his assurances, he knew lingering wasn’t safe for either of them, but neither could he afford to leave her here long enough for him to go for help.

Everett started to stand, but Vetta caught his hand. Her beautiful eyes searched his, the confusion and pain mingling there suddenly replaced by fear.

“Daddy Everett,” she pleaded, the hurt she was feeling evident in her shaky voice, and yet that special word on her lips making his insides turn warm and lovey-dovey. “Daddy, please...”

“It’s all right.” He kissed her on the forehead, careful not to brush her wound. “I’m not going to leave you, but I have to get my horse. See? Goliath is right there. Guess what special little girl is about to get a ride on his back. Doesn’t that sound like fun?”

“No!” She struggled to her knees, trying to stand up with him but her legs refused to hold her. “Please,” she begged,

falling back onto her knees. “Daddy... tell me... please. Who am I?”

The minute those words were out of her mouth, Porscha Carr regretted them. *Who am I?* Really? Nobody was going to believe she had amnesia, and yet she was desperate, scared, and boy, did she ever run with it.

She even had a bump on the head to help the ruse along... but only because she'd taken her seatbelt off, ready to bail from the car from the moment the chase had started and bullets began flying. Tuck and roll, that had been the only thought in her head. Well, that and how the hell had Rick found her so fast?

The need to run had locked every muscle she had during the worst of that car chase. She'd known from the first tap on the bumper that she'd stood a better chance of getting away by running through woods and fields where the hatchback in pursuit of them couldn't follow. But no, every time the Corvette had slowed down, she'd chickened out. Jumping from a moving car was harder than she'd been braced for, and what the fuck? If anyone was supposed to have a gun, shouldn't it have been the bodyguard in the BMW directly behind them? But, noooooooo. Not only was he unarmed, he was in a different vehicle entirely. He might just as well have been another of her ex-husband's incompetent hired gunmen. God knows, he'd crashed into their bumper so many times, he might as well have been working for them.

Either way, she was definitely better off on her own. Even in England, a country she'd never been to before. Hell, she'd

never been out of the United States before. Why, oh why, had she let her twin sister, Vetta, talk her into this?

Who am I?

She knew damn well who she was: Porscha Carr, twenty-five years old last March, gullible idiot who'd thought she'd been marrying for love when she'd said yes to Rick's marriage proposal. But then on the eve of their marriage, he'd tried to kill her. She'd escaped, barely, and the ink on their annulment wasn't even dry yet when Vetta had come up with this cockamamy plan.

"Marry my fiancé in England," she'd said.

"He's rich and powerful. He'll keep you safe," she'd said.

"We're twins!" she'd said. "He'll never know the difference. No one could ever come up with a better plan than this."

Staring up into Everett Garrison's worried eyes—her new Daddy now, whether or not she'd ever talked to or seen more than a photo of him—Porscha panicked and now here she was, being helped up off the ground by the fiancé her sister hadn't actually wanted.

Porscha couldn't imagine why not. The man was gorgeousness personified, but in a blond and blue-eyed way, while Vetta had always nursed a life-long fascination with dark, handsome men weak-willed enough for her to control.

Everett was tall, too. Much taller than Porscha expected, since her twin also had a penchant for only dating men she could tower over in all those high-heeled, fuck-me shoes she liked to wear. How Vetta could walk so gracefully in those things was one of many life skills that Vetta knew like the

back of her elegant hand and Porscha never managed to figure out.

And yet, what had Vetta done the instant Porscha came crying when her husband of less than four hours tried to run her over with her own stupid car? She'd dropped everything, tossed Everett—figuratively if not literally—straight into Porscha's lap before putting her on the first plane leaving for England. Where in that mess Vetta had also sent Everett a “Yes, I love you and can't wait to be your wife” text Porscha didn't know, but here she was. With Rick still gunning for her and Everett the only safe harbor she had, albeit only because she and her sister had lied through their collective teeth to make him that.

It was wrong. So wrong, and yet what had she done but immediately expounded upon all the untruths that had brought her to Everett with yet another untruth?

Porscha hated lies.

“It's all right,” Everett murmured, cupping her face between his strong hands as he gently forced her to meet his concerned eyes. “Ducky, your name is Vetta Carr and I know exactly who you are.”

Porscha did her best not to flinch.

“You're safe with me, I promise. Daddy's got you, and no one will ever hurt you again. That's a promise you can believe.”

She wished.

His brawny arm lent her more than enough strength and stability to help pick her up off her knees. Tucking her under his protective side-embrace, he walked her to his horse.

His *horse*, for god's sake.

Like a knight of old in full-blown tan and red British riding gear, complete with a stupid-looking hat that buckled under his chin, and a handgun tucked into the waistband of his britches.

Stop being bitchy, she told herself sternly. Everett had saved her from her ex's assassins; she ought to be grateful for that. But all she felt was shock, the pain in her head, and the sadness of knowing she had screwed up her life so badly she'd had to flee her own country under her sister's identity to avoid being murdered.

Tucking her hand into his, Everett brought her around to face the side of the massive animal or, rather, his horse's saddle. The stirrup dangled higher than her thigh. No way was she going to be able to get her foot that high.

"Alley oop," Everett said in faux cheerfulness. "Don't worry, Daddy will help you up."

Daddy...

The word shivered through her, prickling up the ladder of Porscha's spine to burrow into the back of her skull. Rick was supposed to be her Daddy. That was the kind of dating site she'd first met him on, and they'd clicked so hard. He was kind, gentle, strong, protective, and he'd had the Daddy routine down pat. He'd given her rules and consequences, and he'd proved himself to be one hell of a good spanker once she'd worked up the nerve to meet him in person.

He'd been everything she'd ever dreamed her someday Daddy would be.

Right up until he tried to kill her.

That her sister, Vetta, also had a desire for a Daddy Dom of her own had been something of a shock. Porscha had never known her twin was a Little, or even that she craved

domination. If anything, Vetta had always seemed more like a *domme*, always needing to be in control, and definitely enjoying a measure of authority over every man Porscha had ever seen her with.

The warmth of Everett's hands dropped to her waist, leaving Porscha barely enough time to grab the saddle horn before he lifted her straight up off the ground, hefting her high enough for her leg to swing up over the saddle. She plopped into the seat while Everett continued to hold her, keeping her there until he was certain her balance was secure. His lingering hands on her hips sent a whorl of butterflies dancing through her stomach. Probably because of all the trauma, or so she told herself.

Grabbing the saddle horn himself, Everett stuck his foot in the stirrup and jumped up behind her onto a saddle built for one. His powerful legs encircled her buttocks and thighs, his muscular chest bumped solidly against her back, and the embrace of his arms as they came around her, gathering up the reins to turn his horse toward home, were horribly, terribly, awkwardly... comforting.

Porscha kept her back straight, unwilling to let herself fall victim to another man's embrace. She tried to ignore him, but the horse loped along in the direction Everett steered it, the natural roll and bump as her bottom bounced in the saddle, sending all the wrong feelings jolting through her. Every up followed by its inevitable down began to feel more like the rhythmic swats of a gentle spanking, something she didn't need...

Well, okay. She did need it and had ever since Rick had destroyed her confidence and her life. But that didn't mean she wanted it.

She *hated* being in this situation. She hated being called by the wrong name, thought of as the wrong sister, and now she was telling Everett she didn't even know who she was? She hated lying, but the unescapable truth of it was, the lie was the perfect solution to the most immediate problem in the scheme Vetta had cooked up. No one, including Everett, would think it odd if she made a mistake, said something that contradicted whatever Vetta might have told him in their many text and face-timing sessions online when all she had to do was say she couldn't remember who she was.

It was the perfect alibi.

And a horrible lie.

Porscha hated herself for both.

Chapter 2

It wasn't yet noon, and already Brookshire had received more visitors than it had in perhaps two years.

Dr. Watts was the first to arrive and, with Mrs. Morris, his head housekeeper, they vanished into the Blue Room where Everett had taken Vetta, depositing her gently upon the bed. As soon as the constabulary arrived, Everett allowed the housemaids to replace him at his bride's bedside and gratefully took his leave. Although not one to admit to a weak stomach where blood was concerned, it was something altogether different to have to hold a struggling, sobbing woman down while the gash in her head was washed, sterilized with stinging liniment and carefully sewn shut using fine thread and many very small stitches in an effort to prevent notable scarring. He'd much rather face down two armed murderers than to have to stand strong in the face of his woman's tears while her already tender head was repeated attacked by Watt's surgical needle.

Escorting the constable and deputies back to the scene of the robbery where his BMW, Corvette, and all their assorted contents still lay scattered across the road, Everett did his best to give accurate descriptions of Shorty and Nervous and their direction of flight.

“We haven’t had this kind of robbery in years,” one deputy said, looking over the luggage scattered across the road.

“*If* it was a robbery,” the constable corrected.

Following the officer as he walked carefully around the destroyed car, Everett asked, “Do you think it wasn’t?”

Poking through the wreckage, the constable looked over the shattered windshield and bodies of Everett’s personal employees. “Looks like the vehicle rolled twice, so they were travelling at a fairly high speed. They knew they were being chased.” An older man, his experienced eyes must have followed clues too subtle for Everett to recognize. All he saw was an awful mess, but he dutifully trailed the constable the length of the lead car until they were standing in front of the hood. “Driver and bodyguard either jumped or were thrown. That bloke there looks to have a broken arm, but death came from a bullet to the head each. Which takes us to the survivor.”

“You mean Vetta.” Although grateful to move on, instead of staring down at the bloody faces of men he had employed, Everett found himself once more standing at the rear of the car.

“Two shots to the boot,” the constable said, pointing out the bullet holes. “But nothing in the BMW. Were your bodyguard not lying in the ditch by your driver, I’d suggest his hand is where these bullets came from. Only thing I don’t quite understand is, where’s the robbery?”

Everett studied the sprawling mess of suitcases, all of which had been unpacked with contents strewn all over the road and ditch. “What do you mean? They rifled through everything. Evidence of that lies all over the place.”

“Does it really?” The constable pointed to a broken suitcase some ten feet down the road behind them. Smashed open when the car rolled, ladies’ underwear, clothing, and two sets of shoes lay in the dirt and gravel. “Is that or is that not a jewelry box?”

“Where?” Everett closed the distance by at least half before he noticed a glint of daylight reflecting off of a pearl necklace abandoned in the grass. After that, his eyes had no trouble picking out stray necklaces, pendants, bracelets and rings. Some looked quite expensive; most to his admittedly uneducated eye looked like costume jewelry, and as for the rest... well, those were jewelry meant for a child. Plastic butterfly bracelets and the lot. He almost stepped on what looked like a pink plastic broach, tangled up in a handful of hair bows and ribboned barrettes and hair scrunchies with Disney characters on them.

Hunkering down, he picked up the nearest bow. It had mermaids, fish and crabs on it. “How did I not notice this?”

“Because, sir,” the constable said wryly, “you see jewelry all the time. I don’t. Neither do our thieves. So why would they leave it behind? Why has nothing been rifled through?” He pointed back to the bodies of Everett’s employees. “The pockets aren’t turned out. Both still have their wallets in their coats, money and credit cards still in them. If the point was robbery, why didn’t they take the money or the jewelry? Or at least the pieces that look real.”

“Because I interrupted them,” Everett answered, but now he was wondering too. He thought back, trying to remember exactly how it had happened, from the moment he heard the squealing tires, shots and crashes, and spurred his horse toward the scene of... was it really an accident? Because the

more the constable said, the less likely it seemed to Everett that it was. “They didn’t take anything because I arrived too soon?”

“They had time enough to shoot the witnesses and drag your lady out of the backseat,” the constable pointed out. “Why not shoot her like they did the others where they found her in the car?”

Everett looked at the torn back of the carriage. “Ransom?”

Shaking his head once, the constable said, “No, sir. This was murder, pure and simple. Leastwise, that’s how it looks to me. And the best witness we have as to the why of it all is lying in your house—”

“—with no memory of who she is,” Everett finished for him again.

“Awfully convenient, don’t you think?” The constable circled the crumpled BMW, but if he saw anything else of note, he didn’t say so to Everett. “We’ll put out the notices, send out a description and a few runners, and see if we can’t flush out the bastards who did this. Maybe we’ll get lucky and she’ll remember who she is or something that can help us catch them.”

And if she didn’t? Everett kept that question to himself. If Shorty and Nervous really were thieves, using murder as a way to keep from being identified, what was the likelihood that they’d risk prison by coming back to finish what they’d started? Everett doubted that was likely, especially since they’d now have to kill him too. But if they weren’t common thieves, and after having added up the constable’s observations on the matter, he was beginning to think they couldn’t possibly be, then the likelihood that they might come back was much, much higher.

What in the world was going on?

Everett sent every groundskeeper he had to help clean up the mess on the road. Old Edmund Mosley, the auto wizard who took care of all Everett's cars, cried when he saw the BMW. That was almost as hard to watch as was the ambulance that came to collect the bodies of his men. He had no idea what he was going to tell Maggie Morris, his housekeeper, who suddenly had the extra duty of being nursemaid to his injured babygirl. He'd talked to the police, he'd talked to the doctor. The only person he hadn't talked to was Vetta herself, because the instant he'd taken her home and shown her the Little bedroom he'd spent the last five months creating just for her, she'd crawled immediately into bed, covered her head with a pillow and pretended to fall asleep.

He couldn't blame her. She'd just had the most terrifying experience any person could fall victim to. Hell, had it been him in her place, he probably would have crawled into the nearest bed too. Except, of course he wouldn't. If nothing else, his father had stalwartly ingrained in all his sons that the nobility never hid. Not from scandals, not from the press, and although murdering thieves had never been one of the examples his father had used to drive the point home, Everett was pretty sure it would have been if only his father had thought of it.

At this point, however, there was nothing more he could do... except go home. When he got there, however, his normally quiet house wasn't.

"Oh! She's a witch!" he heard one of the maid's exclaiming as he pushed open the door. "An absolute witch!"

Closing the door behind him, he was just in time to see Mary flying down the second-floor balcony staircase to join Mrs. Morris as she was racing up them.

“She bit me! She actually bit me!” Mary cried, shoving back her sleeve to show her arm. “All I did was try to help her up. She was all dizzy and could barely sit the pot! And she bit me!”

“Poor lamb,” Mrs. Morris clucked.

“Poor lamb, my arse!” Mary indignantly squealed. “She has a mouth full of very sharp teeth!”

They both stopped when they saw Everett. Instantly, Mary dropped her arm and ducked back behind the housekeeper to become a shadow against the wall, her head bowed and shaking hands demurely folded.

“Lord Garrison, sir,” Mrs. Morris greeted, coming immediately to him. “The mail arrived an hour ago. Will you be retiring to your office and may I bring you biscuits and tea?”

She stopped when Everett waved his hand.

“Forgive my bad manners and eavesdropping,” he said as he climbed the stairs to Mary. “Dare I conclude the biting witch and our injured houseguest might be one and the same?”

The maid flushed under the look Mrs. Morris tossed her. Drawing herself upright, his matronly housekeeper both firmly and politely told him, “She’s had a bump on the head, a fright to boot, and lord only knows what else. Any of those would make anyone out of sorts.”

With the unpleasant images of the car wreck still fresh in his mind, Everett wasn’t about to argue. “That it would, Mrs. Morris. That it would.”

He continued up the stairs, with his housekeeper falling into obedient step behind him. Mary waited long enough for them to pass, before grabbing up her skirts and scuttling off to find something to do anywhere in the house that her royal employer wasn't. Everett had no objections and he wasn't at all upset by her complaints against his future wife. He did, however, know how to deal with it. After all, he and Vetta had talked at length about the first things they would do once she got here. She had told him how nervous she was to finally meet him, and how overwhelming the packing to move had become. She needed a spanking, needed to know through all of her senses that she belonged to him, and he had agreed. What better way was there to start any relationship, but by building the routines that would govern the rest of their lives?

He was a Daddy Dom, with an American Little with whom he could practice all the kinky desires he'd always had and which would limit the risk of world-wide scandal should it ever become public knowledge that he liked to Daddy his women with rules and routines, stories at bedtimes, and spankings—both the fun kind as well as those for discipline. Apparently, just as Vetta had suggested last night on the phone, it was time for Daddy to step in and make his naughty little biter a good little girl once more.

Everett stalked the length of the second floor, passed the guest suites and his mother's favorite sunroom, back when she'd loved living in the country and before she became so immune to the British chill that she refused to leave her London home.

His room was at the absolute end of the hall, with Vetta in the blue room next door so he could keep her close until they married. Sooner or later, he ought to send a letter to his

brothers, apprising them of the situation. In it, he had no idea what he was going to say.

Taking hold of the handle, Everett ran into the door before he realized, while the latch moved freely, his entrance into the room had been blocked from the other side. It barely rattled when his boot and knee struck the wood. He was lucky. If he'd been paying a little less attention, he would have struck it face-first.

“Gracious!” Mrs. Morris said, her gray eyes widening as he rattled the knob, then braced his shoulder against the wood and gave an experimental push. “The doctor said he gave the girl enough sedative to keep her sleeping all day and night long!”

“Apparently not.” Sizing up the door, Everett gave it one more push before deciding whatever she'd blocked it with wasn't worth the inevitable injury to his shoulder. “I guess we're going in the side way.”

Stepping around his housekeeper, he headed for the Pearl Room one door down.

Her house keys jingled as Mrs. Morris pulled them from her belt. Quickening her step, the aged housekeeper reached the locked door that adjoined the two bedrooms just before he did. Sliding the key into the lock, when she pushed, again the door was barricaded from the other side.

“Well, how do you like that?” Pushing harder barely rattled the door in its frame, and Mrs. Morris entire attitude shifted from startled to disgruntled in a single huff of breath. “Oh, I've half a mind to cut a birch!”

She sidestepped when Everett gestured and then he too tried the door, not that it budged for him any better than it had

for her.

“Your room,” Mrs. Morris said. “The adjoining door.”

Everett stopped her before she could march more than a few irate steps from his side. “I’m willing to wager, Mrs. Morris, that door is every bit as blocked.” Frowning, he drew a breath for patience and then knocked. “Vetta, my duck,” he called as he leaned into the unyielding wood. “Open the door, love.”

He waited, listening carefully, but he heard nothing—not even the faintest whisper of movement—from the other side.

“Young lady,” he tried again, knocking sternly a second time. “I am willing to be as patient as any man can. However, I find that patience sorely tested when I am being locked out of a room in my own home. I bear you no ill will. Now please, open the door.”

Everett waited almost a full minute, but there was nothing. No sound at all came from within.

“Blast,” he said mildly, then remembered his sensitive housekeeper. “My apologies.”

“It’s not the first blue word I’ve heard, sir,” she said, but the lines around her mouth were deep with disapproval. “What next?”

Taking off his coat, Everett handed it to her and turned his attention to the Pearl Room’s balcony windows. He opened the glass-paned doors and stepped outside. Although early in the evening now, plenty of daylight still brightened the world enough for him to clearly see every handhold hiding within the thick growth of ivy that climbed the trellises up the side of the manor house. He rolled his sleeves.

“I haven’t done this since I was a boy,” he commented as he threw his leg over the rail and found his first firm footage on the trellis.

“Oh, be careful!” Mrs. Morris hovered just behind him, her hands at the ready in case he should slip.

He didn’t for a second think her strong enough to catch him. Glancing to the ground a good broken-neck’s distance below him, he resolved not to think about that. He eyed the Blue Room’s balcony rail some fifteen feet across from him.

“Mrs. Morris,” he announced as he reached into the ivy to find his first steady hand and foothold on the hidden wrought-iron trellis. “Should I fall, you have my permission to cut that birch.”

“Oh-ho!” the housekeeper laughed, not at all amused. “I’ll not be writing any of this to your brother! You mind where you step, or I’ll be cutting one for you too!”

Everett cracked the smallest smile. That’s what happened when one was born the fifth son of a Duke—even the servants failed to give the proper respect. Of course, it didn’t help matters that the stalwart housekeeper had started her tenure as his nanny. Still... thirty years old and still threatened with a good thrashing.

The trellis gave an ominous creak when he tested it under his full weight. After that, the only thing on Everett’s mind was finding the next sturdy hand and foot hold. Within a few tense steps, he reached the other balcony and was safely over the rail onto firm floor once more.

Hands shielding his eyes, he tried to peek through the interior curtains, but it was bright outside and the curtains too tightly drawn. Mary might have done that, or Mrs. Morris

herself, as a way to help their guest sleep. He'd have felt better about entering if only he could see where Vetta was or what her defensive plans at this point might be. His hand found the door latch and pushed. Half expecting this access to be barricaded too, he was surprised when the door opened without the slightest hitch.

Parting the curtains, Everett slipped inside. There was plenty of daylight spilling in around him to banish back the gloom of an otherwise darkened room. At first glance, he saw no hint of her, but the barricades she'd built behind each of the three doors—the teddy-bear wardrobe blocking access to the hall; the white-and-pink-painted writing desk, two chairs and the toy chest he'd built just for her and which should have crowned the foot of the bed, completely hid the Pearl Room door; and the dressing table, diaper changing table, her naughty chair and every stuffy in the place thrown up against his bedroom door—were truly impressive. The only thing she hadn't moved was the bed, and he understood that completely. That giant four-poster monstrosity was so heavy, he wasn't sure *he* could move it. Which was the only reason he hadn't replaced it with a crib.

Opening both halves of the curtains, Everett let sunlight into the room. Considering most of the rooms in this house, the Blue Room wasn't the largest and yet it had been perfect for what he wanted: a proper bedroom for a little girl who needed a Daddy to make her feel safe and protected, loved and wanted.

“Hello,” he called, announcing his presence in the most congenial way he knew how, although if she was hiding, then she surely had to know he was here.

A faint scuttling noise drew his attention back to the only thing in the room big enough and undisturbed enough to hide an entire person. Approaching the foot of the bed, Everett hunkered down on one knee. Moving slowly, so as not to frighten her even more, he lifted the bed skirt and looked beneath.

She was huddled under the headboard as close to the wall as she could flatten herself. Her eyes were huge, her face pale. In one arm, she fiercely hugged a stuffed sloth in cowboy garb, and in her hand, she was armed with a rather sharp and effective-looking letter opener shaped like a dirk.

“Hello, baby,” Everett said softly.

She stared at him, her shifting grip on the letter opener her only movement.

“Do you remember me?”

She said nothing.

“Everett Garrison. Do you remember where you are?”

Her hand on the dirk flexed again, knuckles whitening where she gripped it.

“I’ll take that as a no. All right, I suppose it only fair that I make myself available to answer any and all questions you might have.” He looked at the floor, then back under the bed at her, and finally up on top of it. He cleared his throat, then dropped down far enough to risk losing himself in the gorgeous green of her eyes. “Would you care for a pillow? Forgive my saying, but you don’t look at all comfortable and since I’m beginning to suspect this might take a while, would you mind if I fetched us each at least one?”

She didn’t so much as squeak.

He nodded once. "I'll take that as a yes." Starting to get up, Everett stopped, thought about it, and then dropped back down where she could see him again. He held up a warning finger. "I am going to go to that end of the bed. I will take two pillows, put one on the floor for you and bring the other right back here to this spot. Now you know exactly what I am going to, but sad to say, you have me at a disadvantage since I cannot say the same thing about you. So, let me narrow your options. I am not threatening you. I am not going to try to grab at you or take away your knife. However, if you try or, God forbid, succeed in stabbing me with that thing, I am going to be *extremely* put out. So put out, in fact, that I will put you immediately over my knee and paddle your bottom far harder and longer than the spanking you already have coming for biting poor Mary." He gave her his sternest look. "*Extremely*. Put. Out," he emphasized. After that, there was nothing left for him to do but fetch the pillows and pray she didn't hobble him.

His ankles prickled with every step that carried him to the head of the massive. Selecting two pillows, he placed one upon the floor—his hand tingled the entire time it was within stabbing range—and then he retreated. He didn't breathe easier until he was back down on the floor, with her where he could see her.

She hadn't moved an inch, although it did look as if she were hugging the sloth tighter. With him watching, she deliberately put the letter opener down on the floor.

"There's Daddy's good little girl," he soothed, smiling gently when some of the stiffness slipped from her tense shoulders. "Are you thirsty? Would you like a drink before we start?"

She shook her head in fast, tiny jerks.

“Very well.” He lay down on the floor at the foot of the bed, stretching out on his back with his head upon the pillow, his hands folded upon his stomach and his long legs crossed at the ankles. “Much better. All right, who am I? Let’s begin at the beginning. On a cold and snow-cast winter morning some thirty years ago, after a full two-day’s exhaustive laboring, I was born. As I’m sure you’ve already guessed, this not from any clear memory of my own, but because my mother lamented each and every one of those forty-six hours loudly and often throughout my childhood whenever I, boys being the mischievous chaps we are, did something wrong...”

Vetta was a captive audience at best, but he did his best to regale her with stories of his school days, the fascinating history of the house, its ties to the Crown and how the estate had come to be gifted to his family before Everett bought it for himself. He even talked about what it was like to live in the country, in a home he had loved every summer they’d come here.

He talked about his past dating experiences and how miserable it had been to find every proper British woman he’d ever dated hadn’t want him. Oh, his family ties, sure. His money, absolutely. But not him, the man, instead of the royal bloodline that didn’t even matter in society these days.

He told her all the ups and downs he’d discovered when he first expanded his search to Italy, Spain, Russia, China and finally to America. He’d met a lot of women on a lot of dating apps, but Vetta had been the first that he had talked to who he felt had really listened to him. She’d been engaging and cheerful, and she’d had a beautiful sense of humor. She’d actually made him laugh, and for Everett who would likely forever be haunted by the edicts his father had browbeaten into all of his sons—*don’t talk with your mouth full; men of power*

have no friends, family or lovers, only users; and the capper of them all: *stop laughing, you look like a braying donkey*—that was probably what had drawn him to her so fast and so hard.

He didn't feel royal when he was with her. He felt human, and damn if he didn't love her for it.

And then, midway through telling her that, he glanced over at her under the bed to find her sound asleep, still clutching her sloth to her chest, the pillow he'd given her finally tucked up under her head and her face turned towards him, as if she'd been watching him talk right up until exhaustion—or Dr. Watts' medication—overwhelmed her.

Either that, or he'd just bored the poor girl clean out of consciousness.

Climbing up off the floor, he crawled up the length of the bed until he could reach in under the frame and stroke her soft hair. Her only response was the softest, cutest snore.

Pulling a blanket down off the bed, he had to crawl halfway under the wood frame to cover her up. For fear of waking her, he dropped a soft kiss onto the back of her hand rather than her forehead. Or the sweet bow of the lips he'd been aching to kiss since long before she'd ever arrived.

There'd be plenty of time for that once she was feeling better. Safer. No matter how much he wanted it otherwise, he could wait.

Smoothing stray wisps of auburn hair back from her all-too-innocent face, he crawled out from under the bed and let her get her rest.

Chapter 3

Emerson McDugall, Everett's estate manager, was already waiting for him when Everett strolled into his first-floor office with every item rescued from the auto crash neatly lumped into piles around the desk.

Everett remembered this room when it had been his father's, and for all that he had no intentions of following in his father's austere footsteps, it hadn't really changed much after Brookshire changed owners. Bookcases still lined all the walls, still chock-a-bloc full of the same old tomes on British law, taxes, agriculture, architecture—everything a man of means might need to nosy his way into the business of those who actually knew how to do these things. The oversized antique desk had been his father's. So had the chairs that crowned the massive fireplace across the room.

Change is what brought about the French Revolution, his father had told him once. Look what happened there.

Everett had no idea if that might be why he'd kept Brookshire pretty much as it was since he'd purchased his family's country estate, but looking around it now, he couldn't help but see all of Vetta's scattered things as bright spots in an otherwise grim interior.

“Is this everything?” he asked as he circled a stack of broken suitcases.

“Everything that could be salvaged,” his property manager confirmed.

Trying not to feel as if he were snooping through a stranger’s personal property, instead of his soon-to-be bride’s, he picked through a pile of clothes, pausing to hook the gossamer strap of a silky red camisole with the tip of his finger. He held it up to the light, admiring the transparency and trying not to get hard just imagining his babygirl putting this on for him. He remembered Emerson and quickly dropped it back on the pile. He covered it with a shirt, patted it twice, and avoided meeting his estate manager’s eyes.

Both men flushed with mutual embarrassment.

Tucking his hands behind his back, Emerson stiffened his shoulders. “How is she, do you think?”

“Scared,” Everett replied. “As anyone would be after the day she’s had.”

“Has she any recall at all?”

“Not yet.” Patting the clothing pile again, Everett moved on to the stacks of small boxes and bags neatly laid out on his desk. A fatly stuffed backpack adorned by millions of multicolored sequins caught his eye. Dragging it to him, he unzipped the top and reached inside. A pure white kitten stuffy was the first thing he withdrew. Dressed in a pretty pink shirt and blue shorts, the smiling toy was in pristine if well-loved condition. The bow balanced between its ears was starting to fray, and Everett stroked it with his finger, finding it a little odd.

“I like pretty things,” Vetta had once told him through one of their many text exchanges. “Everything I have needs to be new and perfect or I don’t want it. Consider it a failing, I guess. Hey, you wanted me to be honest, right?”

Everyone had their quirks, and what babygirl didn’t want Daddy to provide them with pretty things? Or so Everett had thought at the time, although part of him did file that telling tidbit away in the back of his mind with all the other seemingly inconsequential things that he had picked out of their conversations over nearly a year of long-distance-relationshiping. But what was one minor little conflicting character trait considering what had just happened to Vetta. The stuffy wasn’t terribly frayed anyway. And perhaps she had finally found something worth loving past its ‘new’ date.

Setting the stuffed toy aside, he pulled a baby shark sippy cup from the backpack next.

Behind him, Emerson—good old loyal and diplomatic-to-a-fault Emerson—cleared his throat. “Will there be children joining us at Brookshire, sir?”

Everett smiled at the cup, his heart softening as he imagined filling it with juice and tucking the soft tip between Vetta’s pretty little mouth. “I sincerely hope so. Did you go through all this already?”

“As instructed,” Emerson confirmed.

“Did you find anything... odd?”

Emerson looked at the sippy cup in Everett’s hand. “Define... ‘odd’?”

Touche.

“I have no idea,” Everett murmured, and put the cup back too. He spotted an octopus binky tucked underneath the kitten.

His hand itched, but he left it where it was. “I wish I did.”

Emerson was quiet a moment. “Do you know about the will and check? One might consider that odd.”

Everett startled. “One might indeed. Show me.”

Darting well around the ‘child’s’ backpack, the estate manager selected a stack of paperwork crowned by a broken jewelry box. Setting the box aside, Emerson sifted through the papers until he found a white oversized envelope and handed it over.

Opening it, Everett withdrew a packet of papers—the will—with a check paperclipped to it. The check was a beneficiary payment amounting to almost thirty million dollars.

“She is going to hate our currency conversion rate.” Turning the check over in his hand, he studied the unsigned back and then looked at the sum again.

“Sixty percent of thirty million,” Emerson cautiously intoned, “is money well worth killing over.”

How true.

Then Everett looked at the name on the check. “Porscha Carr? Who is Porscha Carr?”

His estate manager nodded. “Mystery upon mysteries, my lord.”

“Everett please, Emerson. Or sir, I suppose. I keep telling you that.”

“It isn’t seemly.”

“We’re cousins, for god’s...” Everett sighed and dropped it. “Thank you, Emerson.”

His nod more like a bow, Emerson left him to snoop his way through the rest without interruption, but like a dog with a bone, Everett wasn't ready to move on until he'd figured his way through this newest problem. If it was a problem.

Frowning, he reached over the stack of papers—mostly old correspondence and credit card bills—and picked up the phone. He dialed.

“Constable Harris,” the constable greeted when he finally picked up on the other end. “If this isn't more important than the pot roast waiting on my supper table, I'm hanging up.”

“It's Everett Garrison.”

“And how did you get my home number, exactly?”

Everett arched an eyebrow. “You gave it to me. At the car wreck this morning, don't you remember?”

Harris sighed heavily in his ear. “I need to stop doing that. How can I help you now?”

Unoffended, knowing he'd be just as testy were it his pot roast dinner being interrupted, Everett relayed what he had found among Vetta's things.

“Now that's interesting,” Harris said between chews. “We've been rather busy on our end since we last spoke too. Shall I catch you up to date?”

“Please.”

Which was how, forty minutes later Everett found himself standing in the middle of a morgue, two stainless steel drawers drawn open and the body bags within unzipped so he could positively identify the men inside.

“That's them,” he said grimly. “That's Shorty and Nervous.”

“Otherwise known as Oliver Hatchett and Dick Halloway,” Harris supplied. “Are you sure you don’t know them?”

“No. Not until this morning anyway.”

“I need to speak with your fiancée.”

Yes, Everett decided. So did he. “Can you wait a day or two for her to recover?”

There was a pause as Harris considered the request. “One day,” he finally replied. “She might not remember who she is, but she might still know something that could help us. We need that information while it’s still fresh.”

“One day,” Everett agreed, but there was a renewed tension inside him that suggested he might have just lied. The last thing his Daddy side wanted to do was force Vetta to dive back into all this when she was still so rattled, she was sleeping under instead of on her bed.

On the other hand, he didn’t like not knowing what was going on, and the deeper he searched for answers to the questions already looping endlessly through his mind, the more questions he found waiting for him.

He hated the unknown almost as much as he disliked change.

What in the world had Vetta gotten herself into? And how, exactly, was he supposed to get her out of it?

Porscha dreamed she was running for her life, with gun shots and screaming and the crash of Everett’s cars tumbling her over and over until she bolted upright in bed... and whacked her head on the underside of the mattress slats. She came

awake already scrambling until her back hit the wall, and suddenly the silence and darkness of the room overwhelmed her. Where was she? Unfortunately, it all came flooding back to her within the span of a few panicked breaths. She was in England, pretending to be her sister at the sprawling country estate of the fiancé Vetta hadn't wanted.

How long had she been sleeping, hours or days? She didn't know.

Cowering under the headboard, she trembled, so anxious she couldn't stop shaking, and so upset by all the lies that had got her to this point she was drowning in guilt. She'd always strived to be a good girl. Her Little side was lurking under the surface of her, beating at her brain for a chance to get out and excise all the bad girl feelings now tying her insides into knots.

She remembered Everett sneaking in through the balcony, providing her with a pillow before he lay down at the foot of the bed to tell her everything about himself. It must have been the pain killers that made her eyes drift closed. She wondered how long he'd talked before realizing she'd fallen asleep. How calm he'd been, even when he'd threatened to spank her bottom. Probably for biting the maid, Mary. The woman had tried to strip her naked and put her in a pink silk nightgown that wasn't even hers. Who wouldn't bite for that?

Once they'd left her alone, she'd slipped out of her bloody and torn clothes and put the nightgown on. The clothes she'd discarded were gone now. So were the barricades she'd built in front of all three interior doors. And the furniture, all but guaranteeing there would be no repeat success in blocking Everett and his household staff from entering before she could get her story straight. The good little girl within her died a

little at the thought. She hated being bad. She wasn't even a good brat, though she had tried to be with Rick.

She didn't want to think about him. Her head still ached, pulsing where the doctor had stitched the cut on her forehead. The painful beat of it raced along with her heart, pounding at her temples and behind her eyes. Her thoughts swam. She vaguely remembered an older woman in a dour black uniform dress slipping prescription pills into her mouth and holding the glass of water to her protesting lips until she finally gave up and swallowed them.

“There's a good lamb,” she'd said. “Now, you close your eyes and rest.”

Then she and that doctor, along with his black bag of torture needles, left Porscha alone. In pain, scared beyond measure, with nothing but her rampaging thoughts in a bedroom that wasn't hers.

She wished it could be, though.

This bedroom was everything she'd ever wanted. She ought to be ecstatic for finding a home and a Daddy Dom willing to cater to her Little side. Just look at all the stuffies and toys Everett had bought for her. Laying down on this massive four-poster bed ought to make her feel like a princess in her very own castle. And yet, when she crawled out from under it, where did she go? Not to the toys, but straight to the window where she expected at any moment to see again the hatchback with two assassins onboard or, worse, Rick himself coming up the long gravel drive beneath the sheltering arms of all those ancient oak trees. It was autumn and the leaves had fallen, leaving dark empty branches to reach for the stars just beginning to wink in and out across the blueish-purple sky.

What was Vetta doing right now? Porscha wanted so badly to call her sister, but she couldn't even do that. Vetta had thrown her cellphone away immediately after Rick tried to kill her. Just in case there was a tracking app on it, Vetta had said. And Porscha had obeyed, because Vetta had always led and Porscha always followed, and that was just the way it had always been.

She couldn't do this. She couldn't stay here, immobilized by fear while Rick stalked her shadow, gnawing at the back of her mind like a monster with real teeth and really bad intentions.

He was coming, and she knew it. The men who had tried to take her were proof enough that he knew exactly where she had gone. Her attempt at escape had failed. She *had* to get out of here.

And go where? She hadn't a clue; she just *needed* to run.

Porscha stepped out onto the balcony, but it was a terribly long way down to the ground. She didn't know how Everett managed to climb up in the first place, but she knew she wasn't strong enough to go down the same way. Her legs were shaking. So were her hands. She didn't feel steady at all, and she blamed it on the fear she just couldn't shake.

In nothing but her nightgown, she retreated back inside to try each of the doors she'd previously barricaded. She expected them to be locked, but all three opened easily; two into adjacent bedrooms and the third into an open hallway. Wall lamps glowed at even intervals all down the length, but at a dimmer light level than they had earlier been at. A glimpse of shadow and movement had her ducking back behind the door, closing it to little more than a crack just as a man in a dark suit rounded the far corner, coming down the hall bearing

an armload of her own clothes. He passed by Porscha's bedroom, stopping at Everett's just next to hers. He knocked and after a moment's silence, Everett's deep voice granted him entrance. The man carried his armload inside, vanishing behind the softly closing door and leaving Porscha's fast-beating heart to pound for a long time afterward.

Now was her moment to get out, while no one was here to see or stop her.

Porscha strained to listen beyond the quiet of the big country house, and when she heard nothing, cautiously ventured from her room.

She'd been fully awake when first they had brought her here, but now with her head still swimming, she couldn't remember her way back downstairs. Did she go right or left? She chose blindly, creeping as quickly as she could in the opposite direction of Everett's room. She did not find the foyer steps, but a secondary stairwell that took her down into a kitchen. It was huge, the architecture a good two centuries old while the appliances were all modern stainless steel.

She stepped outside through the back kitchen door, only to find herself in a garden already bedded down for the winter. Solar lamps lined the cobblestone walkway, casting just enough light to see by as she followed the neatly maintained pathway around the house.

A sudden commotion—raised voices, the slam of a door—from somewhere inside the house told her she was about to get caught again and she ran. Her bare feet feeling every uneven edge of the garden stones and pebbles from a walkway that hadn't been swept away. It hurt to run on them, but out was out, and for now all she could think was run, get away from Rick, his men, Everett and *his* men, not to mention the

buttload of lies it would take to make a life here even possible. She was so stupid for thinking this was her best chance for survival.

The garden behind her might have been empty, but every light in the big house began winking on as she ran around the outside walk, trying to find the front yard or, better yet, the driveway so she could escape to the nearest road. There was a whole group of people with flashlights and cellphones gathering in the front yard, and that put a fresh injection of panic into her. They knew she was gone, already? How had that happened so fast?

She cowered in the bushes at the corner of the house, wondering what to do now. Should she sneak back to her room and tell everyone she'd been in the bathroom, or...

If she could find the stables or an unguarded car with keys magically waiting in the ignition, then she might have a chance. A vehicle would help her make it farther than she would ever get running away on foot and in a damn-near-sheer pink nightgown, for heaven's sake.

And how far will that be? her common sense cut in as she hunkered in the bushes, her feet cooling in dewy grass and her back pressed up against the side of the house, shielding herself from the light by scruffy branches and dead leaves that crunched when she moved. How far could she go with no idea of where she was, where the nearest town was in relation to Everett's estate, or who to run to for help? On the tails of that dreadful thought came an equally terrifying certainty: Stay or go, Rick was going to kill her.

"Fan out," a deep and familiar voice announced, startling her. Rising onto haunches, she tried to see up over the rows of hedges to the shadowy man who'd come charging out of the

house with a crop in his hand, issuing orders to the men following him. “Where’s my horse? Go in pairs. If you find her, don’t frighten her but contain her until I get there. Go quickly and go gently, gentlemen. I don’t want her harmed, whether she cooperates or not.”

It was Everett, standing on the front porch as he slapped his own leg with the flat tip of the crop. She didn’t know any of the other men who separated into smaller groups and dispersed in all directions. Two marched right past her, vanishing back into the lighted garden behind her, cutting that off as an avenue of safe retreat. Two others jogged across the front lawn and into the distant trees she thought might line the driveway she couldn’t quite see from here but had from her bedroom window. More still rounded to the back of the house.

“We’ll find her, sir,” Mrs. Morris announced from a place Porscha couldn’t see inside the house. “We’ll go room to room until we do. Surely she couldn’t have gone far, poor lamb.”

“Until we figure out what’s going on,” Everett said dryly, “anywhere outside my sight is a step too far. And if she’s done this herself, that ‘poor lamb’ will be sitting on pillows for the rest of the week.”

Tingles racing across her bottom, Porscha ducked back into the shadows when suddenly Everett happened to glance her way. Crouching frozen, she held her breath while his heavy boot steps descended the front porch steps and headed her way. Suddenly, the tickle of eight tiny feet climbed the back of her leg, but she remained unmoving, clamping her lips and locking her fingers in the folds of her nightgown to keep from slapping the spider away as she heard the crunch of big feet coming through the leaves and grass. He came right up to

the corner of the house to stand mere feet from her, and then fell the nerve-wracking silence.

It lasted so long her fast-beating heart felt as if it would explode.

“Damn it,” Everett finally muttered, then his steps retreated back across the lawn until she heard the distant front door shut.

Trembling, she listened carefully, but when several minutes passed and there were no further sounds, she rose to peek up through the leaves again. Everett was better at waiting than she was. He stood at the edge of the porch, one hand on his hip as he stared back out across the yard... right up until she moved. Then his gaze locked on her.

“Got you,” he said.

Her whole body panicked and her stomach lurched as every muscle she owned suddenly spasmed into motion.

Bolting out of her hiding spot, Porscha ran.

If he had it to do over again, Everett realized, he probably would have said something less predatory than, “Got you.”

Vetta bolted from her hiding spot faster than he could comprehend the sudden emptiness of the swaying bushes she'd left behind her.

“Wait! Vetta!” He dashed after her, and thank God she was barefoot and he had longer legs, or he never would have caught up with her. If he had *that* to do over again, he'd have worked harder at not ripping her nightgown when he snagged her by the scruff. In two seconds flat, she had slapped, kicked,

and shimmied her way straight out of her clothes and he was left holding nothing but an empty nightgown. His lovely bride-to-be was now sprinting across the lawn in nothing but underwear and a bra.

If he didn't get her back in her clothes soon, some poor unsuspecting driver on the road was going to get one hell of a peep-show.

Clutching the nightgown, he raced after her, catching her in a matter of steps. He grabbed her arm this time, slowing his step in an attempt to bring her to a gradual stop, but she swung on him and neatly boxed his ear.

It was a cool and cloudless night, but he'd never seen so many stars in his life. Everett shook his head to clear it and she swung at him again.

"Enough!" He caught both her wrists, only to have her lash out with her foot. Hooking his arm around her waist, he yanked her in closer, hoping to still her struggles without hurting her, only to have her smaller body erupt into a contortionist's fury of bucking and twisting. The unexpected violence of it knocked them both off balance and, trying to shield her from the brunt of the fall, he hit the ground flat on his back with her landing squarely on top of him. Her elbow slamming into his midriff, knocking the wind clean out of him.

Vetta did not appreciate his sacrifice.

She jabbed her elbow into his midriff, drummed her heels upon his shins, and when she threw her head back, cracking her skull into his chin, Everett hit the limit of what even he could tolerate.

"I said, enough!" he snapped, rolling over on top of her in order to squash her struggles.

“Let me go!” she shouted, kicking and fighting for all she was worth. Americans, he was quick to discover, fought by dirty rules. While he was trying to pin down her arms to stop her from punching and slapping at his head, she sank every tooth she had into his bicep.

He gritted his teeth against the pain until, pinning her wrists together in the leaves above her head, he gripped her jaw with the other. Applying pressure to force her release, he rescued his arm.

“I will not hurt you, but, by God, do that again,” he growled, his arm aching where her sharp little teeth had surely penetrated his flesh, “and I’ll put you across my knee right here and now!”

Her struggles stilled, but he didn’t for a second think it was because she’d given up. Her body beneath his was tense and trembling. She was panting, but then so was he. Under the thin veneer of his shirt, he was pretty sure his arm was bleeding. Even so, he was beginning to regret his threat. She was frightened, that was all. He couldn’t begin to imagine how terrifying it must be not to know one’s own identity.

Softening his tone, he tried again. “I know this is scary, babygirl, but I am trying to help you. I truly am.”

They lay in the grass and leaves, far enough from the brightly-lit house that he could barely see her face. He imagined her deeply shadowed eyes were narrowed with every ounce of the distrust he could hear in her quavering voice.

“You won’t hurt me?”

“No,” he promised, his grip on her softening in relief. “I give you my word, I will move heaven and earth, pay for whatever treatments are required until you regain your

memory. Dr. Watts thought this likely only a temporary loss brought on by the trauma of what you've endured today. My darling girl, no one will ever hurt you again. I swear it on my honor, and that of my family's. I only ask that you try to trust me and be patient until it happens. All right?"

He took it as a good sign, even as he eased a few respectable inches between them, when she didn't immediately resume her fight to break away. She seemed to be considering his words.

"All right," she relented.

"You'll behave yourself?"

Vetta nodded, two shaky lifts of her chin that he could barely discern from the darkness of the night.

"Excellent," he said, optimistically.

He wasn't sure what it was, a twitch of faintly-felt tension that ratcheted through her muscles and signaled her intent an instant before she struck, but had he not been the youngest of four brothers, he might well have fallen victim to her right knee's intended assault upon his manhood. A quick tuck of his hips and she slammed up into nothing more sensitive than the outside of his thigh.

"You little brat!" he exclaimed, for a moment so stunned that he almost lost his hold on her when she swung her fist and tried again to box his ear. And with that, he reached the end of what abuse he was willing to take.

She let out a shriek, but Everett still flipped her, rolling her onto her stomach for the most ungentlemanly bout of well-deserved retaliation that he could dispense. It wasn't his finest moment. He'd always thought their first spanking would happen in more intimate quarters, his bedroom or hers, with

him sitting on the edge of the bed and her little bare bottom bent across his knee. He would be stern, giving her both comfort and the release she obviously needed, but not now.

Grabbing her flailing wrists, he leaned his weight into the small of her back and gave the seat of her panties the most liberal dusting that he could manage. If he left her backside smarting half as much as his hand—and judging by her squeals and cries toward the end, he was well assured of that—than he considered the matter a success... for all of about the first three seconds after the last slap bounced off her squirming backside. Then she lashed her feet back and nearly kicked him in the head.

“Right,” he said firmly. Yanking her panties down her thighs, he bared her bottom to the wrath of his equally bare hand.

Her shrieks took on renewed urgency, and before he'd halfway begun to spank in earnest, her backside wiggled into the lewdest grinding dance, squirming in the grass in her desperate attempt to evade his discipline.

“Stop!” she wailed, but Everett was all done granting second chances. He ignored the sting in his palm and paddled her bottom until he could feel the heat rising from deep inside her flesh. Still, he didn't stop until her pleading wails broke apart and became just plain wailing. “Please!” she sobbed.

Then and only then, did he halt his punishing assault.

Pinning her beneath him, Everett shook the smart out of his hand until he was sure the fight had been thrashed right out of her. She was only the third Little he'd ever spanked, but she was the first that he'd ever brought to tears. His mother would be appalled, but to Everett this was nothing short of victory. It said dreadful things about his character that he felt no small

sense of pride in this, but he did manage to keep all hint of gloating out of his tone when he said, “If you are done behaving like an ill-tempered brat, I will let you up.”

Fighting to pull her sobs back under control, Vetta lay under him, gasping and sniffing before she finally nodded.

“But how can I trust you when you’ve already lied to me?” All her kicking had scooted her underwear into a protective roll across her thighs, hiding her sit spots from him. Hooking his fingers into the flimsy roll of cloth, he gave them another hard yank out of his way. Vetta shrieked, her feet already kicking and scrambling as Everett leaned his weight across her back and let his hard, open hand drive the scolding home. “I do not like being lied to!”

Everett might be only the fifth son of a duke, eleventh in line before he ever saw a penny of an inheritance. But he was also a man of affairs, owner of a textile company that he’d built from scratch and a new line of men’s wear due to launch this winter. Never let it be said he did anything by half measures. He spanked until his lesson had been thoroughly administered and before he was done, Vetta lay limp in the grass, sobbing but no longer fighting.

He was either a monster or a master in the art of spanking woman. He honestly didn’t know which described him best, but as the sting began to fade from his hand and the heat from his annoyance, Everett found himself gazing down upon her while she cried. He suspected he just might be the monster.

That was an uncomfortable realization, every bit as uncomfortable as the heady bulge filling out the front of his pants until the fabric was so tightly tented that he could feel the threads straining under the pressure of his body’s need to have her. A rush of electrifying adrenaline ripped through him.

He couldn't remember the last time he'd felt so sensually, sexually charged. His heart was pounding. His blood was pounding. He felt... damn near animalistic in his desire.

And she was crying.

That cut through the sexual charge every bit as effectively as a knife.

Everett quickly got up. He cleared his throat, tried once to discretely adjust himself in his trousers and then simply prayed it was too dark for anyone to notice.

"Pull your knickers up," he told her, and he was surprised at how gruff and disapproving he sounded, when in fact he was appalled.

Choking on tiny gasps and hiccups, Vetta climbed onto her knees and gingerly pulled her underwear up over her bottom. He could barely see the ghostly paleness of the linen as it scraped up over tender well-spanked flesh, but he heard her breath catch, becoming whimpers as she again dissolved into tears.

Feeling like a real ass, Everett collected the torn remnants of her nightgown, wrapping it around her and pulling the two halves closed. When he offered her his hand, she stared at it for a long time, her hands still behind her, alternately cupping and rubbing at the fire he'd lit. In the end though, she only swiped at her eyes with one wrist and then took it, allowing him to help her up.

Her small hand sliding into his did terrible things to the tent already straining to burst free of his pants. It did terrible things to the monster inside him too. Before he even thought to bridle the beast, he heard himself murmur in dark and

disapproving tones, “All right, my naughty little miss, am I going to have any more trouble out of you tonight?”

Her smaller fingers held captive in his hand twitched. Staring straight down at the ground, Vetta shook her head.

“All right, then.” Note to self: there was no quicker way to bring a misbehaving young lady to heel than by delivering a good, sound spanking. Pointing back to the house, he snapped his fingers. “March, and for your bottom’s sake, this had best be your first and last attempt at running away.”

Head down, she went, rubbing her bottom every step of the way. Only belatedly must she have realized what she was doing, because she was halfway to the porch when she let her hands fall away from her backside. By then, the damage was done. Following not more than a handful of steps behind her, Everett could not pry his gaze off the alluring tilt and swish of her half-naked bottom to save his life. His hand burned. Perhaps not as much as her gorgeous little bottom, but enough to drive a maddening wedge of carnal distraction into what was an otherwise quite orderly mind.

He was a monster all right, and right now all he wanted was to get her into his bed.

Chapter 4

Wrapped in the destroyed cloth of her nightgown, Porscha stood, subdued, exactly where he had pointed when he'd first brought her into his study.

“Don't budge from that spot,” he'd warned, and it was a warning she immediately took to heart.

Her bottom was one solid mass of pulsing, aching, burning hot flesh, but worse than that, she could feel the weight of his disapproval. It was so heavy, it was smothering her.

She swiped at the wetness streaking her face and sniffled. She couldn't blame him for being mad. He'd spanked her until she was a sobbing, blubbering mess, but how many times had she hit him before he'd finally had enough? No, she'd earned what she'd received, and somewhere in the depths of her being, she was glad he'd done it.

As much as it had hurt, being pinned down, overpowered and overruled, she felt better. Relaxed. The fears that had plagued her from the moment Vetta had suggested Porscha take her place, go to England, and marry a man she'd never so much as spoken to before, were gone. None of which made sitting any easier, but she deserved that too.

Everett moved through the room, laying his crop on the desk and prodding the logs in the hearth to kick the warming flames that much higher. Selecting a pillow from the settee, he brought it to her. Positioning a chair directly behind her, he added the pillow on top of its existing upholstery.

“Sit,” he told her.

She obeyed, dreading it the whole way down until her bottom made contact with the seat. She closed her eyes, whimpering. The added cushion didn't do anywhere near enough to cancel out the pain, and yet her shoulders slumped as she relaxed even more. The pain was centering, grounding. And she had to be crazy, because what did she do but grip the sides of the pillow with both hands and pull herself down onto the seat to make the heat and hurt flare hotter. The way she needed it to. Because she had been bad and she needed this.

Porscha whimpered. She was such a mess.

Ignoring the sound, Everett came around to her side of the desk and perched himself on the edge. He had to clear a space first, every inch of the surface being buried under small boxes and bags, bits of clothes and correspondence, gloves and hats, and lined up along the wall behind it were all the broken bits of luggage Vetta had packed for her. That she hadn't noticed her things were in here startled Porscha, sprouting all those tendrils of fear to twist and twine in her tummy again.

Had he gone through them all yet? Did he know just how bad of a liar and manipulator she was? The thought terrified her. She knew exactly what was in her mess of belongings, including all the things Vetta had warned her not to bring—like that copy of her dad's will, the inheritance check the lawyer had sent and which she'd been too scared to cash lest Rick find out. All those love letters from Rick...

Why she couldn't make herself get rid of those things, she didn't know.

Except, yes, she did.

Rick had been her first Daddy, the man she was supposed to marry so she could be his babygirl forever and ever. He was the first man to say he wanted her, all of her, exactly as she was. To give her spankings and kisses and hugs and stories at bedtime, toys and blankies during long car rides, Legos at Christmas, dinosaurs on her birthday, and in the soft, sweet darkness of night, to pull her into his arms and own her willing body over and over and over again... making her his in every way that mattered, one caressing inch at a time.

But no. He'd tried to put her under the rear bumper of his car instead. Because that was the kind of treatment needy Littles like her deserved. Porscha hung her head.

Arms folded across his chest, Everett studied her for a long time before he softly said, "Vetta, look at me. Do you remember who I am?"

Looking at him right now was as painful as her bottom, and twice as embarrassing. "Everett Garrison," she replied, once she'd cleared her throat.

"Do you remember who you are?"

She swiped at her eyes again. The urge to tell him was unexpectedly strong, but as much as she hated lying, she was far more scared of being kicked out of his home and becoming stranded on a foreign continent with no one to help her.

Tell him, her common sense sighed, frustrated.

Bowing over her lap, she covered her face with both hands—scared, embarrassed and guilty as hell.

“Never mind.” Swiveling sideways, he reached behind him to pick up a stack of letters sealed in a gallon-sized Ziploc bag. He held them up. “Who’s Rick, Vetta?”

She jerked upright, her throat choking instantly closed, strangling every swift, shallow breath she took. Her jaw dropped, but no sound came out. God, how she wished she could tell him!

In two quick jerks, she shook her head no, but “no” wasn’t “I don’t know.” She tried again, this time shrugging. Her hands locked tightly in her lap, fingers interwoven so fiercely that her knuckles whitened. Her already rapid breathing quickened that much more. The heat of guilt burned her cheeks. Unable to hold his steady assessment, she looked at her lap.

Everett made a non-committal sound. “I went through the luggage. Would you like to tell me what I found?”

No. Hell, no.

Her mouth instantly dry, Porscha’s mind raced, snapping through visual images of every item she had packed. “I-I don’t know.”

She rubbed at her throbbing knuckles.

Studying her, Everett pulled one of the letters out of the gallon bag. Unfolding the it, he read out loud, “*My dearest love.*” Pausing, Everett looked at her. “*Our impending marriage is all I can think about. I long to hold you, to comfort, love, lead and guide you. I know our romance came out of nowhere. But while I also know ten months isn’t enough time to really know one another, I have never felt more sure of any decision than I do about the one we made together. I can’t*

wait to marry you. Love,” Everett looked at her again before slowly drawing out, “*Rick.*”

Her heart hammered against her ribs. She struggled to keep her breathing slow and normal, but failed miserably. She knew how bad she now looked.

He held up the letter. “Explain, please.”

At least he wasn’t yelling at her.

What more, he was giving her a chance to come clean with him and at least walk away from this horrible mistake with a clear conscience. No more lies to choke her throat and make her feel like dirt, not good enough even to grace the bottoms of his shoes. She needed to tell him the truth and accept whatever consequences for every bad decision that had brought her here to this moment.

She didn’t realize she’d reached back to rub her tender bottom with both hands until Everett said, “Don’t bother rubbing. Something tells me you’ll be right back over my knee in about two seconds. Stop stalling and stop lying, unless you want a sturdy dose of the hairbrush and your first very real naughty-bottom punishment. Do you remember when we discussed this at length? When you asked me to be stern but loving, consistent and not to be surprised if what you needed straight off the bat was a sound, bare-bottom thrashing and some much-needed corner time? Do you remember any of that, or do I need to stop right here so that we can re-do every single conversation we’ve ever shared? Because, forgive me, my darling duck, but all I feel between us right now is this real disconnect of where I thought we were and where we actually seem to be.”

Porscha’s stomach sank as she realized he was talking about a conversation he’d had with Vetta. Her sister, the real

fiancée. It made her head spin and her guilt multiply. Her bottom stung worse, prickled deeper, dread and acceptance twining inside her, trapping her in her own dishonesty.

How many years now had she fantasized about scenes exactly like this one, of hearing threats like this, all while knowing the Daddy doing the threatening had her best interests at heart? Except Everett wasn't her Daddy and it wasn't her best interests that he held in his heart. It was Vetta's.

Bending, Porscha clapped her hands over her face, wishing she were invisible.

Everett sighed. Making himself comfortable on the edge of his desk, he stretched out his long legs and folded his arms across his chest. "Your poor bottom is going to be very uncomfortable tonight, and it already looks like you won't be sitting down at least until tomorrow. Do you really want me to spank you again? I don't like being lied to—"

Her head snapped up and she stared at him in open-mouthed shock.

His eyebrows arched. "You think I don't know you've been withholding something from me? Something that's making you unhappy, clearly. I can't help you if you won't talk to me. Vetta, what the devil is going on?"

More than anything, she ached to tell him. But that would only compound her problems, not fix them. The Little inside of her was beating at her, desperately crying that she didn't want to keep doing this. She felt like a bad girl all the time now, ever since Rick tried to run her over. She couldn't make herself get past the heartbreak, or the confusion of what she'd done that would make her very first Daddy ever turn on her like that.

She'd loved Rick... at least, she thought she had. But although losing him had devastated her, in the very pit of her being, so very deep inside that she dared not examine it too closely, she knew she couldn't have loved him very much. Not like a wife should love her husband. What she was grieving, was the loss of her very first Daddy, not Rick himself. She'd thought she'd had the dream, the fantasy. The sweet bedtime stories and dino chicken nuggets for dinners on segregated plates with little spoons and forks to eat it with. She'd wanted someone stern—like Everett—and loving. Again, like Everett.

But did she deserve those things? No! She was a bad girl, unlovable, incapable of ever being anyone's good little girl again.

God, did she ever need a hug and to lose herself in strong, comforting arms, with maybe a kiss upon the top of her head and the softly whispered words, "You're forgiven, babygirl."

But, she didn't deserve that either.

Covering her face with both hands, Porscha burst into tears, and then she told him everything.

Chapter 5

He'd done it. He'd broke through her walls and finally she was opening up to him. And yet, as Everett stood there, listening while his little girl hitched and hiccuped and confessed her sins to him on the kind of wails he imagined might accompany newly-handed-down prison sentences, all sense of gleaned success evaporated away.

“Vetta is my sister, my twin!” the sobbing Little before him cried. “We swapped places b-because I have to hide and sh-she changed her mind and I didn't kn-know what to do and *my Daddy tried to kill me!*”

Clapping hands over her face, Ve—Porscha, his brain instantly corrected, wilted as she bawled until she'd folded herself almost in half.

And his Daddy arms just reacted. Before he knew he was going to do it, she was in his embrace and he was holding her, rocking her, staring in unblinking, barely comprehending silence at a warm, crackling fire he wasn't really seeing.

“What?” he heard himself croak.

“Why would he do that?” she wept. “What did I do that was so wrong?”

His Daddy hand automatically went to the back of her head, cupping her as he bent to press a kiss to the top of her head. He couldn't stop himself. He couldn't think either. "Who are you again?"

As if suddenly realizing who she was... who he was... and probably how cuttngly brutal not to mention unbelievable her confession was, Porscha jumped. She pushed away from him, though she didn't push very far. He didn't either, and that surprised him. He kept waiting for that pang of irrevocable hurt that should be hitting him at any moment right between the eyes if not squarely in the heart, but things were clicking in his mind way too fast for him to feel anything.

Except maybe incredulous.

Vetta had dumped him.

She hadn't even sent him a *Dear John Get Lost* text to do it.

She'd sent her twin sister to do it for her!

That bloody *insensitive* woman!

"P-Porscha," Ve—her sister whispered, her sad green eyes staring somberly up into his. "You can let me go now. I know you don't want to hold me."

Didn't he?

He stared back down at her, completely unable to tell, but his arms weren't letting go. That said something too.

Didn't it? He honestly didn't know, but he did know he'd been lied to.

He'd been *grossly* lied to. So, why wasn't he righteously pissed off right now?

Oh wait, here the anger came.

“What do you mean, safe place to hide?” he demanded, temper pricking at last. He couldn’t begin to tell what it was building over, but here it came, hot and rushing through him on a tidal wave he had no idea how to brace for.

So he listened while Porscha wrung her fingers and told him about her three-month whirlwind romance with a wannabe Daddy Dom so unworthy of the title that if only the man were standing in this office alongside his Little girl, Everett would cheerfully have killed him.

Wait... *his Little*?! How could he still be thinking like this? How about his devious Little *imposter* and why wasn’t he ready to wring her pretty neck?

Because her neck was still pretty when he looked at it. And because he wanted to hold her, god damn it, not launch her off the front lawn from a clown cannon. He wanted to dry the tears from the emerald-green eyes even now staring up into his, so wide and so fucking forlorn. Every inch of her screamed guilt, but those eyes of her begged forgiveness and damned if he didn’t want to grant it.

Scrubbing his hands back through his blond hair, Everett spun from her and tried to walk away. He made it two steps, then stopped.

He wasn’t about to examine his feelings too closely right now, because he already knew he hadn’t even begun to process everything she’d so far said.

“We really will have to re-do every conversation we’ve ever had,” he said, surprised that that was where his brain immediately went. He pinched the bridge of his nose, then sighed and turned to face her again. It was a wonder he hadn’t

guessed what was going on long before now; her face was doing a horrible job at hiding what she so obviously felt—guilt, sadness, more guilt... maybe a little bit of wonder considering he hadn't yet thrown her out on her ear.

"Y-you..." she whispered, a flicker of slim hope sparking in her eyes. "You still want to talk to me?"

He sighed again. Yes, but he'd be damned if he knew why. "First, know that I will protect you. I will keep you safe, no matter what you say next, but only for as long as you are honest with me. Lie to me again, just once and I don't care how insignificant of a lie it is, I will have you deported from my country and there will be no more aid. Is that crystal clear?"

"Aren't you mad at me?"

"Furious," he confirmed.

The guilt in her eyes mounted. "Oh."

She didn't look away, exactly, but her gaze did drop to his chest.

"Look at me," he told her, and her gaze immediately shot back to his. "No more lies," he commanded. "No matter what I ask. No matter how much you may or may not want to answer. There will be no more lies between us. Is that clear?"

"Crystal, Mr. Garrison... Ever—Mr. Garrison." She looked at her hands while it was all he could do not to be annoyed by her term of address.

He tried to hold onto his temper, but it was already fading. He'd been betrayed about as deeply as a man could be by the woman he'd invited into his home for the purpose of... well, wanting to build a relationship. The whole point of Vetta had been to see if they were a good match. She'd backed out

before she ever met him face-to-face, so obviously they weren't.

And now he had Porscha, and what was he supposed to do there?

What did he want to do?

“Do you want to know me?” he suddenly demanded.

She startled, blinking. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” he sighed, picking his way through a minefield of all the worst, politically incorrect things he knew better than to actually say. What he landed on wasn't much better. “I mean, you've seen me angry, concerned, kind. I've been... honored for the chances you've given for me to hold you. I hope I gave you at least a measure of... comfort?”

Her mouth rounded into an 'o' of understanding. “Mr. Garrison, I've never felt safer than when you're holding me. Maybe that's not comfort, exactly, but... after what I've done...”

He cupped her chin in his palm, stopping her before the already gathering storm of her tears could burst free again. “Listen to me very carefully.” Everett waited until she quieted before he continued. “Porscha Carr, would you do me the honor of staying with me at my estate for an indeterminate length of time, for the purpose of seeing if we might suit as Daddy and Little girl? I know this is fast. I know it's not ideal —”

“Yes,” she shocked them both by whispering. “B-but... Rick...”

“Will no longer have the freedom or anonymity to harm you again. I promise, the next time you see him, it will be at the trial that locks him away in a proper British prison for the

rest of his life.” Releasing her chin, he patted her hip, motioning her to stand. He climbed to his feet and took her small hand in his.

Porscha followed his lead, falling into step beside him, enjoying how his hand held onto hers as he led her from his study. He was taking her upstairs, back to her room, she realized. Why that felt like a disappointment after what she’d just revealed, after what she’d done to him, she couldn’t comprehend. She ought to be happy just knowing he wasn’t going to throw her out. And yet, that edging disappointment only grew stronger when her bedroom door came into sight.

She wasn’t ready to be parted from him, but it was only right she spend the night alone. Frankly, she was kind of surprised he hadn’t already found a reason to escape her company. Even more frankly, she ought to start bracing herself for tomorrow morning when, after a long night of thinking... and regretting, Everett might change his mind.

Not ten minutes after he proposed getting to know you better, seriously? her logical half chided.

But her Little side didn’t have a logical half, only insecurities gathered from every misadventure she’d ever had and hoarded away for moments just like this one. Maybe that’s why she was so shocked when she stopped by her door...

But Everett didn’t.

He reached the end of their arms midstride, but at only half his former speed. Her shoulder registered the gentle tug long before her brain realized he hadn’t let go of her hand.

His blond head turned, his bluer than blue eyes looking steadily into hers.

“Come,” he softly encouraged, though he did not tug her arm again. His fingers relaxed from hers, leaving only her grip on his fingers to keep their physical bond.

A corner of his mouth lifted, becoming a smile. “Come, ” he said again. “I don’t know about you, pet, but I think I’d like to hold you tonight. Nothing dreadfully kinky. No more spanking. Just you and me, and all the cuddles I believe we both need right now.”

Her heart lifted too, glowing with such warmth inside her that she could feel it, reaching through her on tendrils that warmed everywhere it went.

A slow thump of pure arousal pulsed once between her thighs and then went still. She took a step toward him and like magic his fingers closed back around her hand again.

She wasn’t walking, she was drifting along on clouds all the way from her door to his.

His room was far more elegant than hers, albeit in a very bachelor way. The plush white carpet was a good two inches deep. Everything else was tan. Tan drapes, tan furniture, tan bedspread. Even the picture on the wall above his padded headboard was black and white, with the only splash of color being the scarlet red of the handcuffs the silhouetted woman wore while sitting on her lover’s lap.

Her wrists and nipples both ached to wear handcuffs that pretty. Maybe painted in red glitter so it sparkled everywhere the sunshine hit it.

The soft click as the door latched shut behind her made her jump.

“Would you prefer the door open?” he asked.

Porscha tried to laugh it off. “I’m sorry, I know I’m being stupid.”

Blond eyebrow lifting, he frowned. “Are you testing Daddy’s resolve not to spank any more tonight? Because while I am firm in my resolve to spare your poor bottom further assault, my time first thing tomorrow morning is perfectly wide open.”

“I just... I know you need time and... healing and maybe—”

He moved so suddenly, cupping her cheek with one hand and lashing his arm around her waist, pulling her all the way in until she collided with his chest. Everything she saw became sparks and stars from the moment his lips touched hers.

“Porscha,” he murmured.

His kiss was ten thousand times better when the name he called was her own.

His fingers crept up her cheek into her hair. As he rounded the back of her scalp, his fingers closed into a fist, capturing her by her own hair.

She gasped, the pleasure sending a wave of tingles washing through her skin. They centered in her nipples as he broke from her lips, trailing heated kisses down her neck, flicking at her pulse.

She grabbed his shoulders, one knee buckling under her as he tore the shreds of her ripped nightie away, dropping it on the floor.

“Do you want me?” he demanded.

“Yes!” she gasped, only to gasp again when he cupped her naked breast in his hand, the heat of his mouth engulfing her

nipple.

She grabbed his head, holding him to her breast while he teased and flicked the tip with his tongue, then suckled, pulling sensations she'd never felt before from deep in her core.

In the movies, when guys picked up their women, they scooped them up in both arms, one arm under her knees and the other around her back. But that's not what Everett did. He ducked down, both strong arms wrapping around her legs just under the curve of her butt and lifted her straight up off her feet. His mouth was never far from her breast as he walked her around the foot of the bed to lay her down amid the pillows. Stripping off his shirt, he crawled onto the bed and over the top of her.

Her hands found his shoulders as they stared into one another's eyes.

“Green,” she blurted.

His lips twitched before he gave her a playfully admonishing frown. “A lady would let the gentleman ask first.”

“Sorry. Go ahead.”

“Apparently, we already know all about safewords. So, what color are you?”

“Green!”

“If you need to stop, I don't care what the reason, I expect you to say 'red' with the same force. I won't be mad if you want to wait,” he promised, “but I will be very angry if you need to stop and don't let me know. Got it?”

Swallowing, her pussy throbbed and ached, so empty and neglected that she could hardly keep from throwing him over onto his back, climbing onto his cock and riding him until neither one of them remembered who they were. “I don’t want to stop,” she assured him.

“You might change your mind. I’m going to try to be gentle, but if I can’t... I confess, from the moment you arrived, it’s not gentleness I think of when I fantasize about you. And if it’s too soon, god knows I’ll understand—”

“It’s not.” She wrapped her arms and then her legs around him. “And I don’t want gentle.”

She felt the shiver that ran through him. It sparked a shiver of her own as he lowered himself slowly over her, his tender kiss on her already flushed lips every bit as sweet as it was passionate. Kiss after increasingly hungry kiss melted her under the hardness of his lean body.

Porscha couldn’t stop touching him. He couldn’t seem to keep his hands off her, either, or his lips. He explored her body, leaving no inch of her unkissed or undiscovered. She squeaked when the heat of his mouth engulfed the lobe of her too-sensitive ear, laughed when he let his fingertips trace the arch of her foot, and when he spread her legs wide and lowered himself between them, there was no stopping the deeply guttural moan that escaped her when his lashing tongue parted her folds in search of her greedy clit.

“God!” she cried out when he found it.

“Everett,” he corrected with a lopsided grin. “But I like where you’re going with that. Shall we see how well the neighbors know my name by morning? Granted, they live four miles down the road. Don’t worry, love. I’m more than up for the challenge. Let’s see how loud we can get.”

Delighted laughter burst from her lips when he grabbed her by the hips and yanked her into solid contact with the titillating jut of his hard cock. She gasped at the pleasure just as a flicker of movement beyond Everett's shoulder caught her eye. One shadowy silhouette split into the shapes of two men. One held a long item above his head as he charged the bed.

The sound the man's bat made as it bounced off the back of Everett's head and shoulder was almost comical. The way Everett collapsed over her, wasn't.

She screamed, latching onto Everett, cradling his head in her hands as he lolled heavy and unconscious on top of her. "Everett? Everett!"

The two men grabbed her by her arms and one leg and dragged her out of bed. The first man raised his bat again, then everything went black.

Chapter 6

Everett came to with sunlight shining through his bedroom windows, sprawled across the bed all by himself. His head was throbbing, the pain so sharp he could barely open his eyes. Slowly, he reached for the back of his scalp and felt the stickiness of dried blood clumped in his hair and on his fingertips. He stared at the brownish-red tinge then lifted his head, noticing the emptiness of his bed. This time, he didn't for a second think she'd run away.

“Emerson!” he bellowed, wincing and grabbing his head at the same time. He crawled out of bed, staggering to find his clothes and pull them back on again.

“Porscha,” he yelled again and how terrible was it of him that his first thought was that she'd conked him over the head, leaving him just one more lie upon a mountainous stack of the same... right up until he saw a second patch of blood, this one mere feet from his with a downward, sideways smear where she had been dragged off the bed onto the floor.

He vaulted for the opposite side of the bed, following the smear but she was not lying on the carpet out of sight. Another spot of blood marred the pure white carpet where her head must have hit when she'd fallen.

“Emerson,” he bellowed, panic ripping through him.

Racing for the door, he fell before he reached it, his head so dizzy he could barely see. Fingers raking the carpet, he clawed his way up the door, somehow getting his feet back under him, he ran from the room.

The light of the hallway killed his eyes; killed his head. He swallowed past the nausea, shouting again and again for his estate manager as he staggered for the stairs.

Emerson found him first. “My lord, what—Jesus!”

Emerson’s eyes bulged as he took in the dried blood in Everett’s head, hands and even the side of his face. He fell up the stairs in his haste to grab Everett’s arm, helping him balance before Everett toppled head over heels all the way down to the first floor.

Grabbing the banister in both hands, Everett hung on tight. He closed his eyes, willing the world to stop spinning. “Call Constable Harris. They took Porscha.”

“Who’s Porscha? Who took her?”

He didn’t have time to explain.

Grabbing Emerson, Everett dug through his jacket pockets until he found the other man’s cellphone. Barely had he dialed 999 then did his estate manager pluck his phone back out of Everett’s hand.

“Yes,” Emerson said to whomever answered, rattling off their address in well-practiced calm. “I believe we need police and an ambulance... The nature of our emergency?”

“I need Constable Harris,” Everett groaned, cradling his head. “And a bucket. I think I’m going to be sick.”

Clapping his hand over the mouthpiece, Emerson yelled back down the staircase in the most non-professional show of barely contained panic he'd ever seen from his prim- and-proper estate manager. "Mrs. Morris! We have a situation!"

Within seconds, the first of his household staff raced into the entryway below. Mary took one look at him and screamed. She fled back through the house, her cries for the housekeeper growing fainter by the second.

Nothing was getting done; no one was getting summoned; and with every second that passed, all Everett could feel—beside his own throbbing too-small skull—was Porscha being dragged that much further away.

"Phone," he snapped, and tried to take it away from Emerson.

"Police and ambulance are on the way," he relayed, but Everett took the phone anyway. Hanging up on the existing call, he redialed.

"I haven't had so much as a single cup of morning tea," Constable Harris said by way of a greeting when he came on the line. "This is against Geneva Conventions, that's what this is."

"Porscha is gone," Everett told him, gingerly feeling the bump on his head.

"I'm sorry. Who's Porscha?"

"The lady we rescued from the roadside wasn't Vetta. It was her twin sister, Porscha. I'll tell you later. We were attacked in our bed last night. She's hurt." Looking at the blood on his fingers again, he wryly added, "So am I."

The constable was instantly all business. "I'm on my way with an ambulance."

“I don’t need one,” Everett muttered.

“Uh huh. If you’re anything like the blokes in my precinct, you’re saying that because you’re a lousy patient, not because you don’t need one.”

“I won’t be here when it arrives,” Everett restated.

“Where will you be?”

“The parliament building. My family will be there. I think I know who has her, and I’ll need all the help I can get to reach her before he kills her. If she’s even still alive.”

“Why do I get the feeling you’re not being overly dramatic?”

“Get my car,” he told Emerson, who still hovered beside him, watching the one-sided conversation with a deep frown of concern and disapproval.

“Everett,” Emerson sighed. “You need to be—”

“Obeyed,” Everett cut in sharply. “Get my car. Now.”

“Fill me in when I get there,” Harris said into the phone.

And Everett did. He told the constable everything, from the fiancée switch to what Porscha had told him about Rick, to what little he remembered of the night before when Porscha had clamped onto him and screamed.

The sound she had made haunted him. A constant cry in his mind, he could barely keep himself under tight control. Everything in him wanted to move, to run, to get to her. Was it already too late?

He tried to block that thought from his mind, but it lingered. Like the scream and his pulsing headache, he couldn’t make himself stop thinking it over and over again.

Especially when the ambulance arrived and Everett was forced to sit—fucking *sit*, at a time like this—while the EMPs looked him over.

“You have a mild concussion,” one tried to tell him. “We’re going to take you to hospital to get checked out.”

Not a chance, Everett decided, though he knew he had a hell of an argument waiting for him on that count. Already, the constable had offered to drive him to hospital for them, until he was seen. So had Margo, a member of the king’s private secretary’s office, who had spent years keeping the royal household updated on family matters such as this. King Charles wasn’t on the premises, but Everett knew he’d been told when his cellphone rang and Charles’ voice came through on the other end. “You were attacked? In your own home?”

“They took my fiancée,” Everett relayed. “He’s going to kill her if I can’t get there in time.”

“He who?”

When the king asked a question, people answered, and so Everett did. In as few words as possible, trying to save time, he told King Charles what he knew of Rick.

“An American?” On Everett’s confirmation, the king then said, “I’ll make some phone calls. We’ll find them.”

From his mouth to God’s ear was all Everett could think as for the next forty minutes SEG and RaSP officers came and went and Everett was blocked into a borrowed office where it was made clear that was exactly where the king wanted him until further notice.

Everett raged, the need to do *something* eating him alive, but no matter what he said or tried to do, Margo sagely replied, “I know, but for now we need to wait. What good does

it do to run off half-cocked when we don't yet know what direction to shoot?"

Everett hated that she was right. He hated even more the visual scenarios, any and everything that could be happening to Porscha right now, when he was helpless to help her.

His head hurt.

His arms hurt more, the need to have her safely tucked into them so overpowering he almost cried.

Not here. Not at this moment. For all that he was a modern man and saw nothing wrong with men displaying their deepest most insecure emotions, he'd be damned if he got caught sitting here, bawling in his hands, when someone finally deigned to update him on the ongoing search.

Emerson stayed with him the whole time, anxious and pacing the length of the room. The only visitor they had was an SEG officer in a grey and black suit, who brought tea and biscuits and a dollop of strawberry jam in a small crock to the side.

"What news?" Emerson anxiously asked.

"None that I've heard, sir." Setting the tea tray on the desk, the officer excused himself from the room and respectfully closed the door behind him.

Staring at the tea tray, Everett sat there, every what if and bad resolution spinning through his head.

"I can't do this." Standing, Everett marched to the door only to find them locked. He banged his fist on it, but no one answered. He knew this place like he knew the nursery where he'd been raised. *Someone* was out there. He banged again, this time not stopping until the lock clicked and the door finally opened. That the man he now faced held rank was as

clear by his wry expression as it was that he'd had plenty of experience dealing with the impatience of minor royalty.

Which Everett barely qualified as being.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I am under orders to keep you here until otherwise notified by His Majesty The King."

"I want to know what's happening," he insisted. "What's being done to find my fiancée?"

"As soon as I know something, you'll know it. But no one wants an international incident, and so you will be in this room until we locate her. I can, however, tell you, we have the borders locked down, as well as the airport and cruise liners. If she's still in the country, she won't be leaving and neither will anyone with her. Now, if you please..."

He gestured for Everett to step back from the door and then closed it as soon as Everett complied.

He'd never felt more useless in his life.

Emerson expelled his own frustration in a sigh. "You'll pardon me for saying, but that's a bit shitty."

Everett snorted. "Welcome to royalty. I can't believe we're stuck in here like a pair of ill-behaved lads awaiting our father's imminent arrival."

"So long as they call my father and not my mother. You?"

"My father's long passed. I fear no one now." Crossing the room, Everett paused to look out the window. He checked the time. Damn. It was almost ten o'clock. Never had time felt more precious and here he was, wasting it.

"What are you doing?" Emerson asked as Everett unlocked the window and tested the latch. The window opened as smoothly as one would expect from a parliament building.

Sticking his head well out, Everett tried to judge how likely a pair of broken ankles might be if he just jumped for it.

And go where? To do what?

Everyone in a position to help him was either in this building or had been notified of the issue. Isolated in this room, he still knew the fact that Charles had called him directly meant his government was taking this seriously. A foreigner had come into their country and kidnapped, in essence, a member of the royal family. Of course it was being taken seriously.

Hesitant steps brought his land manager to the window as well. “What in the world are you thinking?” He peeked outside too, seeming to judge the distance to the ground and not at all enthused about what he saw.

Everett had moved on from the height. It was all the people outside he was most worried about. It was creeping up on 11 o'clock and the tourists were out in force, as well as regular business men and women and, oh look, a school field trip. It only took one person with a ready camera and he'd go down in history as the first idiot royal to make the evening and probably international news, for leaping out a third story parliament window. He could practically see the memes now: *'Parliament's in session'* written across the top of a photo of him forever frozen in a goofy position midfall and the elongated for emphasis cry 'Nooooo' following him to the ground.

In the middle of broad daylight, no less.

“Didn't the American serial killer, Ted Bundy, do something similar to this?” Emerson asked.

Great. Everett could see those memes now too.

He drew a deep breath, steeling himself. So be it. He'd far rather risk broken bones than be stuck in this room with nothing to do but sip morning tea. But just as he slung his leg over the windowsill and was about to duck under the sash, the door to the room suddenly swung open.

"We found them," the head of SEG announced, then stopped two steps into the room when he saw Everett.

"Where is she?" Quickly coming back in through the window, Everett rushed to meet him. "Take me to her."

"I've been asked to," the man calmly replied. "Not only that, but I fully intend to let you hit him, if you are so inclined. God knows, if it were my wife this bloke absconded with aboard a cruise liner, I'd probably want to kill him." He held up a finger. "One time. Then he'll be taken into custody and he'll be in the king's court the next time you see him."

Everett nodded, but just the thought of Rick and finally being able to get his hands on the man, he knew, he wasn't only going to take that one hit, he was going to make it count.

Porscha woke slowly. The back of her head where Rick's flunky had hit her was throbbing. She felt nauseous, as groggy as if she were waking up after surgery. Had he drugged her? Her thoughts refused to gather, not even enough to figure out what had happened. And when she finally forced open her eyes, she found herself lying on a soothing blue-carpeted floor, sandwiched in between a bed and the closed curtains of a window.

Her nausea grew. The whole room felt as it were rocking, a gentle up and down motion she'd never felt before. It wasn't

until she tried to sit up that she realized she was bound hand and foot, with her wrists tied to her ankles.

She groaned and closed her eyes again.

“You’re awake,” a familiar voice commented.

Porscha worked her eyes open again, blinking to adjust to the painful light that only made her head ache more. All she could see was the bed and an elegant nightstand, crowned with a bona-fide Tiffany-stained glass lamp and a clock that read 1 pm.

“You have been such a pain in my ass.”

Her eyes tried to drift closed again. She fought to keep them open and then to stay focused as a masculine shape came around the foot of the bed to peer at her.

She looked at him, so drugged she felt no fear, only a mild irritation that she couldn’t move.

“You did well for yourself,” Rick continued. “Or rather, your sister did well. Not that she followed any of our plans. I mean, the money your father left is a sizeable fortune on its own, but I can’t believe Vetta hooked a member of the British monarchy. Of course, if she’d stuck to the plan, she’d have married him, offed him like I plan to do with you, and we’d have been set up for life. Rather, I would. Finally. And once I married and Vetta was dead, it would all be mine.”

She wished he would stop talking, her head hurt so much. “Shhh,” she rasped, her mouth and throat both dry to the point she couldn’t summon up the spit to swallow.

“Oh, I’m sorry.” He sounded amused.

“Water,” she rasped again.

“So you can throw up again? To be honest, I think I overdosed you on the chloroform, but it did keep you sleeping long enough for me to get you on board without too many questions. I’m honestly surprised we weren’t stopped at boarding. Apparently, they must deal with drunk passengers often enough that we barely got a side look.”

Good for him.

“Do you know how many people go missing off cruise ships every year? Ships this big are like their own country, perfectly positioned in international waters where jurisdiction can be a real problem. Good news for me, I suppose. Not so much for you. I don’t even need to take you up onto deck once it gets dark enough to drop you overboard without anyone noticing. We’ve got our own balcony. All I have to do is open the sliding door and heave you over the rail.”

Good. At least she wouldn’t have to hear him monologuing anymore.

“Water,” she rasped again.

“Are you going to keep it down, babygirl?”

Not a chance.

Swallowing convulsively, her mouth tasting as if she’d licked out the interior of a dirty shoe, she nodded.

Rick vanished back around the bed. Returning moments later, he had her old bottle in his hand. Bending over her, he tucked the bottle’s soft nipple between her lips. Drops of apple juice touched her tongue. Dry as she was, it was the sweetest nectar she’d ever tasted. From the top of the bed where she couldn’t see, he took down a soft white teddy bear and lay it beside her before snapping out the length of a Moana lap blanket before draping it over her.

She sucked weakly at the bottle, but only drank maybe an inch of liquid out of it before he took it away from her.

She whimpered.

“*Hush, little baby, don’t say a word,*” Rick began to sing in that warm Daddy voice of his that had once captured her Little heart. “*Papa’s going to buy you a mockingbird.*”

He wasn’t her papa, she wanted so badly to tell him, but a soft cloth and his hand covered her nose and mouth. It stung her nose and throat to breathe, but she fell back to sleep before she could complain.

“Shit,” Rick said, startling Porscha awake again. The clock on the end table now read 3:47 pm and there were lines of sunlight moving across the wall much faster than a setting sun should move.

Too early for the sun to set, her fuzzy brain had just enough coherency to realize. She could barely get her eyes open far enough to see her one-time Daddy peeking out through the drapes.

“We’re turning around,” he muttered under his breath. “Shit, shit *shit!*”

There was some sort of excitement in the hall. She could hear loud voices exclaiming, though the words were too muffled for her to make out. Rick suddenly looked up, practically plastering his cheek to the window glass as he craned to see something she couldn’t. A minute later, however, the unmistakable whup-whup-whup of a helicopter touched her ears.

“Shit,” Rick said again.

A sudden pounding at their door had him jerking around to stare at it.

“Police, open the door!”

Rick whipped around even further, staring down at her first and then the balcony.

The police pounded on the door again. “Last warning! Open up or we’re coming in, mate.”

Rick jumped into action, whipping open the drapes and yanking open the doors. He grabbed her off the floor, heaving her up into the air.

He wasn’t about to get caught with her in his room, Porscha realized. There was no panic, only a drugged acceptance that she was about to get hurled into the ocean. The salty sea wind pulled at her hair as she and the Moana blanket he had wrapped around her leaned over the rail.

Everett...

“Help,” she whispered, staring groggily up the length of the ship to where it touched the sky, stretching seemingly miles up to where it touched the sky. Rick had rented a room far below the top deck, relatively close to the water. Looking down, she noted the distance to splash down—she closed her eyes—was still a good sixty feet down, if not more. She was going to die. Funny, how she wasn’t scared.

The door to their room suddenly burst open, and Rick didn’t hesitate. In the next second, she was airborne as he let her go.

“Jesus!” Everett shouted, all but knocking SEG man, Alistair Bailey, flat on his face as he charged the balcony. It had just been a flash of cloth and skin that he had seen drop beyond Rick and the railing, and it had happened so fast, faster than a blink before it was gone. Like a figment of his imagination, except he knew better. “Porscha!”

Rick got out of his way as over the railing Everett leapt.

“Man overboard!” someone shouted, the voice growing distant just before Everett hit the water.

Warm ocean currents weren't what England was known for. Neither was Greenland, and in was this midway point between the two countries where they'd caught up with the cruise liner, the temperatures were a balmy 38-degrees. Shrinkage was a thing, and the absolute cold momentarily immobilized him. Then he saw her, a barely distinguishable pale shape sinking into the blue-black depths below him.

He dove, his lungs and unprepared ears aching under the rapidly increasing pressure. Thank God his father had forced him into swimming competitions throughout his teenaged years. Her paleness grew darker to make out the closer he got to her.

Breathe, his body pleaded. He ignored the need, the tips of his straining fingers finally brushing into the cobwebby softness of Porscha's hair. He grabbed, yanking her up into his arms. Tied into a cannonball dragging in the water, he wrapped his arm around her waist and swum like hell for the surface.

His head pounded from lack of air, prickling pain stinging his ears and behind his eyes as he tried to expel what was in his lungs in slow, even bubbly-bursts. Self-preservation was a panic all its own, and despite his determination it was

exploding inside of him. His chest began to jerk, his lungs fighting Everett's will not to breathe.

He was going to die.

But he'd be damned if this was how Porscha met her end.

In the next second, he broke the surface, sucking air the second his nose and lips left the water. Someone on the ship above exclaimed and the whirring of helicopter blades grew deafening as downward driving air turned the calm waves choppy.

Everett wrestled Porscha's head above water, kicking his strong legs to keep them floating while her head lolled on his shoulder. Her mouth was open and her eyes closed. She wasn't breathing.

A body in a black diving suit suddenly hit the water not twenty feet from him. When the rescuer resurfaced, he'd already cut that distance in half.

"She's not breathing!" Everett shouted as the man reached them.

Grabbing a knife from his utility belt, the rescue diver cut through the ropes that bound Porscha wrists to ankles. "Keep treading water," he ordered Everett as he grabbed onto both him and Porscha.

Within minutes, they were all hauled from the sea into a hoist basket that carried them straight up to the top deck of the cruise ship where the worst moment of Everett's life quickly redefined itself. He watched helplessly as the rescue crew went to work on Porscha, pumping on her unresponsive chest while she lay utterly limp on the deck floor.

Babygirl...

Everett covered his mouth, the fury of every emotion he'd experienced since meeting her swelled and overflowed. He didn't care how many passengers were on-deck. He didn't care about the clicking of all the cameras, or the filming of cellphone videos that would surely make the evening news worldwide. When Porscha suddenly jerked, her back bowing up off the floor as she spewed ocean water was nothing short of magical.

He knocked people out of his way, and didn't stop moving until he'd grabbed Porscha up into his arms. He held her, rocking her as close to his body as he could hold her.

"Daddy," she rasped, as her eyes drifted closed again.

"Daddy's got you," he assured.

"Daddy..." She reached up with a wobbly hand, taking hold of his shirt and tugging on it in her sleepy insistence.

"What is it, my little duck?"

"Please tell people to stop hitting me on the head."

And he was never, ever again going to let her go.

Epilogue

Two months later...

Everett stood on the dais beside his family's Protestant Anglican bishop, adjusting his grey tuxedo and watching the door to the chapel like a hawk.

So much for waiting a year, learning one another over a long period and taking their time to decide if they were right for one another. Practically from the moment they were both released from the hospital—her with a concussion and chloroform poisoning; he with a broken clavicle and a mild case of the bends—he'd made himself inseparable from her.

Was he a little overprotective now? Yes. A little paranoid whenever they went out together and people approached her? Guilty. And he wasn't about to change anytime soon, on either account. But for all that, he also knew without a shred of a doubt there would never be anyone other than Porscha for him. She was the light of his life, the heat in his bed, the woman who spent most days valiantly throwing herself into her new role as the face and voice speaking out for the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the babygirl who at other times crawled into his lap for reassurance and hugs.

He personally thought the National Coalition could wait for a few more months. In his opinion, the best thing for Porscha would be for her to continue seeing her therapist while she spent the rest of her time safely sequestered in the nursery he'd made for Vetta but thoroughly redecorated for Porscha. She needed time to color, to play hostess with her stuffies at 'let's pretend' tea parties with real china dishes and sparkly princess dresses the likes of which only Disney characters could get away with wearing in this day and age. He'd bought her a tiara with real diamonds only to find out she was a cardboard box and markers kind of girl.

He wouldn't have her any other way.

Off to the side, the church organ began to play the intro of a wedding march and the opening entrance doors at the back of the chapel opened.

His breath caught as Porscha slipped into the room, alone, without anyone to give her away, and a smile that said she clearly didn't care on her beautiful face.

"I'm not being given away," she'd said back in the hospital when he'd first broached the subject of marriage and she'd... well, she'd yawned. But then, she was on a whole new cocktail of medication, this time hospital approved. Then she'd taken a nap, which is what he still preferred to think of those scary unconscious spells that she'd spent those first three days drifting in and out of.

Rick's homemade chloroform had been a bastard and a half to get out of her system, and they'd been lucky. Porscha was still undergoing regular tests to make sure her brain and other organs remained in good working order, and there were medications that she'd have to take for at least the foreseeable

future if not the rest of her life. But she was alive, and judging by the frequency of her smiles, she was happy.

Except when she had nightmares. Then he would do for her what he did for himself, because he still had them too: he held her, where she belonged, right next to his heart.

There was nothing like very nearly losing a person to make one realize the depths to which one loved them. And somewhere among all those initial lies, just enough of the truth of Porscha must have filtered through the deception, because he didn't just care for her. She was his heart, the other half of his soul, the most important being in his life and damn, had that ever happened fast.

But, more important than that, she was his Little girl. Not the first and only one he'd ever had, but definitely the last.

Daddy's Little imposter.

He would love her for the rest of his life.

The End

About Maren Smith

I am a Little, coffee fanatic, dog and cat mom, was an administrator for six years at my local BDSM dungeon, and have since become a Utah resident. An International and USA Bestselling Author several times over, I have penned more than 160 novels, novellas and short stories, and am the author of the Masters of the Castle and Daddy's Little series.

I also write under the names of Denise Hall, Darla Phelps, and Penny Alley.

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Daddy's Discipline by Stella Moore

A MF story by Stella Moore

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Chapter 1

MaryAnn

“Finally!” Flopping backwards onto her best friend’s pretty blue couch, in the equally pretty living room of Olivia’s beach house, Shannon blew out an exaggeratedly loud breath. “I thought we’d never make it here.”

“Traffic wasn’t *that* bad, Shay,” Olivia said with a roll of her eyes. From her spot on the armchair opposite the couch, MaryAnn had to lift a hand to cover her own laughter at the pair’s antics. “It was positively flying for a holiday weekend.”

“I’m not talking about traffic and you know it.” With her lips pushed out into a pretty pout, Shannon propped herself up on her elbows and leveled a glare at Olivia. “The men. I thought they’d never let us out of there. I swear by the time we left they were just making up rules to annoy us.”

Though she never would have admitted it out loud, MaryAnn had wondered the same thing. Rules around sunblock and locking the doors made sense, but when Bryant had started in with a list of acceptable snack foods, MaryAnn had found herself resisting the urge to roll her eyes. If it hadn’t been for her own eagle-eyed Daddy standing right beside

Bryant, she wasn't sure she would have been able to keep her reactions to herself.

“Well, we're here now, and what they don't know won't hurt us.” Olivia's grin turned mischievous. “It's not like they're actually going to be watching us to make sure we're not gorging ourselves on snack food. As long as nobody gets hurt, they'll be none the wiser. Which, unfortunately for you, means you do actually have to wear sunblock.”

“Ugh!” Shannon fell back against the couch once more and scowled up at the ceiling. “It's not my fault I burn before I tan, unlike you two. I might hate you both a little bit while we're here, just so you're aware.”

An old familiar fear tightened around MaryAnn's chest, but she forced herself to drag in a deep breath and will it away. *She didn't mean that. She doesn't hate you. She's your friend.*

The tightness eventually eased, but some of the fear still settled like a rock in her stomach. MaryAnn had never been great at making friends under the best of circumstances, so it was still a little unbelievable to her that these two gorgeous, successful women wanted her around.

Especially since she'd nearly gotten both of them killed. Twice, for Shannon.

“You don't hate us. You're just mad at your Daddy, and you're even more mad that he's right,” Olivia teased. “But you can be mad at him when we get home. There's no pouting at the beach. So come on, let's go get some sun and then eat our weight in junk food!”

Grabbing both of Shannon's hands in hers, Olivia pulled the blonde bombshell to her feet. With a whoop, they took off

toward the back door, pausing only when Olivia seemed to realize MaryAnn wasn't right behind them. "You coming?"

"I, um... shouldn't we unpack and stuff, first?" She was stalling, but now that they were here, she wasn't sure how to tell her friends about her Big Secret.

"Nope." With a happy giggle, Olivia marched back to the living room and clamped a hand over MaryAnn's wrist. "Being responsible can wait until we get back home. Now let's *go*, before I spank you both myself!"

The laugh that burst out of MaryAnn was nervous and strained, but Olivia didn't seem to notice as she dragged MaryAnn to the water's edge.

"Dammit! Be right back," Olivia announced with an aggravated sigh, turning on her heel and trudging back up to the house.

With a shrug for the sudden departure, Shannon stripped down to her lime green bikini and ran straight into a crashing wave. Panic hammered at MaryAnn's chest as her friend disappeared under the water for what felt like an eternity. It only eased somewhat when Shannon's blonde hair popped back into view.

"I bet she didn't even put on sunblock first."

MaryAnn jumped at the unexpected sound of Olivia's voice right beside her. "Oh! I thought you went back inside."

"What? Oh, no, we forgot to close the back door. And I am not willing to risk a date with my Daddy's belt over a stupid door, so I went back to lock it."

"Good idea." Just barely resisting the urge to reach back and rub her own bottom at the reminder of the punishments

their Daddies had promised if they broke any of the ‘safety’ rules, MaryAnn forced a smile. “Thanks for remembering.”

“Don’t mention it. Come on, we’ve only got a couple hours of daylight left and you know what the Daddies said.”

“Not a toe in the water after the sun goes down,” MaryAnn parroted obediently.

“Exactly. Last one in is a rotten egg!”

Shedding her clothes to reveal a bright pink bikini that put all of her generous curves on display, Olivia let out another whoop of excitement and ran for the water. Well, if you could call it running. It really looked to MaryAnn more like a lot of slipping and sliding in the constantly shifting sand.

Nobody had told her just walking on the beach would be such a workout.

Of course, they probably hadn’t thought to mention it because none of them knew she’d never actually been to the beach before. It wasn’t that she’d *lied* per se, she just hadn’t volunteered that information when they’d been planning this trip. And nobody, not even her Daddy, had bothered to ask.

Not that it would save her bottom if he ever found out about her little deception. Especially since she was one hundred percent certain that he would consider it not only dishonest, but dangerous as well.

Ugh.

Maybe she should come clean and go back inside. If she didn’t actually get in the water, her Daddy wouldn’t have any reason to punish her. Right?

But it looked so inviting, in a scary kind of way. She hadn’t realized before just how huge the ocean really was.

Terrifyingly huge, and still it called to her just as clearly as her friends were as they stood in the crashing waves, waiting for her to join them.

It wasn't like she couldn't *swim*. She'd just only ever done it in a pool. Where her feet could touch the bottom. And where the water wasn't actively trying to kill her.

Still, Olivia and Shannon knew what they were doing. And there was a lifeguard on duty, even if they were a little ways down the beach.

“Stop being such a baby.” Muttering darkly to herself, MaryAnn yanked her dress up over her head and tossed it aside. She was pretty sure she looked even less graceful than Olivia had as she marched down to the edge of the water, but she tried not to think about the spectacle she must be making of herself.

“Finally!” Shannon called with a grin as MaryAnn stepped hesitantly into the surf.

The tide rolled in, covering her feet, and MaryAnn squealed at the icy shock of the water. “Oh! It's so cold!”

Head thrown back, Olivia let out a loud, delighted laugh. “It always is, at first! The best way to get used to it is to just jump right in.”

“I'm not sure the science backs you up on that,” MaryAnn mumbled, but she forced herself to take a few more steps forward, fighting back the urge to scream as the cold water crashed around her again.

“Jeez, girl, when was the last time you were at the beach?” Planting her hands on her hips, Shannon shook her head in mock dismay. “Out here acting like you've never seen the ocean before.”

The sun didn't have anything to do with the heat suddenly infusing MaryAnn's cheeks. "Of course I've seen the ocean. Don't be silly."

"Then why do you look so nervous? Wait." Grabbing Olivia's hand, Shannon dragged her up to where MaryAnn was still standing in the ankle-deep tide. "MaryAnn. Be straight with us. Is this your first time at the beach?"

Shit shit shit. Unable to look her friends in the eye, MaryAnn lowered her gaze to the water lapping at her ankles. "Um. Well. Technically, yes."

While Shannon let out a string of curse words that would make a sailor blush, Olivia just sighed. "Does Dean know?"

"He only ever asked if I knew how to swim. Which I do."

"Uh huh. And when was the last time you went swimming?" Shannon asked, her tone dripping with suspicion.

"Umm..." Now that she actually had to think about it, she wasn't sure. "I mean, I remember going to the pool as a kid. My mom would take us sometimes."

When Olivia spoke again, it was a tossup as to whether she sounded more annoyed or sympathetic. "You know you're going to get spanked so freaking hard, right?"

MaryAnn shrugged, finally risking a glance up at her friends. "I was kinda hoping it wouldn't be a big deal."

Throwing her hands in the air, Shannon paced toward the water and then back. "Jesus Christ. You can't possibly be that naïve. You really think your super-overprotective Daddy is just going to be cool with you hiding not only your minimal experience with swimming in general, but also your complete lack of experience with swimming in the ocean? Where you

could easily get knocked off balance by a wave and stuck underwater? What were you thinking?"

Tears pricked at MaryAnn's eyes. "I was thinking I really wanted to come with you guys and I was worried he wouldn't let me if he knew I wasn't a very strong swimmer."

"That's actually really sweet." Wrapping her arms around MaryAnn's waist, Olivia squeezed her tightly. "Isn't that sweet, Shay?"

"Sweet? She's gonna get us all killed!"

"No, I won't, I swear. If I get found out, it's on me. I'll just lie and say you guys didn't know anything about it. Cross my heart."

"Fine." Blowing out a breath, Shannon jabbed a finger in MaryAnn's direction. "But you don't go anywhere near that water without me and Olivia around, or I swear I'll beat your ass myself before I tattle on you to your Daddy. Got it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Good." Shannon grinned, and grabbed MaryAnn's hand, tugging her toward the waves. "Now, let's go pop your ocean cherry."

Dean

Twenty minutes. They'd been at the beach house for twenty minutes, and hadn't bothered to call to let anyone know they'd arrived safely like they'd agreed to do when they'd first asked about planning this trip. Dean's cock twitched at the thought of

reddening his naughty little girl's backside when she got home. While she'd been plotting outfits and gushing about the different activities they had planned, he'd been daydreaming about her return.

Even without all the extra rules that had been put in place for their weekend away, it was pretty much inevitable that the girls would get themselves into some kind of trouble. The only question was how *much* trouble, and he'd kept himself plenty busy planning out different punishments for his babygirl.

"I'm going to call them." Reaching into his pocket, Bryant yanked out his phone, glaring at the screen as if the phone itself was responsible for his Little girl's lack of communication.

Dean sipped his whiskey as Bryant paced the living room floor, his expression growing darker with every passing second before he finally growled, "You are in so much trouble, princess. Call me."

Stabbing at the screen with his thumb, Bryant continued to pace the floor. "I knew this was a bad idea. They don't follow the rules when we're around. Why did we think they would follow them when we're two hours away?"

"I didn't," James replied easily, shrugging when Bryant turned a murderous glare on him. "Granted, I figured they'd make it more than a few hours without getting in trouble, but I had no delusions that they'd last an entire three-day weekend without earning themselves at least one serious punishment."

Dean coughed lightly to cover his urge to laugh when Bryant snarled at his brother. "Then why did we let them go?"

"Because they needed it." It was Dean's turn to shrug when Bryant shifted his stony gaze to him. "They need a

chance to get to know each other without us hovering, and in a relaxing environment. Look, the app shows all their phones are at the house. Most likely, they're perfectly fine and they just got caught up in the excitement and forgot to call."

"'Most likely' isn't good enough. I just need to know she's okay."

Sympathy pushed Dean to his feet to clasp a hand on his friend's shoulder. "She's safe. He can't hurt her anymore."

He couldn't blame Bryant for being jumpy, even more so than the rest of them. Twice, his Little girl had been kidnapped and tortured by a madman. Though they'd all had their own brush with losing the women they loved and were all probably a bit more overprotective than necessary now that the threat had been eliminated, Bryant was easily the worst of the three.

"I know." Puffing out his cheeks, Bryant let out a long, slow breath. "I'd just feel better if I could hear her voice."

"I might be able to help with that."

Chapter 2

MaryAnn

The ocean was a monster. A living thing intent on devouring any who dared to step even one foot in her waters.

And MaryAnn was head over heels in love with her.

Dropping onto her towel, she fell backwards, staring up at the slowly darkening sky as she dragged in deep breaths and willed life back into her limp extremities. “Holy crap. I wasn’t expecting that to be such a workout.”

“I always forget how exhausting it is,” Olivia agreed with a weak laugh. “Think we could pay someone to carry us back to the house?”

A noise off to their right caught MaryAnn’s attention and she turned to see a golf cart headed straight for them. “Maybe those guys could give us a lift.”

“Shit. It’s the cops.” Despite the fact they weren’t doing anything wrong, there was an excited edge to Shannon’s voice. “Everyone just play it cool.”

“Evening, ladies.” Without stepping out of the cart, the taller of the two officers grinned down at them. “Are any of

you Shannon Wright, by chance?”

Without bothering to sit up, Shannon waved a hand. “I’m Shannon. Is there a problem, officer?”

“No, ma’am. Friend of mine just asked me to give you a message to call your father.”

“My father?” Shannon frowned. “Why would... oh my god. I’m going to *kill* that asshole.”

Chuckling, the officer shook his head. “I’m just going to pretend we didn’t hear that. Have a good evening, ladies.”

The cart took off again as Shannon jumped to her feet and stormed toward the house. Olivia and MaryAnn scrambled to gather up their towels and hurry after her.

They found her standing in the middle of the kitchen, still dripping water, with her phone pressed to her ear and a thunderous expression on her face. “Bryant Monroe, what the hell were you thinking? I can’t believe you had the cops come tell me to call my Daddy! You are such an... what?”

Little by little, the fury drained from Shannon’s expression. “Shit. We were so excited when we got here, we just forgot. Yes, but that still doesn’t give you the right to call the cops on us!”

What had they forgotten? MaryAnne glanced over at Olivia, whose eyes were wide in her suddenly pale face.

And then it hit her. They were supposed to call their Daddies as soon as they got to the house, to let them know they’d made it safely.

“Uh oh,” MaryAnn muttered quietly.

Groaning, Olivia let her head fall back. “I know. I figured we’d make it through the night without breaking any rules, at

least. Dammit.”

Shannon tilted the bottom of the phone away from her mouth, her expression having softened into apologetic lines. “Your Daddies want you to call them, too.”

Crap.

MaryAnn skirted around Shannon to grab her phone from her purse before making her way out onto the back deck and closing the door after herself. Swiping open the screen, she winced at the three missed calls and single text.

Did you forget something, naughty girl? Call me. I love you.

With a heavy sigh, she hit the button to dial his number and lifted the phone to her ear. He answered on the first ring, amusement lacing his tone. “Hey, babygirl. Having a good time?”

“I’m sorry,” she blurted out, blinking back the tears that had sprung to her eyes at the sound of his voice. “We got here and we wanted to get in the water before it got dark and we were so excited we just forgot.”

“Relax, baby. I’m not mad.”

“Oh. You’re not?”

“No. You are definitely getting that naughty little bottom spanked when you get back, though.”

“But you just said you weren’t mad!” She was whining, but she’d gotten over being embarrassed about it months ago. Her Daddy had made it clear he loved her Little side just as

much as the rest of her, so there was no reason for her to feel any shame over it.

“I’m not. But you did break a rule, and I’ve been daydreaming about turning that cute butt of yours red as soon as I see you again. I miss my babygirl.”

Warmth filled her as the band of tension around her chest eased. “I miss you too, Daddy.”

“Are you girls having a good time? Other than the visit from my friends,” he added with a chuckle.

“Oh my god, *you* called them? Daddy! That was so embarrassing!”

“Well, if you’d done what you were supposed to, I wouldn’t have had to call them. You know Bryant worries.”

Guilt twisted her stomach into a knot. Bryant worried because of her. Because she was responsible for Shannon nearly getting killed on two separate occasions. It was a wonder he could stand to look at her these days. “Will you tell him I’m really sorry?”

“I’ll pass it along. You go have fun, and I’ll see you when you get home. Oh, and MaryAnn?”

“Yes, Daddy?”

“I want you to spend the next few days thinking about how Daddy is going to spank your bare bottom and then fuck you until you come so many times you can’t think straight when you get home. But keep your hands off that sweet little pussy while you think about me. Understood?”

Dammit. It was going to be a long weekend. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. I love you. Behave yourself.”

“I love you, too. Bye, Daddy.”

The call ended, but instead of joining her friends inside, she took a moment to stare out over the ocean. With nothing but the sound of the waves crashing against the shore and the sky turning pink above her, she'd never felt more at peace. Even knowing she had a sort of punishment waiting for her at home couldn't mar the perfect beauty of that moment.

At just the thought of going over her Daddy's lap, her clit throbbed in time with her heartbeat, and she nearly groaned. He knew exactly what he was doing, telling her to think about her impending punishment without letting her touch herself. By the time they made their way back to Baltimore, she was going to be an aching, needy mess.

Which was exactly how he liked her.

Doing her best to push those thoughts aside, she turned and made her way back into the living room where she found Olivia perched on the couch. Obviously, her conversation with James hadn't been very long, since she'd had time to change back into real clothes and wrestle her mass of curls up into a messy bun atop her head.

“Hey.” The smile she flashed MaryAnn was filled with sympathy. “Was Dean really mad?”

“No, actually. He didn't seem upset at all.”

“Lucky,” Olivia said with a sigh. “James lectured me for a solid five minutes about how the rules they gave us are there for a reason and how if we couldn't be bothered to follow them, we could just come home right now.”

“We have to leave?”

“Nah. He's just dramatic. Not that I'd ever say that to his face, but he is. But we should probably be on our best

behavior the rest of the trip, or at least not let them know if we break any more rules until we get home.”

“Sounds like a plan. I, ah, guess I should go get dressed?”

“Please. I’ve been starving myself all week in preparation for gorging myself on crabcakes and Thrasher’s fries this weekend, and if you make me wait much longer, I can’t be held responsible for what happens.”

“What are Thrasher’s fries?”

“That’s right! This is your first time in Ocean City.” A wide, wicked grin stretched across Olivia’s face. “We have *so* much to show you.”

MaryAnn

As far as MaryAnn could tell, ninety percent of what her friends wanted to show her was food related. An hour later, she was staring down at half a bowl of ice cream, wondering if she could force it down without the rest of the contents of her stomach making their way back up.

“You don’t have to finish it,” Olivia assured her with a laugh. “We probably should have paced ourselves a bit better.”

I paid good money for that food and you’re going to eat every last bite, you ungrateful little bitch.

Despite knowing the woman who’d spoken the words couldn’t hurt her anymore, MaryAnn could feel the blood draining from her face as the memory resurfaced. Panic

clawed at her throat and she desperately wished Dean was there to walk her through it.

No sooner had she made the wish than his voice filled her mind. *Breathe for me, babygirl. Can you do that? Just breathe for Daddy. Big breath in. That's my good girl. Now let it out nice and slow.*

“MaryAnn? Hey, what’s wrong?” MaryAnn was vaguely aware of someone grabbing her arm, dragging her away from the crowds of people to a relatively secluded spot off to the side. “Jesus, girl, you look like you just saw a ghost.”

“I’m fine.” Releasing her breath with a loud *whoosh*, MaryAnn forced a smile. “Just a little tired, I guess.”

“Bullshit.” Fire flashed in Shannon’s eyes. “Nobody goes from happy and laughing to white as a fucking sheet that fast just because they’re tired. And frankly, I find it a little insulting that you’d expect us to believe that.”

“Shay.” By contrast, Olivia’s voice was soft and soothing as she laid a hand on her friend’s arm. “Maybe we should go back to the house and talk about this.”

As if suddenly realizing where they were, Shannon glanced around and grimaced. “You’re probably right. Come on.”

The drive back to the house was filled with the tense kind of silence MaryAnn usually associated with the moments before she went over her Daddy’s knee for a punishment. An image of her, draped across Shannon’s lap as the other woman swatted her bottom with gusto popped into her mind and MaryAnn couldn’t stop the giggle that burst free.

“Laughter is good.” Meeting her gaze in the rearview mirror, Olivia grinned. “You don’t look like you’re about to

pass out anymore, which is also good.”

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to worry you guys.”

Olivia shook her head as she turned the car into the driveway. “We can talk about it inside. I’d say over ice cream, but I think we’ve all had enough junk for one night.”

“No food, please. But maybe some wine.”

“Coming right up.”

By the time the three of them were settled on the couch together, with MaryAnn sandwiched between her friends and cradling an oversized glass of wine in her hands, she was feeling much steadier. Steady enough for the embarrassment to finally start creeping in. “I’m sorry,” she said again, her gaze locked on the pale gold liquid in her glass. “I didn’t mean to ruin everyone’s evening.”

“Girl, stop apologizing and tell us what happened back there.” Concern twined with irritation in Shannon’s voice. “What brought it on this time?”

The reminder that her friends weren’t complete strangers to her panic attacks just made the whole situation that much more humiliating. “It’s stupid.”

“No, it’s not.” Gently tugging MaryAnn’s hand from her wine glass, Olivia gave it a hard squeeze. “If it upset you, then it’s not stupid.”

“Now you sound like Dean.” Tears were filling her eyes and MaryAnn managed a watery laugh. “I sorta wish he was here. No offense.”

“None taken. Sometimes we just need our Daddies.” Surprisingly, the soft words came from Shannon, the last person MaryAnn expected to admit she needed anybody.

“I feel like I need him all the time. Too much.”

“Please.” Shannon snorted out a laugh. “Daddies love to feel needed. They wouldn’t know what to do with themselves if we didn’t come crying to them about one thing or another on a regular basis.”

“Really?” She’d always assumed Dean was trying to make her feel better about being so needy when he told her pretty much the same thing. Hearing it from Shannon, though... maybe he’d been telling the truth all along.

“Really. Now, tell us what happened.”

And just like her Daddy, apparently Shannon wasn’t going to let her change the subject that easily. Since she wasn’t going to get off the hook, MaryAnn took another sip of wine to fortify herself before answering. “It really wasn’t a big deal. Just a bad memory. Sometimes I can hear my mom in my head so clearly, and it feels like I’m a little kid again, and I just freeze. It’s like all the fear I felt back then comes rushing back and I don’t know what to do so I just... panic.”

“Oh, honey.” Setting her own wine aside, Olivia wrapped her arms around MaryAnn’s shoulders and squeezed. “I swear if I ever get my hands on that woman...”

“She should be in jail.” Shannon’s voice was tight with fury. “Or under it. I’m fine with either option.”

“I should be, too,” MaryAnn said softly, a tear slipping down her cheek to splash against her hand. “Some days I still feel like I should march into the DA’s office and tell him the deal is off and to send me to prison where I belong.”

“Don’t be stupid.” Setting her glass on the coffee table with a loud *click*, Shannon shoved to her feet and fisted her hands on her hips, her expression furious. “You have to stop

blaming yourself for what that asshole Nate did. Nobody else but you thinks even one tiny bit of the blame for his actions falls on you. Got it?”

“But I—”

“No. We’ve been over this a million times, in a million different ways. And I stand by what I said. I don’t blame you, Olivia doesn’t blame you, nobody blames you. So stop being so fucking hard on yourself, would you?”

Startled out of her descent into self-pity, MaryAnn blinked up at her and said the first thing that came to mind. “Yes, Ma’am.”

From her other side, Olivia snorted, then giggled. Shannon shot her a glare, but it only lasted for a second before her lips twitched, and it wasn’t long before all three of them had dissolved into laughter.

“All right,” Shannon managed after the giggles finally stopped. “We’ve got like an hour left before our ‘ocean curfew’ kicks in. Who’s up for one last swim before bed?”

“Me!” MaryAnn and Olivia chorused in unison.

As they raced for the water, MaryAnn could feel the weight of the evening lifting off her shoulders. But she couldn’t shake the feeling that she didn’t deserve the forgiveness her friends so easily offered, or the happiness she’d found with Dean.

Even worse, she couldn’t ignore the constant dread that it would all be ripped from her without a moment’s notice.

Chapter 3

Dean

When his phone rang, he had to do a double take at the screen. Why the hell was Shannon calling him?

“What’s wrong? Is MaryAnn okay?”

“She’s fine. Well, physically she’s fine. But... I think she needs her Daddy.”

“What happened?” Jumping up from his office chair, he patted his pockets to check for his keys and wallet. Already, he was calculating how long it would take for him to get to her, and doing his best not to panic at being so far away.

“We went to the Boardwalk and she had a bit of a panic attack. Liv and I got her calmed down and brought her home. She told us it was a flashback, something from her childhood and that bitch of an egg donor she calls her mother.”

That stopped him in his tracks, and his heart broke for his babygirl as it had hundreds of times since he’d known her. “Fuck. Is she okay?”

“Yeah. We talked it out, went for a swim. *Before* it got dark out, because I know you’re going to ask. She seems okay, but I

still think she needs to talk to you and I don't trust her to make the call on her own, so here we are." There was a long silence, laden with meaning and Dean waited to see if Shannon was going to continue.

"Is there something else?" he prompted, trying to rein in his impatience. He just wanted to talk to his babygirl and make sure she was all right.

"Yeah. Yeah, there is something. Why the fuck does she still think the Nate situation was her fault?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I don't fucking know, Dean. One minute we're talking about her mother, the next thing I know MaryAnn is telling us how she should have gone to jail because of 'what she did'. Which was fucking nothing, and we all know it, so I would have thought her *Daddy* would have gotten those bullshit thoughts out of her head by now."

Stunned, he rubbed a hand over his face as he struggled to process Shannon's words. "I didn't know she still thought that. Fuck."

"Well, she does. What are you gonna do about it?"

"I'll figure something out. Can I talk to her now? Please."

"Yeah."

He was ready to jump out of his own skin by the time MaryAnn's voice came through the speaker. "Daddy?"

"Hi, babygirl. I heard you're having a hard night."

"Oh my god." She groaned, and the sound was so filled with embarrassment he had to bite his cheek to keep from laughing. "I can't believe Shannon called you. I'm *fine*."

“Shannon called me because she loves you and she was worried about you. Wanna tell me what happened?”

“Do I have to?”

“No. But I think you’d probably feel better if you did, don’t you?”

“Maybe,” she admitted with a heavy sigh. “It was stupid. We ate too much and I couldn’t finish my ice cream and Liv said it was okay but then I could hear my mom in my head calling me an ungrateful bitch and I guess I sorta panicked.”

God, what he wouldn’t give to be there, to hold her and rock her until even the echoes of her pain faded. The panic attacks were less frequent these days, but when they came, they could still knock her off-kilter for hours afterward. “Did you talk to your friends about it?”

“Yeah. It helped, some. The ocean helped more.”

“Good.” He paused, uncertain if he should say anything or just wait until they got home to address Shannon’s concerns. But not only would Shannon flay him alive, he wasn’t sure he could wait that long to know she was okay. “Shannon also told me what you said about how you should have gone to jail.”

“Shannon has a big fucking mouth.”

MaryAnn hardly ever swore, and his eyebrows rose at the vehemence in her voice. “Little girl, do you need to go stand in the corner for a bit before we finish this conversation?”

“No, Daddy. Sorry.”

“That’s my good girl. Now, tell me why you said you deserve to be in prison.”

“Because I didn’t *do* anything!” Her voice trembled, widening the crack in his own heart a little more. “I should

have known what was going on. If I'd paid more attention, they never would have gotten hurt. And I know Shay and Liv say they don't blame me, but I don't understand how."

"Nobody blames you because it wasn't your fault, babygirl."

"But—"

"No. There are no 'buts' here, little girl. What happened to Olivia and Shannon was not your fault, period. And if I'd realized you were still feeling this way, we would have had a conversation about it a long time ago."

"What kind of conversation?"

"The kind where you sit on your sore bottom and write lines until the message sinks in."

Through the phone, he heard her sharp intake of air and his cock twitched at the breathless quality of her voice when she spoke again. "You can't punish me for that!"

"Not a punishment. A lesson. One we will repeat as many times as necessary until you actually believe it."

"That's not fair."

"What's not fair is you beating yourself up over this when nobody else blames you for any of it, babygirl. You need to learn to let go and forgive yourself."

"I don't know how."

"We can work on it when you get home. For now, I just want you to enjoy your weekend with your friends, okay? I love you."

"Okay, Daddy. I love you, too."

"Bye, babygirl. Be good."

He sat there, rolling the problem over and over in his mind so long that the lights in his office automatically switched off. With an irritated wave for the motion-sensors, he turned them back on and swiped open his phone to make a call.

“Hey. How would you and James feel about crashing the girls’ party? I think we need an intervention.”

Chapter 4

MaryAnn

“Rise and shine, sleepyhead!”

The mattress dipped as someone climbed in beside her and MaryAnn pulled the covers over her head with a groan. She shouldn't have had that third glass of wine the night before.

Or was it a fourth?

Fuck.

“Ten more minutes,” she grumbled, burrowing deeper into the mattress.

“Not a chance. We have three more days of no Daddies and we are not wasting a single second of it. Up and at ‘em!”

The blanket was yanked from her hands and MaryAnn opened one eye enough to glare at her attacker only to find Olivia grinning down at her with a smile even brighter than the early morning sun pouring through the windows. “How are you this chipper so early?”

“I'm a morning person. And I've been up for like two hours so I've already had my caffeine. Come on, Shannon's making more coffee but you better hurry if you want some.”

With another groan, MaryAnn rolled out of bed and made her way to the bathroom. She wasn't any more awake by the time she went through her morning routine and stumbled her way down the stairs to the kitchen, but the scent of coffee perked her up a bit.

“Oh, that smells amazing.”

Turning from the counter with an oversized mug in one hand, Shannon raised an eyebrow. “You don't drink coffee.”

“I'm making an exception this morning.”

Shannon smirked as MaryAnn pulled a mug from the cabinet. “Wine hangover?”

“Yeah. I don't usually drink so much.”

“Well, there's plenty of coffee so help yourself. I made a whole pot since I finally convinced Liv to get rid of that monstrosity she used to have.”

“It was an espresso maker and it's amazing.” Liv's smile was all smug satisfaction. “It lives at my house now.”

Shannon's brow furrowed for a moment before her eyes widened and she let out a delighted laugh. “You clever little brat.”

“What?” MaryAnn glanced from one woman to the other, her sluggish brain trying and failing to understand what was going on. “I'm not awake enough for subtext. Someone please tell me what's going on.”

“This little con artist knew damn well her Daddy would never spend that much money on a coffee maker for their house, so she got one for the beach house figuring that after enough complaints James would just let her bring it home with her and replace it with a normal one.”

“I would never,” Olivia said primly, but her wide grin spoke volumes. “And I’m surprised you think so little of me, Shannon.”

“On the contrary. I’m a bit in awe of you right now. Obviously I need to step up my game. Don’t want Bryant getting too complacent on me.”

“I doubt there’s any danger of that happening any time soon, hon.”

The playful banter swirled around her as MaryAnn poured herself a cup of coffee with a generous helping of the chocolate-flavored creamer Olivia had bought. She sipped at the concoction, pleased to find it wasn’t as bitter as she’d expected.

It would have been easy to feel like the third wheel, but somehow Shannon and Olivia always managed to make her feel like part of the group, even when she didn’t say a single word.

By the time she finally finished her coffee, she was feeling much more awake, and the slight hangover had disappeared. Which, according to Olivia, meant it was time to head back to the beach.

It was even better than the day before. Now that she had learned all the tips and tricks for making sure she didn’t get knocked over and dragged under by a wave, or get carried too far down the beach, playing in the water with her friends was the most fun she’d had in years.

When Olivia suggested they ‘play mermaids’, she wasn’t exactly sure what that entailed but she wasn’t about to turn down an opportunity to play pretend. As she dived beneath the

waves, she could feel herself slipping into a headspace she usually only inhabited with her Daddy.

Over and over they swam under the waves and popped back up, sometimes with a handful of rocks and shells to fawn over, other times with fantastical tales of a fish they'd met underwater. Even uber sophisticated Shannon joined in the game.

“My little fishy friend says it's time for lunch,” Shannon said when they resurfaced for what felt like the hundredth time.

Giggling, Olivia poked her friend's toned stomach. “Does that fishy friend live in your tummy?”

Before Shannon could answer, the tummy in question growled loudly and Shannon tipped her nose in the air. “That wasn't me! That was a sea monster!”

“Sea monster!” Olivia cried, racing for the shore.

With loud shouts of their own, Shannon and MaryAnn followed, grabbing up their towels on the way back up to the house. All but gasping for breath, MaryAnn collapsed onto one of the deck chairs and squeezed what felt like a gallon of water from her hair.

“You okay?” Shannon asked, her eyes narrowed in suspicion as she rubbed a towel over her pinkened skin.

“Yeah. Just tired. Where do kids get all the energy to play like that all day?”

“I don't know, but if we could bottle it I bet we'd be billionaires by the end of the business day.” Lowering herself into the chair opposite MaryAnn, Shannon winced and rolled her head from side to side. “I may be Little inside sometimes,

but my body definitely isn't. We should go get massages before we head home."

"Really? I've never had a massage before." Instinctively, she ran through her bank account in her head before remembering the credit card Dean had given her with the clear instructions to enjoy herself on her trip. But he probably meant food and souvenirs and stuff, not extravagant splurges like a massage.

"Liv and I go at least once a month. You should start coming with us."

"Oh, I don't know about that. It's not like I have a super stressful job like you guys." In fact, she barely had a job at all these days. She'd taken over a lot of Dean's bookkeeping for his stores and she occasionally stepped in when he was short-staffed, but it wasn't a career. Not like what Olivia and Shannon did.

"What are we talking about?" Carrying a tray laden with various cheese and meats and crackers, Olivia carefully placed it on the table between them before settling into a chair herself.

"Trying to talk MaryAnn into joining us for our monthly spa day."

"Oh my gosh, yes!" Somehow, Olivia's smile managed to get about a thousand times brighter as she bounced in her seat and clapped her hands. "I can't believe we haven't invited you before. We're horrible friends. Do you hate us?"

"Of course not!" Panic had MaryAnn's eyes widening and her heart threatening to beat out of her chest. "I could never hate you. I understand if you guys want to have your own thing. It doesn't bother me."

“Well, it should.” Once again, Shannon was glaring at her, leaving MaryAnn floundering as she wondered what she’d said wrong this time. “The three of us are a package deal and it was shitty of us to leave you out. Forgive us?”

“There’s nothing to forgive. But I really don’t want to impose.”

“You’re not.” Olivia’s grin turned mischievous. “If anything, you’re helping us out.”

“What? How?”

With a nonchalant shrug of her shoulders, Shannon reached across the table to grab a piece of salami. “We’ve been dropping hints about wanting to do an all-out spa day, really get pampered from head to toe instead of just massages and mani-pedis like we usually get. But Bryant just raises that damn eyebrow and reminds me I have a monthly budget to stick to, a budget that is not nearly as high as I would like since he took that job with the legal aid group.”

“James just kisses my head and tells me I don’t need fancy spa treatments to look gorgeous.” Olivia rolled her eyes skyward. “They just don’t understand.”

“But if we told them we were taking *you* to go get pampered, because you’ve never gotten to do anything like it before...” Shannon left the sentence hanging, and MaryAnn had the distinct impression she was supposed to be filling in the blanks, but with *what* she wasn’t quite sure.

“What would that do?”

The look Shannon sent her clearly said she was being dense. “Well, you know the Daddies all have a soft spot for you. You’re like some wounded little bird they’re all determined to nurse back to health. Wow, that sounded a lot

nicer in my head, but I didn't mean it in like, a bad way. They're just all really protective of you."

"What? No, they aren't. Bryant hates me."

For a moment, Shannon simply stared at her before throwing her head back and letting out a howl of laughter. "He definitely does not hate you. Where on Earth did you get that idea?"

"Okay, maybe he doesn't *hate* me, but he definitely blames me for you getting hurt, especially the second time. Honestly, I'm shocked either of your Daddies want anything to do with me."

Olivia wrinkled her nose in obvious confusion. "How can you possibly think they hate you? We invited you to our house for Christmas for heaven's sake."

Shrugging, MaryAnn pulled her towel tighter around her shoulders. "I just assumed they put up with me because of Dean. Well, and I sorta figured Shannon bullied them into being nice to me."

"I would, if I had to," Shannon said, lifting a careless shoulder. "But honey, Bryant left a very, very well-paying job for one that doesn't pay worth shit just so he could spend countless hours defending people like you who don't have anyone to speak for them. And that was after he and I broke up over him taking your case. He wouldn't do all of that if he didn't care about you on some level."

"But... but Nate took you to get to me. He hurt you because of me. How could Bryant not hate me after that?"

"Jesus, this again? I hope your Daddy wears your ass out when you get home, because obviously I'm not getting through to you."

Dean's warning from the night before played through her mind and MaryAnn's cheeks warmed far past what even the sun had managed. "He, um, might have said something about that."

Sitting up straight in her chair, Olivia grinned expectantly. "He did? What did he say?"

"Just that I was going to be writing lines on a sore bottom when I got home."

"Should be a lot more than a spanking and some lines," Shannon grumbled.

"Well, um..."

"Oooh, there's more." Olivia wiggled in her chair. "Tell us!"

"Do you remember what I told you he did when he punished me for sneaking out to confront Nate? How I had to write down all my rules and then he... you-know-what in my you-know-where?"

"Oh, how he fucked your ass while you read the rules out loud?"

"Shannon!" MaryAnn squealed. "Keep your voice down!"

"Please. Nobody can hear us. But yeah, we remember. What about it?"

"Well, that happens *every* time I have to write lines."

"Seriously?" Olivia's eyes were wide as saucers. "You poor thing!"

"It doesn't happen often, but yeah. He says it's so I'll remember the lines better, but I think he just wants an excuse to do it."

“Of course he does,” Shannon agreed with a grin. “They’re always looking for some excuse to put it in our butts.”

“Well, if MaryAnn is going home to *that*, I say we deserve to be a little spoiled in the meantime.” Olivia’s grin turned smug. “Massages, facials maybe? Oh, we should go to the end of the boardwalk and see how much money we can waste trying to win one of those ridiculously large stuffed animals.”

As the conversation shifted to their impromptu girls’ day out, MaryAnn’s mind drifted. Was Shannon right? Did their Daddies all see her as some lost little girl who needed to be protected at all costs?

For some reason, the thought didn’t sit right with her. She didn’t want to be singled out among her friends. Granted, it was better than thinking they all secretly blamed her for Nate, but it still made her *different*.

The question was... what was she going to do about it?

Chapter 5

MaryAnn

“I’m getting too old for these long beach days.” Groaning loudly, Shannon collapsed onto the bed in MaryAnn’s room. After lunch, they’d gone straight back into the water, then to the carnival at the end of the Boardwalk where MaryAnn was certain she’d blown her budget to smithereens trying to win a giant stuffed shark. She’d had to settle for a much smaller stuffed crab, but she was pretty damn proud of it all the same.

“We should call the Daddies and let them know we’re too tired to leave and we just live at the beach now,” Shannon continued, throwing an arm up to cover her face. “They can come visit on the weekends.”

Laughing at her friend’s antics, MaryAnn joined her on the bed. “Somehow, I don’t think they’d go for that.”

“You’re probably right. Dammit.”

“What is she right about?” Olivia wiggled in between them, her head resting on MaryAnn’s shoulder in a move that somehow felt ridiculously intimate and completely natural at the same time.

“She said the Daddies wouldn’t let us live here without them. I mean, I offered visitation! What more could they want?”

“You say that, but you’d go nuts without Bryant around to rein in your bratty ways,” Olivia pointed out with a giggle. “And I’m definitely not switchy enough to keep you in line between visits.”

“Switchy?” MaryAnn asked.

“Yeah, like where you like doing the spanking and being spanked,” Shannon explained. “You can switch back and forth. Obviously it’s more complicated than that, but it’s the basic gist.”

“Oh.” Rolling the idea over in her mind, MaryAnn wrinkled her nose. “I don’t think I’d get much enjoyment out of spanking someone.”

Olivia nodded her agreement. “Same.”

“I think I could, with the right person. But not Bryant. That just feels wrong.”

An image flashed in MaryAnn’s mind of stern-faced Bryant bent over Shannon’s lap, and she couldn’t help the laugh that burst free. “You’re right. That would be weird.”

“Ew, stop imagining it! Now I’m imagining it!” Shannon’s squealed demand was punctuated by the *thump* of a pillow as it connected with MaryAnn’s face.

Grabbing another pillow, MaryAnn swung hard, a maniacal laugh making its way free when Shannon rolled off the bed from the force of it.

“Oh, it is *on*.”

Chaos exploded all around them as pillows were flung this way and that, their screams and laughter filling the room. They were all breathless and panting by the time they collapsed back onto the bed.

“God, that was so much fun,” MaryAnn said with a shaky laugh. “I’ve never done that before.”

“You’ve never had a pillow fight?” Even nearly breathless, the confusion was clear in Olivia’s tone.

“Nope, never. I never really did sleepovers or anything growing up.”

“I swear if I ever get my hands on your mother...” Shannon’s voice trailed off into silence, and MaryAnn suddenly wished she hadn’t said anything. Now she’d completely ruined the mood.

Mind racing, she searched for something, anything to get that happy, carefree feeling back. When an idea popped into her head, she almost lost her nerve. There was no doubt the Daddies would absolutely skin them alive if they found out, but... wasn’t the thrill of getting caught half the fun?

“You know what else I’ve never done?” she asked, propping herself up on her elbows to meet her friends’ curious gazes.

“What?” they asked in unison.

“Skinny dipping. We should try it.”

“No way.” Shannon rolled her head from side to side against the mattress. “The Daddies will kill us.”

“They’ll never find out. Please, Shay?”

“We are on a fairly secluded section of the beach,” Olivia pointed out, her eyes sparkling with mischief. “Nobody really

patrols down this way and it's already dark out. We should do it."

"You can't be serious." Groaning, Shannon grabbed a pillow and placed it over her face.

"Come on, Shay." Olivia put a bit of pleading into her voice and MaryAnn fleetingly wondered how James ever found the strength to deny her anything. "Let's at least go peek outside and see if anyone is around."

With another loud groan, Shannon tossed the pillow aside and glared at both of them. "Fine. But if we get caught, I am *not* taking the blame for this."

Jumping up from the bed, MaryAnn grabbed both their hands and hauled them to their feet. "Deal! Let's go!"

With Shannon grumbling behind her, MaryAnn led the way downstairs and out the back door. To her surprised delight, the beach was completely empty. Well, not *completely*. There were other people further down, but they were little more than shadows in the moonlight. Which meant they wouldn't be able to see anything, either.

Stopping several feet from the water, MaryAnn looked around at her co-conspirators. "Okay, so, how do we do this? Do we get naked here and run in or go in and then get naked?"

Humming thoughtfully, Olivia tapped a finger against her chin as if she were debating one of life's great mysteries. "Going in first means less chance of being exposed, but then we might lose our clothes in the waves."

"Alternate plan, we just go back inside and watch a movie and stuff ourselves with junk food," Shannon said, her tone part plea, part sarcasm.

“We did that last night.” Not wanting to waste another second arguing, MaryAnn pulled her shirt up over her head and tossed it onto the sand. “I say we just get as close as we can first then strip down and dive in.”

“I can’t believe I let you two talk me into this.” Despite her grumbling, Shannon yanked her shirt off and reached for her shorts. “You know who’s gonna get blamed when we get caught, right? Me. They’re going to assume this was my wild idea and I talked you two into it.”

MaryAnn gave her a playful shove toward the water. “Stop being such a worrywart. There’s nobody around close enough to see us and the Daddies are home, with no way to spy on us. How could we possibly get caught?”

Dean

“Jesus, I thought we’d never get out of that traffic.” Climbing out of the backseat of Dean’s SUV, Bryant groaned as he stretched his back and winced. “I’m getting too old to be stuck in a car for five hours.”

“Yeah, well, all it takes is one little accident on the bridge.” With a wince of his own, Dean slid from the driver’s seat.

“And leaving three hours later than you intended,” James added with a dark look for his brother.

“I had a work emergency. What was I supposed to do?”

“You could have called from the road. Passed it off to someone else. All I’m saying is, we wouldn’t have gotten

stuck in that clusterfuck if we'd left on time.”

“All right, boys.” Dean cut them both off with a look he normally reserved for his babygirl. “Let’s not fight. We’re here to surprise the girls, remember?”

“I’m just saying—”

“And you said it plenty of times on the drive here,” Dean snapped. “I would have just left your ass on the side of the road, but I didn’t want to worry Livvy.”

“Fine. I won’t say anything about it again. Let’s go see what our naughty Little girls are up to.”

“Maybe they’re behaving themselves.” Even as Dean said the words, he recognized the false hope in them. Putting three mischievous brats together for the weekend was guaranteed trouble. He could only hope it was the kind of trouble that resulted in a fun, sexy punishment he and his babygirl could both enjoy. After their conversation the other night, he didn’t want to be any harsher with her than he absolutely had to be.

His hopes lifted a bit when Bryant tested the front door and found it locked up tight. But when they made their way into the living room and found the sliding door to the back deck sitting wide open, any hope of a sweet reunion with their Little girls was dashed.

“I swear it’s a miracle those girls can ever sit comfortably,” James grumbled under his breath as he stalked toward the deck. “Where the hell are they?”

Leaning over the railing, Dean scanned the beach for any sign of them. The full moon provided some light, but not nearly as much as he would have liked.

“There! Are they *in* the water?” Disbelief colored Bryant’s tone. “They are. Jesus Christ, do they have a death wish?”

Without bothering to take off their shoes, all three men marched down the steps and toward the shore. Although, it wasn't much of a march when the sand kept sliding out from under them. Dean tried not to think too hard about how ridiculous they must have looked just then.

Just before they reached the wet edge of the sand, something caught his eye. "Hold up." Bending down, he picked up the garments and stood, shaking his head as he held them out to his friends. "I'm pretty sure our naughty girls switched out their bathing suits for their birthday suits for their late-night dip."

"That's it. I'm going in." With sharp, jerky movements, Bryant yanked his polo shirt over his head and popped open the button on his jeans.

But before he could get his pants off, an outraged shout met their ears. "Hey! Assholes! Get away from our stuff!"

Planting his fists on his hips, Bryant glared at the naked blonde charging at him from the water. "Do you really think it's a good idea to be calling me names when you're already in so much trouble, princess?"

Shannon froze, and even in the dark, Dean swore he could see her eyes widen. "Bryant?"

"It's Daddy to you, little girl. You and your friends have about thirty seconds to get out of the water before I come in after you. And you do not want me to have to chase you."

For a long moment, Dean wondered if he was going to have to follow through on his threat. Standing frozen in the surf, her bare torso glistening in the moonlight, Shannon looked like an animal trying to choose between fight or flight.

Luckily for her, she chose neither. Twisting around, she called for Olivia and MaryAnn, and soon two dark heads popped up behind her in the water. The trio trudged through the crashing waves back to the sand, where they stood with their arms wrapped around them, trying their best to cover all of their ‘sensitive’ parts.

Taking pity on his babygirl, Dean pulled off his t-shirt and handed it to her. With a grateful smile, she quickly covered herself with it. Not that it did much, as the soaked material clung to every gorgeous curve. But at least she wasn’t completely naked anymore. Bryant and James followed suit, with more or less the same results.

“We-we can explain,” Olivia stammered, tugging at the hem of her Daddy’s polo shirt in a desperate attempt to cover her private parts. “Daddy, I—”

“Unless you want all of our neighbors to witness you getting your bottom blistered, I suggest we take this conversation inside, Olivia Jane.”

Bottom lip puffed out in a pout, she dropped her head. “Yes, Daddy.”

A heavy silence surrounded them as they made their painstaking way back up to the house. Inside, Bryant dashed up the stairs and returned a few moments later with blankets to drape around the now shivering forms of their Little girls before taking his place beside James. The six of them stood in the middle of the living room in a silent face off for several long seconds. Every now and then, MaryAnn would peek up at Dean, as if she were trying to figure out exactly how much trouble she was in, but he deliberately kept his expression as blank as possible despite the anger churning in his gut.

How the hell could she have been so careless? Even with Nate out of the picture, they knew better than to leave doors unlocked. And a nighttime dip in the ocean was just asking for trouble, even if they'd been fully clothed.

“All right.” It was Bryant who spoke first, and Dean had to hide a smile as Shannon immediately stiffened at the sound of her Daddy’s furious voice. “Before we start handing out punishments, I want to know one thing. Whose idea was it to go skinny dipping at night in the ocean with no supervision?”

Judging by the way Shannon’s eyes narrowed, Bryant’s gaze had gone directly to her, just as Dean’s had. And, he suspected, James’s as well. But as Shannon opened her mouth, whether to confirm or deny Dean couldn’t be sure, she was cut short by the last person he had expected to speak up.

“It was me. It was my idea.”

Chapter 6

MaryAnn

Three heads swung her direction, and despite how different they all were, the expressions of shock on their faces were nearly identical. Bryant recovered first, his eyes narrowing with obvious suspicion. “It was your idea to go skinny dipping, in the ocean, in the dark?”

Nerves sealed her throat shut, and all she could manage was a small nod.

“You really expect us to believe that you talked Shannon and Olivia into something and not the other way around?” Bryant pressed.

“It’s not *that* hard to believe.” Shannon’s words were mumbled under her breath, but MaryAnn heard her just fine and silently willed her friend to shut up before she made everything worse.

James lifted an eyebrow in a show of clear disbelief. “Given your and Olivia’s history of... mischief, it is a bit hard to believe that of the three of you, MaryAnn is the one who instigated all of this.”

“Right, because she’s so mature and responsible.” Shannon fisted her hands on her hips, her blanket slipping off one shoulder as she glared daggers at them. “So responsible, that we had to teach her how to swim!”

As soon as the words were out, Shannon slapped a hand over her mouth, her eyes going wide in a look that rivaled the Daddies’ expressions. Beside her, Olivia groaned and let her head fall back, while MaryAnn simply froze in place as her Daddy’s eyes locked on her.

“Babygirl, I certainly hope I’m misunderstanding. Because if you lied to me about knowing how to swim, you can kiss any chance of sitting comfortably goodbye for the next month.”

Still unable to force the words free, she shook her head, the wet strands of her hair whipping around her face.

“Then what is Shannon talking about?”

Swallowing hard, she gathered her courage and finally managed to speak. “I-I know how to swim. I didn’t lie.”

“That isn’t what I asked, little girl.”

“I know, I’m sorry.” To her horror, tears were already filling her eyes and he hadn’t even touched her. The humiliation of being lectured so publicly combined with the worry over how much trouble they were in was quickly becoming more than she could take. “I can swim, I’ve just never swam in the ocean before. But Olivia and Shannon were really good teachers!”

“Ah.” Dean visibly relaxed, and the fury cleared from his expression. “I suppose that’s on me for not being more thorough with my questions before I let you come on this trip.”

“You’re not mad?”

“Oh, I’m still plenty mad. And I think you know as well as I do that you should have been more forthcoming about your experience level. But I’m happy to know you didn’t outright lie about being able to swim.” Stepping forward, he cupped her chin in his large hand, forcing her head back and her gaze up to his. “Now, I want you to look me in the eye and tell me the truth. Was it really your idea to go swimming naked in the dark?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“And what about the back door?”

“What about it?” Shannon cut in, her tone still combative.

With a glare in Shannon’s direction, Bryant answered. “It was not only unlocked, but open when we got here. And now is not the time to have an attitude, princess.”

“Crap!” Now it was Olivia interrupting with another long groan of consternation. “I got so caught up in the excitement, I completely forgot about the door. Daddy, I’m sorry.”

“You certainly will be by the time I’m through with you, Olivia Jane. This isn’t the first time we’ve had this discussion, but I am determined it will be the last.”

“Yes, Sir,” Olivia whispered. “I’m really sorry.”

“No!”

The cry escaped from MaryAnn’s lips before she could think better of it, and once again she found herself on the receiving end of three shocked stares. “No, what, babygirl?” Dean asked, his voice surprisingly gentle given how much trouble they were all in.

“I, um. I don’t think Liv deserves to get in trouble. It’s my fault we were outside in the first place, so I’m the only one who should get p-punished.”

James’s expression softened. “I appreciate you wanting to protect your friends, but they both know better than to let themselves get talked into something dangerous. And Livvy especially knows how I feel about leaving the doors unlocked or open, and as the owner of the property, it’s ultimately her responsibility.”

“Come on, babygirl.” Reaching for her, Dean wrapped a hand around her upper arm and tugged. “Let’s go upstairs so you and I can talk about this some more.”

“As for you two.” Bryant pointed across the living room. “You can march your naughty little bottoms over to those corners and think about why they’re about to be very red and very sore while James and I discuss your punishments.”

“Wait.” Heart pounding, MaryAnn dug in her heels to keep her Daddy from moving any closer to the stairs. “Are Liv and Shay getting spanked together?”

Bryant and James exchanged a look, while beside them Shannon and Olivia’s faces turned bright red. “That’s the plan,” Bryant said after a pregnant pause.

“Then I should be, too. It-it’s only fair.”

It felt like all of the blood had rushed from her head as she waited in the sudden, heavy silence for a response.

“Excuse us.” Dean’s voice was tight with what she assumed was anger as he gave her arm a not-so-gentle tug in the complete opposite direction and pulled her onto the back deck, closing the door behind them. But to her surprise, he

didn't yell or even launch into a lecture. He simply pulled her into his arms and his cheek came to rest on the top of her head.

Little by little, she relaxed into him. Until at long last she simply burrowed into his embrace, tears once more burning at the backs of her eyes.

"There. That's better." Pulling away slightly, he smiled down at her. "Ever since Shannon called me last night, it's been killing me not to have you in my arms."

"I'm sorry. She shouldn't have bothered you. There was no need to make you worry for nothing."

"Babygirl, worrying about you is part of my job description. And I'm glad she called, because now I know you've got some things going on in that brain of yours that we need to work through."

There was no point in arguing with him when he decided they needed to 'work through' something, so she simply sighed and gave him the words she knew he wanted to hear. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl. Now, we need to talk about what just happened. Do you really want to be spanked with Shannon and Olivia? Honest answers only, please," he added with a quirk of his eyebrow when she opened her mouth to assure him she did.

Dammit. Telling him how she really felt, what she really needed had been a sticking point for her from the moment she'd met him. And somehow, almost a year later, it wasn't any easier. "No. I don't want to. But..."

"But?" he prompted when she trailed off.

"*But*, when I was talking to Shay and Liv the other day, they said the three of you treat me differently. That you all

have a soft spot for me, and that you all act like I'm a wounded bird you have to nurse back to health." Now that she'd started, she couldn't seem to stop the flow of words, just like she couldn't stop the tears that accompanied them. "I don't *want* to be a wounded bird. I just want to be treated like everyone else. I'm so tired of being the weak one, the broken one."

"Oh, babygirl." Cupping her face in his hands, he leaned down to brush a kiss across her lips. "You're not weak."

"Then stop treating me like I am! And tell Bryant and James to cut it out, while you're at it."

"All right. But I don't think you're in any emotional state to be making big decisions right now. We can talk about you joining Shannon and Olivia the next time you all get into trouble together." Despite the severity of the moment, amusement danced in his eyes. "Because I am certain there will be a next time."

"But that's not fair!"

"I'm sorry you feel that way, but it's my job to protect you. And right now, I'm protecting you from doing something you'll regret in the morning."

"I won't, I promise. Please, Daddy?"

Dean

Staring into his babygirl's wide brown eyes, he could feel his resolve crumbling even as he shook his head. "I don't think so, baby."

Tears glistened in her eyes and her bottom lip pushed out into a pretty little pout he would have been able to appreciate more if she hadn't been in so much damn trouble. *"Please?"*

Fuck. He was stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it was his responsibility to make good choices for both of them, especially when she was riding an emotional high like the one she was obviously on now.

On the other, this wasn't the first time she'd mentioned feeling like the odd man out in her friend group. Olivia and Shannon had been best friends for years before MaryAnn came along, so it made sense she'd constantly feel like an outsider. And he couldn't deny he felt the same way sometimes, seeing as how his two closest friends were literal twins.

If he could do something to help her feel like she belonged a little bit more, shouldn't he do that?

"I'm not convinced you really know what you're asking for, babygirl," he said gently. "If I let you do this, it means taking whatever punishment your friends are getting, plus writing lines for me afterward. And it means baring your bottom in front of Bryant and James, which you've never done before."

"I know. Liv and Shay have told me all about it." Pink darkened her cheeks and her lashes lowered to shield her eyes. "I, um, I've sorta been wondering about it for a while."

"Really?" That was news to him, but it made sense. Still, it was a big step. For both of them. The pros and cons of the decision rolled around in his mind until he finally gave in with a sigh. "All right. We can start with corner time while I talk to Bryant and James about what they had in mind for Shannon and Olivia. If I don't think their punishment is too harsh, I will

consider letting you be part of the group punishment. But if I say no after talking to the other Daddies, then I expect you to listen and not argue or we will be having another discussion about listening to Daddy in the morning. Am I understood?”

He didn't have a chance to see her reaction, because her arms were around his neck before he even finished his last question. “Thank you, Daddy.”

“Don't thank me yet, babygirl,” he said with a chuckle as he hugged her close. “James and Bryant are much stricter Daddies than I am, and you may realize that being part of the group isn't all it's cracked up to be. But since you're determined to give this a try, let's get you into one of those corners, naughty girl.”

Chapter 7

MaryAnn

It was tempting to look around to try and see what Shannon and Olivia were doing in their corners. She knew what they were all *supposed* to be doing. Staring at the stupid wall in front of them and ‘thinking about what they could have done differently’.

But her mind refused to concentrate on anything but the knowledge that James and Bryant were seeing her bare-ish bottom for the first time, and the possibility of being subjected to whatever harsh punishment they had in mind. She knew enough from her friends’ stories to know that their Daddies didn’t hold back, especially when safety was involved. And between forgetting to lock the back door and breaking the rule about swimming at night, there was no doubt the Daddies would see their actions as very, very unsafe.

That didn’t even begin to take into account how their Daddies might feel about the fact that all of that had been done while they’d been naked as jaybirds out where anyone could have seen them.

Shit.

“All right, girls. Front and center.”

Jumping slightly at the snap of Bryant’s voice, MaryAnn turned and shuffled forward, her hands fluttering in front of her as she tried to block her panties from view. Dean had tugged them up in the back, exposing most of her bottom while preserving some of her modesty.

A quick glance to her right revealed that her friends hadn’t been given the same courtesy, but for the first time, she wasn’t at all upset at being left out.

Taking her spot in front of the Daddies, MaryAnn lowered her gaze to the ground as Bryant launched into their sentencing.

“I think it goes without saying we’re very disappointed in you girls. We trusted you to at least follow the basic safety rules we laid out for you, and instead, you left yourselves vulnerable to a break in, exposed yourselves to all our neighbors, and put your lives at risk by swimming at night. Do you have anything to say for yourselves?”

To MaryAnn’s surprise, Shannon didn’t argue. Her voice was quiet as she shook her head and said, “No, Daddy.”

MaryAnn and Olivia echoed her assent, and Bryant grunted in approval before James took over. “Since there are three serious infractions to discuss here, you will each be receiving three separate spankings. And since each of these infractions put all of you at risk, you will be receiving one part of your punishment from each of us to remind you that when you talk your friends into taking risks with their lives, you aren’t just potentially hurting them, but the people who love them, as well.”

Triple shit. When she'd asked to be included in this, she'd assumed it would be her own Daddy spanking her the entire time. Which, now that she thought about the joint punishments Olivia and Shannon had described before, had been a gross miscalculation on her part.

“What that means,” Dean said, picking up where James had left off, “is that you will each be going over your own Daddy’s lap for a warmup, and then you will bend over for the next Daddy to give you a count of six with his belt. We will rotate two more times, finishing up with your own Daddy’s belt across your naughty bottoms. Any questions?”

She had a feeling his request for questions was directed more at her than anyone else, but she didn’t dare speak up. If he saw even a hint of hesitation, he’d pull the plug so fast it was liable to make her head spin.

“No, Sir,” Shannon and Olivia said, the sulk clear in their voices. Though they weren’t arguing, it was obvious they weren’t happy with the punishment, either.

“MaryAnn. Eyes on me, little girl.”

Reluctantly, MaryAnn lifted her gaze to meet his. “Yes, Daddy?”

“Do you have any questions for me, babygirl?”

“N-no, Daddy.”

Through narrowed eyes, he seemed to be studying every inch of her face until she was ready to squirm under his intense gaze. But even though her tummy was filled with butterflies, she didn’t look away. Eventually, his expression relaxed just a fraction and he nodded. “All right. You have your safeword if you need it, baby. And I expect you to use it if necessary, understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Time to get that bottom nice and warmed up.”

Dean

While the girls had been facing the corner, the Daddies had been discussing their punishment and rearranging the living room to suit their needs. The couch had been pushed out of the way to make room for three straight-backed chairs arranged in a triangle.

He wasn't altogether happy about the arrangement. Nobody had ever spanked his Little girl but him, and he knew for a fact that Bryant tended to spank a hell of a lot harder than Dean or even James. Then there was the emotional aspect of how MaryAnn might feel watching him punish someone else. While she'd never shown any hints of jealousy, he'd never given her a reason to before now.

But he'd shared with the other men what Shannon had said about them treating her like a 'wounded little bird', and while it was clear Bryant and James had their concerns about the arrangement, they'd agreed it would probably be good for MaryAnn to be included.

That didn't mean Dean wouldn't be keeping a close eye on her the entire time. And if he caught so much as a hint that she was in distress, he was prepared to pull the plug on the entire operation.

Taking his seat, he guided MaryAnn over his lap as James and Bryant did the same with their own Little girls. From his

position, he could see Shannon's bare bottom as she shifted to try and get comfortable, and the miserable expression on Olivia's face as her Daddy's hand patted her bottom. It was tempting to leave MaryAnn's panties in place, but no doubt she'd just see it as one more way he was treating her like she was different from her friends.

With that in mind, he took a deep breath and tugged her panties down to her knees. Over his lap, MaryAnn tensed, but didn't object.

Good girl.

Bryant cleared his throat, and his tone was full of disappointment when he spoke. "After everything we've been through together, you girls should know better than to be so careless with your safety. After tonight, I hope this isn't a lesson we need to repeat."

The sound of his hand connecting with Shannon's bare skin echoed around the living room, followed quickly by her sharp intake of breath. Taking his cue, Dean shifted his attention to the bottom draped over his knee.

It didn't take long to get a reaction out of her. Five swats into her 'warmup', MaryAnn gasped as a particularly hard swat landed across her sit spot. "Ow! Daddy!"

Damn if the petulant whine in her tone didn't have his cock hardening beneath her. He'd always been a sucker for those little noises, especially since it had taken some coaxing to get her out of her head enough to let them loose in the first place.

Beneath his palm, her bronze skin was already darkening, and he just barely resisted the urge to pause and run his fingers between her thighs to see if she was dripping with need the

way she usually was during a spanking. Not only did he not want to distract her from a well-deserved punishment, he wasn't about to put on any more of a show than necessary for their friends.

“Fuck, Bryant!” Shannon’s outraged shout rose over the cacophony of sound and Dean paused with his hand halfway towards its target.

Bryant, however, never even faltered in his assault on his naughty girl’s bottom. “That’s one minute with the soap when we finish here, princess. Want to go for more?”

“No! No, Daddy,” she added, her tone much more respectful. “I’m sorry, you’re just spanking extra hard and it slipped out!”

“I’m spanking extra hard because I want to be extra sure you never pull a stunt like this again, little girl. Am I understood?”

“Yes, Daddy. I’m sorry.”

“I know, princess. But you have to start thinking things through a bit more. All of you do. We can’t always be there to ensure you’re making good decisions, and we need to be able to trust you to be safe when we aren’t around. It would kill us to lose any one of you.”

As Bryant’s words echoed in his mind, Dean put a little extra strength behind the next round of swats he laid down on his babygirl’s reddened bottom. Not only had she encouraged her friends to do something dangerous, she’d done so knowing she didn’t have the experience to keep herself safe.

And dammit, he hadn’t put a bullet in a man’s brain just to lose her to her own recklessness now.

Obviously James was having similar thoughts, because soon shouts of “Daddy, no!” and “I’m sorry!” were coming from all three naughty girls as they squirmed and wriggled over their Daddies’ laps.

By the time they all stopped, their girls’ sniffles and whimpers and soft sobs filled the room.

Guiding MaryAnn to her feet, Dean stood and pulled her into his chest, rocking her gently from side to side until she relaxed into his embrace. “I’m really sorry, Daddy,” she whispered, her voice so pitiful he was tempted to call off the rest of her punishment.

But Bryant’s words were still fresh in his mind, and Dean forced himself to pull away enough that he could see her face. “Look at me, babygirl.”

With obvious reluctance, she tilted her face up to meet his gaze, tears shimmering in her eyes. “Yes, Daddy?”

“This next part is going to be hard for you to take. But I want you to promise me you’ll stay in position. If you move around too much, the belt could catch you somewhere it’s not supposed to. Okay?”

“I’ll try.”

“If you need a break, or you think it’s getting to be too much, just say ‘Yellow’ and we can pause to talk about it.”

“Okay, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Bend over the back of the chair and grab the seat. Bryant will be giving you the first six.”

The color seemed to drain from her face. “Bryant?” she asked, her voice squeaking with surprise.

“Yes. Is that a problem?”

“No, but... couldn't James go first? Please?”

“Why?”

“It's just”—she glanced over at Bryant, who was watching them over Shannon's head with clear amusement—“I heard he spanks really, really hard and I thought if James went first I might be kinda warmed up for him. Or something. I dunno.”

“Ah, I see. And do you really think any of you are in a position to negotiate your punishments right now?”

“I guess not.”

“No, you are not. Over the chair, babygirl. Now.”

He waited until all three girls were in position before catching Bryant's eye and jerking his head toward the deck. Bryant followed him outside and pulled the door shut behind him, his expression full of curiosity. “What's up?”

“I need a favor.”

“Ah.” Grinning, Bryant slid his hands in his pockets and rocked back on his heels. “You want me to go easy on your girl? No problem. I know she's not used to harsher punishments like Shannon and Livvy.”

“No. The opposite, actually.”

Eyes wide, Bryant froze and let out a low whistle. “Well, I wasn't expecting that.”

“I know. But she asked for this, literally. And if we're going to prove to her that we don't all think she's some wounded little bird, then you can't hold back with her.”

“I'm tempted to add a few minutes to Shannon's soap time for that,” Bryant grumbled, running a hand through his hair. “Little brat needs to learn to think before she speaks.”

“I appreciate the sentiment, but... I can't say she's wrong. We *do* treat MaryAnn differently, and I'm not sure that's the best thing for her.”

“Probably not. It's just hard when she always looks like she's about to jump out of her skin if you so much as raise your voice at her.”

“Trust me, I get it. But she's stronger than you think.”

“All right. She's your babygirl, so if that's what you think is for the best, then I won't hold back.”

Chapter 8

MaryAnn

What the hell was taking so long?

Not only was her pulse rate climbing with every passing second, but the top of the chair was also digging into her hips and the growing ache was competing with the burn in her backside.

To her left, Shannon blew out an annoyed breath and pushed up from her chair. “Fuck this, I’m not staying bent over this stupid chair while they gossip like a pair of old ladies.”

“I’ll make sure your Daddy knows to add an extra minute to your soap time,” James said calmly. “And if you don’t get back in position by the count of three, I’ll start adding extra strokes to your punishment. One.”

The back door slid open just as James was issuing the second count, and there was amusement wrapped around the steel of Bryant’s voice when he spoke. “Why are we counting?”

“Shannon? Care to explain to your Daddy why I’m counting, or should I just start adding strokes now?”

“Fine, I’m going. But I still say it’s bullsh—stupid we had to wait so long.”

“I didn’t realize you were so anxious to get your bottom strapped, princess. Makes me wonder if I’m not being strict enough with you at home.”

“That is definitely *not* what I said.”

“We’ll see. Maybe a week of no friends and spending all your free time as Daddy’s naughty Little girl will help make up for what you’ve clearly been missing.”

“Daddy! That’s not fair!” Shannon’s voice had pitched up to a whine, making her sound younger and more pitiful than MaryAnn could remember hearing her before.

“We can talk about it more after we’re done here. Does anyone need to potty before we begin?”

Heat infused MaryAnn’s cheeks at the question. It was deliberately worded to humiliate them, but knowing that didn’t ease the sting of embarrassment any. “No, Sir,” she replied in unison with her friends.

“Good. Now, this six is for skinny dipping on a public beach where anyone could have seen you.”

“But we checked before we took our clothes off!” Olivia protested. “Nobody was on the beach with us close enough to see!”

“Did you forget that we have neighbors, little girl?” Her Daddy’s tone left no room for argument. “Or that there are plenty of beach access paths around here where someone could walk right up on you without you seeing them? What if, instead of being caught by your Daddies, you’d been discovered by someone who wanted to hurt you?”

“We didn’t think of that,” Olivia admitted softly.

“Obviously.” Dean picked up the thread, and MaryAnn just barely managed to hold back a whimper at the ice in his tone. Even when she’d been in the biggest trouble she’d ever been in after sneaking out of the house to confront her psycho ex, he’d never sounded so... hard. “By the time we’re finished here, I hope you all will think before you act in the future.”

As if by some unspoken agreement, they all shifted positions, and the sound of belt buckles coming undone rang in the air. MaryAnn dropped her head to focus on her breathing the way her therapist and Dean had taught her. Just as she was letting out the third deep breath, something tapped against her bottom, drawing her attention firmly back to her impending punishment.

She heard it before she felt it. Whether she was hearing Bryant’s belt connecting with her own skin, or one of the others, she wasn’t sure. But a split second after the sound reached her ears, pain exploded across her bottom cheeks, deeper and more intense than anything she’d ever felt with Dean. They’d played with his belt, to get her used to it and remove some of her fear around the implement, but she’d never been punished with it.

Until now.

Gripping the seat of the chair, she clenched her teeth together and breathed through the pain. No way was she going to be the first one to start making a fuss and prove everyone right about how weak she was.

As it turned out, she didn’t have to worry about being the first. That honor went to Olivia, her voice already thick with tears after just one stroke. “I’m sorry! Please, it hurts!”

Maybe Bryant wasn't the hardest spanker in the group, after all. Did that mean Dean had been holding back with her all this time?

She didn't have much time to dwell on it, as the second belt stroke landed, catching her at the sensitive crease where her ass met her thighs. Holy *fuck* that hurt! But still, she forced herself not to make a sound, even as her two friends let out cries of pain from either side of her.

Somehow, she managed to keep quiet through all six strokes, despite the fact her entire backside felt raw and swollen and engulfed in flames by the time the last one landed.

To her surprise, Bryant crouched down beside her chair and brushed her hair from her face, his expression an odd mixture of pride and concern. "You okay, sweetheart?"

"I'm fine. You don't have to fuss over me."

"As the man who just finished striping your ass, yes, I do. And if you'll look around, you'll see you aren't being given any special treatment."

Forcing her head up, she glanced over at Olivia. Sure enough, Dean was mirroring Bryant's stance, murmuring something she couldn't hear as Olivia sniffled loudly and nodded her head. Opposite them, James was doing the same thing with Shannon.

"So, I'm going to ask again little girl, and I expect an honest answer. Are you okay? Do you need to take a break?"

"No, Sir," she replied softly, with significantly less attitude now. "It hurts, but I can take it."

"Good girl. Do you want to talk to your Daddy before we switch?"

If Dean so much as looked at her, she wasn't sure she could keep herself from telling him she'd changed her mind, that she wanted to stop. "No, Sir. But thank you."

"All right. You're doing such a good job, sweetheart. I'm very proud of how you took the first part of your punishment."

"Thank you, Sir."

With a quick squeeze of her shoulder, he stood and there was some shuffling before everything settled again and she realized they must have all switched places.

One down, two to go.

Dean

This was so much harder than he'd imagined. And he'd imagined it would be pretty fucking hard.

Taking his place beside Shannon's chair, he studied MaryAnn's posture, her expression, her breathing. Other than the death grip she had on the seat of the chair and the occasional snuffle she let slip, she seemed to be fine.

Which worried him more than if she'd broken down sobbing.

Had Bryant ignored him and gone too easy on her? Was she too embarrassed to cry?

Or had he been the one treating her with kid gloves this entire time?

Whatever the answer was, he wouldn't know until they finished. So he resigned himself to keeping one eye on her

while he focused on the naughty Little girl in front of him.

One thing was for certain, James hadn't held back even a little with Shannon. Her backside was already red and angry, with six perfectly raised welts. Given what Dean knew of their friendship, it wasn't really surprising that James had given her such a thorough punishment. But despite his conversation with Bryant, he couldn't help but hope James went a little bit easier on MaryAnn.

"All right, girls." It was James who led the charge on the next lecture. "You were all, especially Olivia, made very aware that keeping the doors locked at all times was one of my main stipulations for allowing you to stay here this weekend. What if someone had noticed the back door was open and come inside to wait for you? Not only did you risk the house itself, you risked something far more important—yourselves."

"I'm really, really sorry, Daddy." Olivia's tone was almost pitifully apologetic when she spoke up. "It was my responsibility. I should be the only one gettin' spanked."

"Don't worry, Livvy. Daddy has something in mind to ensure you remember this lesson for a very, very long time. But you were all tasked with remembering the rules, so you are all going to be punished together, as previously discussed."

Just as before, the sounds of leather meeting flesh echoed around the room, practically as one. Olivia and Shannon weren't shy about crying out for their Daddies, or begging for forgiveness, but MaryAnn remained silent.

Halfway through the second round, Dean paused to watch as James laid a fourth stripe across MaryAnn's bottom. Her eyes screwed shut and her knuckles turned white on the edge of the chair, but she still didn't make a sound. If anything, it

seemed as though she was breathing through the pain, like she did with a panic attack.

It would have been impressive if it hadn't been so damn worrisome.

Shifting his focus to the woman in front of him, Dean did his best to ignore his growing concerns about his own babygirl and focused on doling out the rest of Shannon's punishment. After the sixth stroke, he crouched down beside her chair and ran a hand over her hair. "You doing okay, honey?"

"I'm s-sorry!" she wailed, tears flowing freely down her cheeks. "I was tr-trying to be g-good, I swear!"

"Yeah, I know. And it sucks that you're getting your bottom roasted right alongside your friends, but that's what happens when you convince other people to go along with your impulsive ideas. Hasn't Livvy been punished plenty of times because you talked her into breaking her Daddy's rules?"

"Y-yes."

"So, maybe next time you'll all think twice about dragging each other into trouble, huh?"

"Y-yes, Sir. I'm sorry."

"I know you are, honey. And it's almost over. Can you be a big girl for us and take six more?"

"I think so, Sir."

"Good girl."

Rising to his feet, he changed positions one final time and bent to try and meet his babygirl's gaze, but she kept her eyes locked on the floor in front of her. "You okay, baby?"

“I’m fine.”

“Hey. Eyes on me, babygirl.”

With obvious reluctance, she lifted her gaze to meet his, and he was almost relieved to see the sheen of tears over the dark brown. Letting his lips curve in an approving smile, he tucked her hair behind her ear. “There’s my pretty girl.”

As it always did, the praise relaxed her, and she offered up her own tremulous smile. “Hi, Daddy.”

“Hi, baby. Do you need a break?”

“No. I’m okay.”

He hesitated, then went with his gut and cupped her face in his hand. “It’s okay to cry if you need, MaryAnn.”

“Don’t wanna.”

Pushing her too hard was likely to just result in her digging in her heels, so he let it drop for the time being. Once he gave her the final six of her punishment, he had every intention of dragging her upstairs for a very long conversation about what was going on in her head.

For now, he had a spanking to finish.

Chapter 9

MaryAnn

Her ass *ached*. So did her chest and her throat with the effort to hold back the tears brought to the surface by getting her bottom whipped by two men who were obviously not holding back.

She wasn't even sure why she was fighting them so hard anymore. As Dean had pointed out, Olivia and Shannon weren't bothering to keep quiet. But it had, somehow, become a point of pride for her that she wasn't going to cry or carry on.

Hopefully, her own Daddy would be gentler with her than Bryant and James had been. It was humbling to realize that even her worst punishments hadn't come close to what her friends must endure on a regular basis.

Dean's voice cut through the noise in her brain as he launched into his lecture. "And now we come to the final infraction of the night. Swimming after dark. You girls were given this rule for a reason. What if there had been a rip tide and you couldn't see it? What if there had been, god forbid, a shark? Jellyfish? The ocean is dangerous enough during the

day when you can see the potential dangers. You had no business being in there when you couldn't see a damn thing.”

Unlike her first two rounds, she couldn't calm her racing heart as Dean moved into position behind her. And when his belt connected with her already sore, welted backside, she couldn't stop the whimper as the pain flashed through her system.

And with that pain came a stark, sinking realization that her Daddy had absolutely been holding back with her all this time.

Fuck.

The second stroke pushed her up onto her toes, and a few tears slipped silently down her cheeks. Number three caught her sit-spots and she wondered if she'd ever sit comfortably again.

But four... four broke her.

Delivered right across the fullest part of her bottom, it criss-crossed with the welts James and Bryant had left behind. And no amount of self-restraint could have held back her cry of anguish. “Daddy, I'm sorry!”

“I know, baby.” Running his hand over her bottom, he lowered his voice, soothing her with his words. “Two more. Can you be my brave girl and take two more for Daddy?”

Brave. She could be brave. For him. “Y-y-yes.”

“Good girl.”

They came hard and fast, one right after the other, but despite the agonizing, burning pain covering her entire bottom, she managed to keep herself from completely breaking down until Dean pulled her up and into his arms. The moment she

was pressed against him, his scent surrounding her, her breath hitched and she knew the breakdown was coming.

Apparently taking that as his cue, Dean scooped her up, cradling her to his chest like a baby. She kept her eyes shut tight against the burgeoning tears until she felt him settle again, his lips brushing across her forehead as he rocked her gently the way he always did after a punishment.

“My brave Little girl,” he murmured, running a hand up and down her arm. “It’s just us, baby. You can cry now.”

And cry, she did. Great, big, gulping sobs that seemed to wrack her entire body with such force she wondered how she didn’t simply fall apart in his arms.

Through it all, he whispered sweet words of praise. Telling her how brave she’d been, what a good girl she was, how well she’d taken her spanking. How proud of her he was, which seemed silly since she’d been the one to push for the group punishment in the first place.

But little by little, his words calmed her, until finally the sobs faded to sniffles and whimpers as she shifted on his lap. “I’m r-really sorry, Daddy.”

“I know, baby. Are you feeling up to talking about it, or do you want to wait until morning?”

If they waited, she wouldn’t sleep. “I can talk now.”

“Okay. You said skinny dipping at night was your idea. Want to tell me your thought process there, babygirl?”

“I dunno. I just sorta thought it would be this fun, exciting secret between the three of us.”

“I hate to tell you this, baby, but Liv can’t keep a secret to save her life. Especially when she knows she’s been naughty.

She would have told James eventually and then you'd have been in even more trouble.”

“More trouble?” It seemed impossible for anything to be worse than the punishment she'd already gotten.

“Yes. Keeping naughty behavior from Daddy is the same thing as lying. And do I allow my Little girl to lie to me?”

“No, Daddy,” she whispered, fresh tears welling up in her eyes. She hadn't considered any of that when she'd talked her friends into breaking the rules.

“No, I absolutely do not. So, one way or another, you were going to be found out. But putting all of that aside... Why skinny dipping? Were you just bored? Looking for something exciting to do?”

It would be so easy to take the easy out he was offering her. Except, they'd just finished a conversation about how lies weren't allowed between them, and she had a feeling he'd figure her out eventually. “Not exactly.”

“Then what was it, baby? Help me out, because this seems so unlike you and I really want to understand what's going on with my Little girl.”

“It just sorta happened.” Once she started, the words seemed to pour out of her in a jumbled rush. “We were having a pillow fight and then I mentioned how I'd never had one because I didn't really go to sleepovers as a kid and then Shannon got all mad about my mom again and I'm just so *tired* of feeling like a freak and everyone always feeling sorry for me, and I just wanted to do something to prove I wasn't a wounded fucking bird anymore. Because I'm not. Or, at least, I don't want to be. God, that all sounds so stupid when I say it out loud.”

“No, it doesn’t. It makes perfect sense.”

“It does?”

“Yes. And I have a feeling I’m somewhat to blame for you feeling that way.”

“Oh, no. Dean, that’s not at all what I—”

“I know, baby. But I’ve been holding back with you, and I think the others have at least partially taken their cues from me. At the very least, I knew that Bryant and James were treating you differently and I didn’t stop them because I thought you needed that.”

Her first instinct was to deny it, to argue with him. But when she thought about how she’d been at the very beginning of their relationship, how absolutely terrified she’d been of literally everything, she was forced to admit he’d made the right call. “I think... I think maybe I *did* need that, at least at first.”

“But not anymore?”

“No. Maybe. I mean, I don’t really know what you’ve been holding back, or how they’ve been treating me differently, so I can’t really say if I’m ready for something else, can I?”

“That’s a very good answer, babygirl.” He pressed a kiss to her temple, and she all but melted at his praise. “So, how about this. When we get home, I’ll make a list of five new things for us to try together. You can pick one, and if that goes well, you can choose another until we work our way through the list. Sound good?”

It sounded wonderful and terrifying all at the same time. And as much as she wanted to be his brave girl, she couldn’t help the worry fluttering in her chest. “It does, but...”

“But what if something on the list seems really scary and you don’t want to try it?”

“You know, you keep telling me you’re not a mind reader but I’m not sure I believe you.”

Chuckling, he pulled her tighter against him, and some of the anxiousness eased as she snuggled back into his embrace. “I’m not a mind reader, but I do know my babygirl and I’ve gotten pretty good at telling when you’re worrying yourself over something you don’t need to worry about. If there’s anything on the list you absolutely don’t want to try, or you want to put off for a bit, just let me know. We don’t have to do anything you’re not ready for.”

“But how is that any different than the way things have been? You’ll still be holding back.”

“Because now you’ll have more of a voice in what gets held back. And trust me, baby, everyone has things they won’t try because it scares them or they just flat out don’t want to do it.”

“Really? Even Shannon and Olivia?” It seemed impossible that such strong women were afraid of anything.

“Absolutely. Ask them about their hard limits and I guarantee they have a list. Even Daddies have hard limits.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“I know. And that’s my fault. We should have had this conversation months ago. Forgive me, babygirl?”

“On one condition.”

“What’s that?”

“Will you talk to Shannon and Olivia’s Daddies and tell them not to treat me special anymore? Wait.” Sitting up, she

shook her head. “Scratch that. I still want you to tell them, but *after* we get to have our spa day.”

“I’m not really sure what one has to do with the other, but it’s a deal.”

“Thank you, Daddy.”

“Anything for you, babygirl. But now that we’ve talked about how I’m going to do things differently, it’s your turn.”

Uh oh. Suddenly feeling wary, she shifted nervously on his lap. “My turn?”

“Yes. While I understand how you were feeling, breaking rules that were put in place to keep you and your friends safe wasn’t the best way to go about making a point. Was it?”

“No, Daddy. And I’m really sorry, it won’t ever happen again.”

“I’m glad to hear that. But do you remember the conversation we had last night? About you still feeling like the things that happened with Nate were your fault?”

Her bottom clenched instinctively at his words, renewing the ache from her spanking. “Yes...”

“Do you think maybe that’s part of why you had such a strong reaction to Shannon telling you that James and Bryant treat you differently? Because maybe some part of you feels like you don’t deserve their kindness?”

The denial burned on her tongue, but she paused, weighing his words in her mind.

Was that why she’d been so upset at the idea of being treated differently? Part of it had certainly been Shannon’s ‘wounded bird’ comment, because there was no denying it had stung.

But, in reality, she *was* wounded. Even with therapy and Dean's gentle guidance, she knew damn well she still had wounds that were far too easily ripped open. Just like when they'd been on the boardwalk.

Maybe their Daddies had all gone a little overboard trying to protect her, but it was becoming more and more clear they'd only done so because they all cared about her.

And that was the pill she couldn't seem to swallow.

"Maybe," she confessed quietly after a long silence. "I don't know how they can look at me and not see all the bad things that happened to Shannon and Olivia. They should hate me and I don't understand why they don't."

"Because nothing that happened was your fault, babygirl. I know it's hard for you to accept that, so when you have your next session with Jeanine, I want you to talk to her about why you feel that way and what we can do to help you work through those guilty feelings. Okay?"

Dean hardly ever got involved with her therapy sessions unless she invited him, so the fact that he was inserting himself now meant he was serious. And that any attempts to argue with him would likely just end up with her over his knee getting her already sore bottom spanked until she agreed. "Yes, Daddy."

"Thank you, baby. In the meantime, you are going to sit your naughty little bottom down and write me some lines."

"Daddy," she whined, dragging the word out as long as she could. "Can't it wait until we get home?"

"Well, it certainly can. But I figured you would be happy to write them now, since I didn't bring a mat for you to sit on."

At home, they had a whole stack of specialty mats for her desk chair made of the same material as the kind of mats people used to clean their shoes off before going into a house. They were scratchy and absolute misery on a freshly-spanked butt, and her Daddy always made sure to spank her right before she sat down. So yeah, maybe sitting on her welted bottom would suck, but it was definitely preferable to the alternative. “Now is good.”

“That’s what I thought. Stand up.”

With a quiet sigh, she rose from his lap and watched as he approached a small writing desk she’d barely paid attention to before. Leave it to James to furnish his beach house with plenty of places for a naughty Little girl to sit and write lines.

Her suspicions were confirmed when Dean opened the top of the desk and removed a large pad of paper and a pen. Closing the lid, he sat the pad down and bent over it, his hand moving swiftly across the page.

“All right. Come here, babygirl.”

Dragging her feet just a little, she crossed the short distance to stand beside him. “What if we just forget about the lines and I promise to be a good girl forever and ever and ever?”

“I think we both know that’s a promise you wouldn’t be able to keep, little girl. And this lesson is too important to skip. Now, sit your bottom down before I decide it’s not sore enough.”

The threat had its desired effect and she immediately lowered herself down to the hard wood. Even without the scratchy mat, her bottom ached at the contact and she couldn’t help but whimper a bit at the renewed pain.

“Good girl. One hundred lines of the first sentence, then another hundred of the second. I’m going to go downstairs and get my duffel bag, but I’ll be right back.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said with another sigh as she picked up her pen and pulled the pad of paper closer to her.

Tears blurred her vision, but even through them, the words were clear.

I am worthy of the love my friends choose to give me. I have nothing to prove to anyone, especially myself.

Picking up her pen, she blew out a shaky breath, and got to work.

Chapter 10

Dean

He paused in the doorway to watch her as she scanned the sentences he'd written for her. The hitch of her breath told him the words had hit their mark.

Good. Maybe they wouldn't need to repeat this particular lesson very often.

Gently pulling the door closed behind him, he turned to head down the stairs, jerking slightly when he spotted Bryant doing the same thing from the bedroom a bit further down the hall. A second later, the door to the master bedroom across the stairs opened, and James stepped out.

For a moment, they all stared at each other before grinning practically in unison. James pressed a finger to his lips and gestured down the stairs. Obviously, Livvy was already asleep and he didn't want to wake her.

They made their way downstairs together, and Bryant collapsed on the couch, his head falling back as his eyes closed. "God, I'm fucking exhausted. This is not how I thought this night was going to go."

“Really?” Grinning, James dropped down beside his brother. “I assumed this was exactly what would happen. Well, perhaps not this level of naughty, but I had no doubts I would be turning Olivia’s bottom red before she went to bed tonight.”

“Fair,” Bryant conceded with a sigh. “I think I’m just exhausted all around.”

“Because you work too much.” When Bryant lifted his head to glare at him, Dean just shrugged. “You know it’s the truth. And if you keep it up, you’re not going to have enough energy for your Little girl and that’s not fair to either of you.”

“It’s really annoying when you’re right all the time, you know that?”

“I get that a lot.”

“I bet. Probably drives MaryAnn batty. Speaking of, how’s she doing? Is she dead to the world, too?”

“No. She’s writing lines. I was actually just coming down to grab my bag so I could get back up to her.”

The brothers exchanged a smirk. It was no secret between them what all ‘writing lines’ entailed in Dean’s household.

“We won’t keep you, then. But tell us you at least got this silly idea that she holds any blame for Nate’s actions out of her head,” James said, any hint of amusement fleeing his expression.

“Working on it. I think it would still help to hear it from both of you. But that will have to wait until morning.”

“We’ll be here. You get back to your babygirl.”

“Thanks.” With that, Dean grabbed his duffel from where they’d dropped them at the front door on their way in and headed back up the stairs.

MaryAnn

Most days, she hated writing lines. But then, *I will not ignore Daddy when it's time to go to bed* didn't have nearly the same emotional impact as the words currently in front of her.

At first, it was the 'worthy of love' part that had her smiling down at her paper, even as her hand began to cramp. It wasn't until she was nearing the fiftieth line that she focused on the second part of that sentence.

I am worthy of the love my friends choose to give me.

Nobody was holding a gun to anyone's head and demanding that her friends spend time with her. Really, nobody would blame them if they'd never wanted to be friends with her in the first place. But even after three brushes with death, Shannon and Olivia had chosen her. James and Bryant too, now that she stopped to think about it. If either of them truly felt she'd been to blame for Nate's actions, there was no way they would allow their Little girls to be friends with her.

Funny how a painful punishment and a solid cry could make things so much clearer.

The bedroom door opened with a slight squeak, and she twisted around to smile at Dean as he stepped inside, his black duffel bag thrown over one shoulder. "Hi, Daddy."

"How are the lines coming, babygirl?"

"Good. A little over a quarter of the way there."

Dropping the bag on the bed, he crossed the room to glance over her shoulder before bending down to brush a kiss across the top of her head. “Good girl. I’ll leave you to it.”

She could hear him moving around behind her, and a familiar unease tightened in her gut. Was he preparing for what came after her lines were written? Would he spank her again? Sometimes he did, just because he said he loved to feel the heat in her cheeks when he was buried in her bottom. Hopefully tonight wasn’t going to be one of those times.

Doing her best to ignore him, she refocused on her lines. It wasn’t long before she finished the first hundred and moved onto the second line.

I have nothing to prove to anyone, especially myself.

That one was even harder to swallow than the one about being worthy of love. How could she not have anything to prove?

But as she wrote, the seemingly ever-present weight in her chest lessened just a bit with each line. And by the time she’d finished all two hundred lines, she was feeling lighter than she had in, well, possibly forever.

“All done, Daddy.”

“Let’s see.” Moving to stand beside her, he picked up the pad and carefully scanned every line. Sometimes she wondered if he was actually checking, or if he just wanted it to *feel* like he was being extra thorough. Either way, it always left her squirming in her seat a bit, waiting for him to find something wrong.

Like always, though, there was nothing and he eventually returned the pad to the desk. “Good girl. How are you feeling about the lines?”

“Really good, actually.” She hesitated a bit, warring with the desire to get her punishment over with and the need to talk out her feelings. “I sorta still feel like I have something to prove.”

“We’ll work on that. But whenever you start to feel that way, just remember the first line I gave you.”

“Why? What does that have to do with anything?”

“Oh, babygirl.” Gripping her chin between his thumb and forefinger, he tilted her head back. “Because when people love you, there is never anything to prove.”

“Oh.” Fresh tears pooled in her eyes, but she blinked them back. “I didn’t realize they were connected.”

“Well, you can think about that while you read them out loud for Daddy. Stand up.”

A shiver raced up her spine at his words, but she pushed to her feet and turned to face the desk, leaning down to place her forearms on either side of the legal pad and her feet braced the way her Daddy had taught her.

“That’s my good girl,” he crooned, running his hands over her aching flesh. “You’re going to have some pretty marks in the morning, babygirl.”

Marks? He hardly ever spanked her hard enough for her to see any proof of it the next day. The idea of waking up to a reminder of her punishment sent a flash of white-hot arousal through her.

“Relax for me, babygirl. We need to get you nice and loosened up so you can take Daddy’s cock in that naughty little bottom of yours.”

Groaning softly, she dropped her head and forced the muscles in her lower half to relax as he popped open a bottle of lube and coated her bottom hole with the cool liquid. And then forced herself not to tense up all over again when his finger pushed past her initial resistance and deep into that tight, forbidden part of her.

Then a second finger, spreading and loosening her with enough of a burn for her breath to catch and her pussy to throb emptily, as if it knew it was being denied. Why being punished this way turned her on so fiercely, she didn't know, but it did.

“There we go. Deep breath, baby.” His fingers were replaced by the blunt tip of his cock pushing into her, forcing her open far more than any plug they owned ever had. “You're going to take all of me, aren't you? Because you're my good girl, isn't that right, MaryAnn?”

“Y-yes, Daddy,” she managed to gasp out as he finally settled deep inside of her. “But it hurts!”

More than usual, probably because she hadn't been plugged while writing her lines. She always hated that part, hated feeling the heaviness of it inside of her when she shifted in her seat, but she'd never realized how much it helped to prepare her for Daddy's cock.

“I know, baby. I want it to hurt. I want this to be a lesson you remember.” Rocking backward and then forward, he fucked her with slow, shallow strokes. And even then, her bottom burned with every movement. “You are so fucking loved, babygirl, by so many people. And if I have to repeat this lesson once a week for the rest of your life to make you see that, then that's what I'll do.”

What did it say about her that instead of terrifying her, the threat only made her feel more safe, more loved, than she

already did? “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Read your first line, baby.”

With that instruction, he pulled back, far enough to have only the tip of his cock inside of her as she struggled to focus on the words on the page. “I am worthy of the love my friends choose to give me.”

Gripping her hips, he thrust forward, slamming into her sore, punished bottom with enough force to make her cry out even as pleasure flooded her system. “*Choose* to give you, babygirl. We are all here, together, because we choose to be. Read it again.”

Voice trembling, she repeated the line over and over as he fucked her with those long, forceful strokes. Pain and pleasure melded together inside of her, until she could no longer tell where one ended and the other began.

“Daddy, please. Please.”

“Tell Daddy what you want, babygirl.”

“Want to—want to come. Oh, fuck. Please!”

Clever fingers slid between her soaked pussy lips to where her clit ached and throbbed with every beat of her heart. “Next line, baby. And then Daddy will let you come.”

“God,” she choked out, forcing her eyes to focus on the words in front of her. “I h-have nothing to p-prove to anyone, especially my-myself.”

The hand not currently working her toward oblivion wrapped around her throat, hauling her up, forcing her back to bow as he pulled her head back toward him. All the while, he fucked her, claiming her bottom hole with that delicious burning pain.

“You are fucking perfect, exactly the way you are, MaryAnn Foster. And you will never, ever risk yourself like this again because you think you have something to prove. Do you hear me, little girl?”

He tightened his grip on her throat, just enough for her vision to blacken at the edges and panic to claw at her chest. “Y-yes, Daddy!” she somehow managed to gasp out past the constriction around her throat.

“Good girl,” he growled in her ear, loosening his hold so she could breathe freely once again. “I love you, so fucking much, baby. Are you going to be a good girl and come for Daddy? I want to feel you come while I have my cock buried in your pretty, welted bottom.”

Like she had a choice with his knowing fingers forcing pleasure on her, driving her higher and higher toward her peak. Even if she’d wanted to disobey, her body was no longer hers to command.

A low, needy whine escaped her throat, earning her a wicked chuckle in response. “That’s my pretty girl. Come for Daddy, baby.”

Pleasure erupted from her very core, flooding her body with such intensity, her vision once more threatened to turn black. If it hadn’t been for his hand around her throat holding her upright, she wasn’t certain her legs could have held her.

“*Fuck*, baby. You feel so good on Daddy’s cock. Now you’re going to take every last drop of Daddy’s cum in your tight little bottom hole, like the good fucking girl you are.”

With one final thrust he filled her, just as a second orgasm crashed over her, leaving her weaker and shakier than the first. For what seemed like an eternity, the only sound in the room

was their ragged breathing, interspersed by the occasional whimper as her bottom clenched instinctively around his softening cock.

“Such a good girl,” he crooned softly after their breaths returned to somewhat normal. “Let’s get you cleaned up and into bed, baby.”

She was only vaguely aware of being carried to the shower, of the warm water splashing over her as she swayed on her feet before her Daddy pulled her close. Of the soapy washcloth being so carefully brushed along her skin. The pain from her punishment flared back to life when he turned her back toward the spray, and she burrowed into him with another soft whimper as he gently cleaned her sore bottom.

“I know, baby. We’re almost done.”

By the time he dried them off and carried her to the bed, her eyes were already drifting closed. “Daddy?”

“Yeah, baby?”

“Will you marry me?”

There was a long pause before his deep laughter echoed around the room. “Well, now you’ve gone and ruined my surprise. I was planning to ask you in the morning. On the beach. I brought the ring and everything.”

Warmth filled her, but she was too wrung out to do more than smile. “You still can. I’ll pretend to be surprised.”

“That’s my good girl.”

The End

There's more!

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About Stella Moore

Stella is a USA Today Bestselling author of romance featuring irresistibly sassy heroines and the strict, dominant men who try to tame them. Her favorite place to write is on her deck, with a glass of wine, enjoying her fabulous view of the countryside. Aside from reading and writing, Stella's favorite hobby is shopping. She is a fierce advocate for teaching women to love themselves, both in her writing and in the real world!

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Are We There Yet by
Maggie Ryan

A MF story by Maggie Ryan

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Chapter 1

“Are we there yet?”

“Have I stopped the car?” His answer was instantaneous. Of course, having been asked the same question for the umpteenth time in the span of a few short hours allowed Liam’s response to be given without a second’s thought.

“Nooooooooooooo.”

He’d bet his last dollar the only reason she’d failed to add yet another “o” to the word was because the drawn-out, exaggerated sigh accompanying it had taken every ounce of oxygen she had in her body. His eyes flicked to the right to see his Little girl sink lower in her seat.

“Babygirl, sit up straight and pull your seatbelt tighter, please.”

With another dramatic exhale, she obeyed, pushing herself back up before giving the seatbelt a tug so it would actually hold her in place.

“That’s my good—”

The word “girl” he uttered was drowned out by a piercing shriek as his Little girl began to bounce as much as the newly

tightened belt would allow, her finger pointing out the window. “Daddy, look! There, can you see them?”

His heart rate had skyrocketed with her shriek and went up another notch when he glanced out the windshield to see where she was pointing.

The tires added their own discordant squeal when he pressed the brake pedal to the floor as the deer ran into the road. Despite the seatbelt he’d just insisted she tighten, his right arm instinctively shot out to brace his Little girl.

“Don’t hit them!” she screamed, her eyes slamming shut and her hand grabbing the “oh shit” handle above the door.

The car rocked hard as it came to a stop, missing the pair of deer by less than a foot. The fawn didn’t seem the least bit fazed, continuing across the road while its mother stood in the middle of the asphalt, ears pitched forward as if hearing the cry from the car’s passenger. Time stood still as he and the animal locked glances. The doe’s wide brown eyes matched the velvet of her coat.

A soft whimper drew his gaze to the trembling Little beside him to see her fingers splayed open just the barest minimum required in order to sneak a peek, ready to snap closed again if the sight before her proved to be what she feared. Instead, the corners of her lips turned up in a smile, her hands dropped to her lap, and she gave the softest, “Ohhhhh,” he’d ever heard her utter.

“She’s beautiful, isn’t she, Daddy?” she asked softly in awe.

“Yes,” he agreed, glancing again at the majestic animal. With a slight dip of her head, the deer’s muscles bunched, and they watched as she leapt across the blacktop to follow her

fawn, the pair disappearing into the woods bordering both sides of the road.

“That was awesome!”

Awesome?

That wasn't the word he'd choose. Not by a long shot.

“We do *not* scream in the car, young lady.”

“But, Daddy, you were gonna hit her baby!”

“The fawn didn't run into the road until you screamed,” he pointed out.

“*You* said to tell you if I saw any animals on the road,” she reminded him.

Giving her a stern look, he shook his head, his right brow arching. “Do we really need to discuss the difference between calmly alerting me and screaming so loudly you nearly gave me a heart attack?”

“Sorry, Daddy.”

Realizing his arm was still held out to prevent her from flying forward, he dropped his hand to her leg and let the light squeeze he gave her thigh speak for him.

“Let's just speak a little lower and no more bouncing, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy,” she said brightly while giving another little bounce before his words sank in. “Oopsie.”

“Just remember oopsies quite often lead to owies,” he said, completely unable to keep from grinning as two faint pink circles appeared on her cheeks.

With a final glance to the trees, he took his foot off the brake and the car rolled forward again.

“Do you think we’ll see another deer, Daddy?” she asked as they smoothly took yet another curve.

“I’m sure we’ll see plenty,” Liam answered. “Let’s just hope there aren’t any more in the road. That was way too close for comfort.”

“It was a bit scary,” she admitted. “I’m so glad you didn’t hit them.”

From the corner of his eye, he saw her arms cross across her chest as she hugged herself. A quick glance let him know her stuffed lion had slid to the floor when he’d slammed on the brakes.

“Me too, babygirl,” he said. “Sorry about Dander.”

“It’s okay,” she said before wistfully looking toward the floor where the stuffie lay.

He grinned as the toes of her sneakers arrowed downward as if to point out the stuffie’s position, but the grin disappeared when he saw her begin to slide down in her seat in an attempt to close her feet around the lion’s body like the claw machine in an arcade.

“Sit up, Gertie girl. I’ll get Dander for you when we stop.”

When she obeyed without complaint and kept her arms in place, he knew his Little girl had been far more scared than she’d let on. It was another five miles before he saw a posted sign that read “scenic lookout”. Taking the exit, he pulled to a much smoother stop and turned off the ignition. He got out of the car and moved around the hood to her door. Opening it, he bent down and scooped the stuffie into his hand and wagged it in front of his Little who now wore a tremulous smile, both arms wide as she reached for the lion... or so he thought.

Instead of grabbing the stuffie, she pulled him down close enough to bury her face in his neck. “I’m really sorry I scared you, Daddy.”

He felt the warmth of her breath against his skin as she added, “And I’m really, really glad your heart didn’t attack you.”

His heart that had just been pounding melted as she pressed the softest kiss beneath his ear. He could feel every inch of her trembling.

“Oh, babygirl,” he said softly, unlatching her belt and lifting her out of the car, Dander smushed between their bodies. He held her tightly, his eyes closed as he thanked the gods for the woman in his arms and for the fact nothing far more serious than a bad fright had occurred.

“I’m okay,” he assured her, opening his eyes. With one arm beneath her butt to provide a secure shelf for her to sit on, he added, “And so are you.” He felt her body begin to soften with every stroke of his fingers through her thick auburn curls. After a few minutes, she pushed away in order to look up at him and give him a little nod. He pressed his lips against hers, his body reacting instinctively when she gave a loud moan that had every cell in his body sitting up to take notice. Though he instantly wanted to bend her over the car’s hood and take her from behind, he did the more mature Daddy-thing and turned them both to face the valley.

The sign hadn’t lied. The fact the scenery was breathtaking was proven with her single deep inhale and whispered “wow” uttered on the exhale.

Now *that* was a word he had absolutely no problem agreeing with.

“I’d say more like double wow.”

She giggled. “Super-duper-quadruple wowie,” she said, skipping over several levels of wow to up the ante.

“Can’t argue with that,” he agreed as she finally remembered Dander, pulling him free to share the view spread out before them. A ribbon of silver twisted across the valley like a snake. Rocks became sparkling scales on the serpent’s body as the sunlight pierced through the water of the river slithering through the forest. He couldn’t decide what color he’d describe his eyes were seeing. At least a dozen different shades of verdant green filled the valley as thousands of trees marched across rolling hills from the river to the horizon. They watched as a hawk glided effortlessly across a sky the color of the Caribbean Ocean, not a single cloud marring the pure cerulean expanse.

When it suddenly dove, he could feel his Little straining to get free for a closer look. Not about to set her down to run to the short rock wall separating them from a fall of at least several hundred feet, he tightened his hold. “We can watch from right here, little girl.”

“What’s he doing?” she asked.

“Fishing for his supper would be my guess,” Liam said. “What’s wrong?” he asked when she gave a long sigh.

“I can’t decide if that’s good or bad,” she admitted. “I mean, I know he has to eat but that means some poor little fishie has to...”

When she trailed off, he reached for Dander and gave the lion a little shake to fluff out his mane. Lowering his tone, he spoke in the voice he’d given the stuffie the moment she’d adopted the lion from the store.

“Remember the circle of life, little one,” he growled.

“He’s right,” Liam said in his regular voice as if Dander truly was the third among them. “Tuna mapapa and all that.”

Her giggle became the cutest little snort. “It’s Hakuna matata,” she said, giving the stuffie a hug. “Isn’t Daddy just the silliest thing?”

Silly was perfectly okay with him when it allowed the love of his life to relax in his arms. They admired the view long enough for her to dig into his jean pocket.

“Well, aren’t you quite the forward one,” he said as his cock stirred at the brush of her fingers through the denim.

“Daddy! I just want your phone,” she said, successfully pulling it free. After taking a few shots, she instructed him to turn around so their backs were to the valley. “Say cheeesseeee,” she commanded, taking several selfies.

She scrolled through the photos and stopped on one, enlarging it. “Look, Daddy, there’s the hawk!” she said, showing him the screen where the hawk soared above them in the background. “This is a fabtastiful photo,” she added, giving the picture her highest level of Little praise.

“Definitely frame worthy,” he agreed. “Ready to go?”

“Yes!” she said with enthusiasm and, using what he referred to as her outdoor voice, yelled, “Goodbye, Mr. Hawk!”

When he stopped at the exit of the lookout to check for both traffic and any deer, she asked, “Are we there yet?”

He could only shake his head and groan before pulling back onto the road.

Chapter 2

She buried her face in Dander's mane and giggled when her Daddy groaned. Other Littles might not dare laugh when their Daddies made such sounds, but she just couldn't help it. Her Daddy's groans and growls were so sexy she had to press her thighs tightly together to keep her hand from straying to her hidden place. A place that had been designated as a definite "no touch" zone.

Well, if she were being entirely truthful, it was often touched and sometimes even by her own hands, but only when given direct orders from her Daddy that it was okay for her to do so. No amount of sternness or head shaking could keep her panties from dampening though. She might be a Little but underneath her purple and black polka-dotted t-shirt and pink leggings, she was all woman and her Daddy qualified as the world's sexiest and most perfect Daddy ever to have graced the universe.

She absentmindedly combed her fingers through Dander's fur as the car continued to climb up the mountain and then swoop down, twisting left then right, before rising up and diving down...

"Um, Daddy?" she said as one hand pressed against her stomach.

“Are you okay?”

“I-I don’t think so,” she admitted as the car dipped yet again. “My tummy hurts.”

“Hurts?” he asked. “What kind of pain? Stabbing, continuous, occasional, aching?”

She shook her head even though she should have known he’d go directly to Doctor Daddy mode. “Not really pain, pain. More like icky.”

“Icky? Babygirl, Daddy needs a bit more than that.”

Remembering the pull-out, she clarified. “It’s swooping. Like the hawk, Daddy. Up and down, and then swishing from side to...” She couldn’t get the last word out before she slapped her free hand over her mouth.

Liam pulled the car off the road despite there not being any scenic lookout available. He was out of his door and framed in hers before she even registered they’d stopped. Once he had her belt unfastened, he gently took her out of the car and guided her to the edge of the road. Sweeping her long hair into one hand, he kept an arm securely around her as he bent her forward.

“Go ahead, babygirl. Let it out.”

Despite his instructions and the fact her stomach really did feel icky, nothing happened.

“Gertie, I know you hate being sick, but I promise, you’ll feel better if you’d let yourself throw up,” he said, gently prying her hand from her mouth and squeezing it in his.

She could list the grossest of gross things on one hand and hurling took up at least two entire fingers. After another long moment, she shook her head ever so slightly.

“I can’t.”

“You can,” he corrected.

“Will you hold Dander?”

“Of course,” he said, accepting the stuffie and tucking him beneath his arm. “Just relax, we’ve got you.”

And they did. Dander never flinched as nature took over and she lost the contents of her stomach. Her Daddy offered words of encouragement and praise until all that was left were a few final dry heaves. Once she was done, he wiped her face with his handkerchief, passed the stuffed lion to her, and guided her to sit back on her heels. It proved be an easy position for him to press his free hand against her forehead to test her temperature.

“I got carsick, Daddy. I don’t have a fever,” she said softly, looking up at him.

“Doesn’t hurt to check now does it?” Taking advantage of her position to gently palpate her neck, he added, “I’ll get you a pill when we get back in the car.”

She barely resisted the urge to assure him she didn’t have mumps either by stating, “You can’t. We were out, remember?” When he looked absolutely dejected, she was very glad she’d not teased him further about his overreactive roadside manner.

She reached up and laid her palm against his cheek. “It’s okay, Daddy. I feel better now.” It was a teeny-tiny fib, but she’d say anything to wipe that look from his face.

When he frowned and his eyebrow quirked, she added Psychic Daddy to his long list of titles.

Still, she wasn't without skills herself. "I might still be a bit queasy, and I could really use something to wash my mouth out, but I'm not gonna hurl in the car."

"Are you sure?" he asked, not even bothering to hide the fact his finger was now on the pulse point in her throat to check how fast her heart was pumping.

"I promise I'm good to go, Daddy."

"All right, but we're stopping at the store and getting you some Dramamine."

"That's a prescription I'll be glad to take, Doctor Daddy."

"Doctor Daddy? You're just too cute," he said, a grin replacing his worried expression as he bent to kiss her forehead before walking her back to the car. When she attempted to climb inside once he opened the door, he pulled her back. "Hold on a second," he instructed.

"What are you doing?" she asked as he bent down to reach across the front seat.

"I specifically remember hearing you wanted Daddy to wash your mouth out."

The words might sound a bit familiar, but she sure hadn't meant them to be taken *that* way. "No, Daddy. I said *something*, not *someone*, and I just meant I could use a drink to wash the ickies out. Just water, no soap!"

He pulled back, giving her a frown. "Are you sure? I've heard ickies can be quite difficult to get rid of. A sliver of soap —"

"I couldn't be any surer than the surest of sure one could be that I definitely do *not* need soap." His huge grin had her rolling her eyes. "You're teasing me, you big ole meanie."

“Gotcha. Here you go,” he said, her travel cup in hand only to shake it and discover it empty. “Well, let’s try that again, shall we?” A second foray in the car awarded him his own bottle of water which had a few ounces left.

“Thanks, Daddy,” she said, accepting the bottle. By the time she’d swished and rinsed and did some very unladylike spitting, she’d emptied the bottle and given him a thumbs up. They were soon on their way once again.

“It shouldn’t be too much farther,” Liam said as she hugged Dander just a bit tighter against her belly.

Despite her promise not to hurl in the car, she was extremely glad when his words proved true and it took only a few more hills and twisty curves before he flipped on his signal to turn. If there had been any doubt they were no longer in the city, it instantly evaporated. Instead of a sprawl of several different storefronts and at least two choices of fast-food places to choose from all filling a long strip of concrete, they pulled to a stop in front of the one and only store in the parking lot. Yep, they were definitely smack dab in the middle of a small town out in the country.

“Dam,” she said, snorting back a giggle when her Daddy practically gave himself whiplash turning his head to stare at her, his eyebrows shooting to his hairline.

“You better be so sick with delirium you have no idea what’s coming out of your mouth if you’re cursing, little girl,” he admonished.

Glad he was simply Daddy now, she shook her head. “Not the naughty kind of damn, Daddy. Just, you know, the regular kind of dam.”

“And now you’re babbling,” he said, the worried expression returning as he lifted his hand.

Before he could press it against her forehead, she grabbed it in hers and used their joined hands to gesture out the windshield, drawing his attention to the sign that hung above the store’s door. “The Dam Store,” she said. “See, Daddy? We’re at The *Dam* Store.” As if that wasn’t good enough, she spelled the word. “D A M spells the good kind of *dam* not the naughty way with the ‘N’ at the end which spells dam—”

“I’ve very well aware of what it spells, young lady,” he said, giving her a look that had her butt muscles tightening. “I also know it is not *F U N N Y*.”

If he was also spelling, it was definitely time for a distraction. Fortunately, she had one on hand. “Do you think they have Dramamine?”

“Only one way to find out,” he said, immediately sliding back into loving caretaker. “Do you want to wait out here?”

“And miss seeing if this store sells anything besides dam supplies?” she asked, a bit amazed at her own audacity. But really, who could blame her? It was simply impossible to expect a Little not to take advantage of the situation. After all, there was no rule against reading a sign even if the word could be misconstrued. “Do you think there’s really a dam somewhere around here?” she asked as he helped her from the car.

Liam glanced around. “Since we’ve been driving alongside a river for the past several miles, it stands to reason there is, but I suggest you give serious consideration as to how many times you want to push me,” he warned, giving the seat of her leggings a subtle but definite slap.

“Hey, it’s not my fault the name is The Dam Store,” she protested, rubbing her butt with both hands.

Evidently, he decided to shift his approach because instead of saying a word, he ignored her, taking her hand as they climbed the wooden steps to the porch that ran along the length of the entire store. A few rockers and a pair of ceiling fans provided some ambiance to the store while also adding a bit to her nausea as she watched the blades of the fans whirl around and around and...

“Dramamine,” she reminded, pressing a hand against her lower abdomen.

“Welcome,” a man’s voice greeted them as they pushed through the door. “Oh, it looks like someone isn’t feeling so hot,” he quickly added, stepping around the counter to walk down an aisle.

Her first thought was it appeared her Daddy wasn’t the only psychic. Her assumption changed when the man returned with a green and gold bag instead of the yellow and purple box she was familiar with.

“Do you have any Dramamine?” she asked as he approached them.

“Right here, little lady,” he said, stopping before them and offering her the bag.

Taking it, she read the label and squished the bag to ensure that instead of hard pills, the bag really did contain soft doses that were meant to be chewed instead of swallowed. That was a definite point in the pro column. The second was the label also mentioned these were great tasting and contained lemon, ginger, and honey. In other words, the medicine fairy had swept down to wave her magic wand over the bag to ensure

that even though nausea was really, really gross, this new type of Dramamine wasn't going to be.

“How did he know?” she asked, her eyes wide as she offered the bag to her Daddy.

Liam simply grinned as the grocer chuckled, his smile reaching his blue eyes as he answered instead. “My wife used to be a flat-lander when we met. Despite being married over fifty years, she still gets car sick driving around in these hills. Probably the reason she prefers to ride her horse.”

“She has a horse?” Gertie asked as she tugged the bag from her Daddy's hands. “That's awesome and I'd love to meet her, but since I had to ride in a boring old car, we'll take these. I mean, I'll take them, but not like steal take them—”

A belly laugh worthy of Santa Claus poured from the man's mouth as he took the bag from her. “You're like meeting my Betty all over again,” he said as he ripped the bag open and handed two of the wrapped lozenges not to her, but to Liam who nodded, removed the foil, and held the first one out.

When she stuck out her hand, he shook his head.

“You haven't washed your hands.”

“Is there some invisible sink I'm missing where you washed yours?” she retorted.

“No, but you're missing the fact that I'm not touching the actual medicine,” he said.

Sure enough, she could see he was still holding a bit of foil that had wrapped the medicine.

“And I'd watch the sass if I were you, tummy ache or not.”

Knowing it wasn't a suggestion as much as a warning, she nodded which had her stomach roiling. Far more slowly, she

tilted her head back and opened her mouth wide. The medicine dropped onto her tongue and she cautiously gave it a chew. Despite the label's promise, she wasn't absolutely positive the manufacturer's idea of what tasted great and hers were the same. Fortunately, she and the medicine fairy evidently had identical tastebuds because the medicine was actually quite tasty. She opened her mouth again, her toe tapping as the second lozenge was unwrapped.

"Your little one looks just like a baby bird," the older man said with a grin.

"Cheep-cheep-cheep."

"A greedy one at that." Liam laughed and she huffed.

It was only when her hands went to her hips that Gertie remembered she was still holding Dander. She could feel her cheeks heating as she turned to glance back at the grocer, the movement causing the second dose of medicine to bounce off her lip instead of landing on her tongue.

"Easy," the store's owner said as he reached out, only to find his hand patting air instead of her back as she staggered a bit to duck, turn, and dip in order to catch the Dramamine before it hit the floor. "Quite a skilled dancing bird at that."

Successfully catching the medicine, she swept her tongue around the lozenge to make sure it didn't just slide down her throat, then carefully chewed before swallowing. With a little grin, she gave a small curtsy as the grocer clapped. "Thank you, Mr.—"

"Wilhelm Frank Fenstermacher," he said, chuckling when her mouth dropped open again, this time having absolutely nothing to do with taking medication. "It's a pleasure to meet you, little miss. May I know yours?"

“Um... my what?”

“Your name?” he prompted.

“Oh, right. Sorry, you just have a really big name. I’m Gertrude Mildred Willamena Watson and it’s a pleasure to meet you, too,” she said in a very serious grown-up voice. When his mouth dropped open and he gave a long, drawn out whistle, she began to giggle.

“And you say *my* name is big,” he exclaimed. “I don’t see how you aren’t simply exhausted.”

She tilted her head to the side. “Exhausted?”

“From carrying around such a magnificent name.”

“Oh, that’s why you can call me Gertie.”

“Only if you call me Will,” he said. “Deal?”

“Deal,” she agreed, offering her hand only to realize she’d fisted all her fingers except her little one.

Will didn’t even blink an eye, linking his far larger pinkie with hers and giving it a shake as if they were making some very important pact.

“Now that we are friends, Gertie, I’ll let you in on a little secret. I always allow my Betty to choose a treat after she’s taken medicine. If it’s okay with your Daddy, you’ll find a big selection down aisle two.”

“Oh, can I?” Gertie asked eagerly, switching her attention to the other man in the room.

“I don’t know, *can* you?” Liam replied, giving his normal response when she forgot her manners.

Knowing that rolling her eyes would definitely tip his answer toward the negative, she only visualized doing so and

promptly changed her request. “I meant, *may* I please pick out a treat, Daddy?”

Oh Em Gee! Did I just call Daddy, Daddy, in public... in front of a complete stranger... well, not a complete stranger, we just shook pinkies so Will couldn't be all judgey and stuff, could he? Besides, he'd called my Daddy, Daddy first, hadn't he? The question is why? And why isn't my Daddy looking the least bit fazed by any of this stuff?

Deciding there were way too many questions to consider, she shook her head to clear it just in time to hear her Daddy's answer.

“Yes, you *may*.”

“Thank you!” she remembered to say before she turned to run down the aisle directly next to her, not caring that it held non-edible items such as paper towels, bug spray, and laundry detergent.

Chapter 3

The two men stood watching as Gertie dashed out of sight before turning to look at each other. With matching grins, they shook their heads, and as if some sort of internal timer kicked in, they held their hands out at the exact same moment, not to shake but to pull each other closer into a hug.

“Your Little one seems like a very sweet young lady. But from the look of panic on her face when she realized she called you Daddy, my guess is you haven’t shared much about this visit?” Will said as he released Liam.

“Let’s just say my mind was elsewhere,” Liam said. “From the moment Gertie started turning green, all my attention was on finding her something to settle her stomach. Even that didn’t stop her from being sick on the side of the road.”

“Poor thing,” Will said as the two walked toward the counter, Liam dropping the foil pieces he’d removed from the lozenges into the trashcan at the end of the huge, raw-edged cedar slab.

“This looks like Jack’s work,” Liam said as he ran his fingers over the smooth wood, following the grain.

“It is. Jackson is a true artist,” Will agreed from where he’d stopped before the glass-fronted cooler. “Want a cold

one?”

“Thanks,” Liam said, showing no surprise when the older man slapped a bottle of water into his hand. He not only owned the store, he obviously understood that anyone driving didn’t drink when behind the wheel... especially when a Little was involved. Liam hadn’t just chosen this part of the world for a mini-vacation, this was also a final test-drive of sorts before deciding if this was *the* place where he’d invest more than just a sizeable sum of money.

“Speaking of failure to mention things, The *Dam* Store,” Liam said, giving emphasis to the middle word. “Seriously?”

Will’s belly laugh was just as boisterous as before. “You’ve heard the term ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’?” When Liam nodded while drawing deeply on the water, Will continued, “There has been a store here since the first settlers drove their wagons over those hills, so while the building’s had a few upgrades, I decided there wasn’t any need to—”

“*Fix* it,” Liam finished for him.

“Exactly, and if you’ll pull your head out of your ass and think about it for a moment, you’ll understand that’s not the *only* reason to keep the name.”

There were very few men Liam would allow to even suggest his head wasn’t on his shoulders exactly where it belonged, but Fenstermacher did make that list. Instead of being affronted by the suggestion, he gave it some serious thought. A movement caught his eye and he watched as Gertie gave every candidate on the shelves her complete attention. The very fact she would pick up a candy bar and then discuss the choice with the stuffed animal tucked under her arm made the answer clear as the windowpanes fronting the store.

“What Little could possibly resist the name,” he said.

Will’s laugh drew Liam’s Little’s attention their way, her head lifting and turning toward them. Liam gave her a smile and a wave, letting her know all was safe in her world and her only concern was what treat she’d eventually pick.

“Which allows every Daddy, Mommy, Auntie, or Uncle a chance to see how long it takes for that same Little to slip up and say the word which will most likely earn themselves a red bottom,” Will offered as if imparting some point of great wisdom.

“You say that like it’s some sort of contest,” Liam said, setting down the emptied water bottle.

“That’s actually a great idea,” Will said, picking up the bottle and tossing it into a bin marked for recyclables. “We could give our Caretakers tickets to write down their guess as to how long it takes their Little to mess up and say the word after being warned not to. When they do, the ticket goes into the basket and at the end of each week, we draw a winner.”

“Do you honestly think there will be any Little whose name *doesn't* go in the drawing?”

“Nope,” Fenstermacher answered with a chuckle.

“So why bother guessing if every ticket goes in the drawing?”

“Keeps it fun and allows you to learn just how much you know your Little,” Will explained. “It might be quite humbling to see how often Bigs get it wrong.”

“What’s the prize?” Liam asked, his attention definitely captured by the idea.

“You mean besides the whole red-bottom thing?” Will said with a chuckle.

“That’s a given, not a prize,” Liam said.

“I never said there wouldn’t be details to iron out,” Will retorted. “That’s where I’m hoping you come in.”

“Hmmm, might as well give it a trial run,” Liam said. “Twenty.”

“Wait, that’s your guess? Twenty minutes? What’s the matter, son, lost your touch?”

“Seconds,” Liam corrected.

The grocer barked a laugh. “Humble much?”

“Just watch,” Liam said.

“No coaching,” Will called out.

Liam simply waved the caveat off as he sauntered to join his Little on aisle two.

“I’m still deciding, Daddy,” Gertie said. After flicking her eyes toward the front as if to ensure Mr. Will couldn’t hear her, she lowered her voice. “Do you think Mr. Will might be a Daddy?”

“With that white hair and beard, he’s definitely old enough to have children,” Liam said, not missing the roll of her eyes. It wasn’t the first time she’d pulled that little move either, but he’d address it later.

“You know what I mean. Not *that* kind of Daddy. One like you.”

Ignoring the fact that time was ticking, Liam didn’t rush her. He reached out to tuck a stray curl of auburn hair behind her ear as he contemplated how to answer. He’d never lie to

her, but was this the time to spill the beans? Deciding to take the middle road, he asked, “Would that bother you?”

“Not at all,” Gertie assured him. “Mr. Will seems really nice and did you hear him say his Betty has a horse? Maybe she’s a Little like me and we can be friends and she’ll let me ride with her while we’re here.”

“Maybe she will,” he agreed as she considered a Milky Way only to shake her head and replace it on the shelf. Her fingertips hovered over the next offering and, deciding this was the perfect time to get back on track, he said, “You’re not the only one with a sweet tooth, you know.”

Her nose crinkled as if the very concept was foreign to her as Liam reached for a candy bar, its bright yellow wrapping drawing her attention only to have her snort and shake her head as she took it from his hand.

“Daddy, why would you pick a Butterfinger when you know Mounds is your favorite?”

Ignoring the presence of Fenstermacher, who wasn’t even pretending not to eavesdrop, Liam looked from the candy bar in her hand to his Little girl’s face. Her eyes, a very rare lilac color, never failed to draw him in. He allowed the tension to build just a few seconds more before he leaned toward her and spoke the required warning softly but clearly, “Because, little girl, it won’t be your *mound* I’ll be slipping my *battered finger* into to remind you to be very, very careful with words that might not be ‘officially’ naughty but are said with the single purpose of pushing your Daddy’s buttons.”

The term you could “hear a pin drop” entered his mind as he watched her throat constrict, her eyes go wide, and her entire body flush when the meaning of what he’d said fully registered. It was honestly quite a sight to behold.

But the absolute kicker was when her lips curled up into a smile before she said, “Wanna bet me the owner of The Dam Store isn’t only a Daddy, but has a very naughty sense of humor?”

He chuckled as she very purposefully inserted the name of the store, ensuring she’d be caught. Liam scooped her off her feet. “No, but I’ll bet you can be quite the naughty Little girl,” he said, giving her a kiss as he began to carry her toward the front of the store.

“Hey, wait, I didn’t get to pick a treat!”

She was right, so he set her down and watched as she took a step back toward the candy and then stopped, looking at the Butterfinger in her hand. “You know what? I think I’m good.”

“Oh, babygirl, you’re way more than just good,” Liam said, picking her up again, satisfied to see any earlier embarrassment of being caught out as a Little disappearing as she wrapped her legs around his waist and her arms around his neck.

“I never would have believed it if I hadn’t heard it with my own ears,” Will offered as he handed Liam a map and a second bottle of water. “The treat’s on me, remember?” he said, waving toward the door as Liam reached for his wallet. “Go ahead. Cabin is unlocked. You’ll find the key inside on the table.”

“Thank you,” Liam said as he shook Will’s hand. The older man had advised Liam that it might be best to let Gertie explore and watch her reactions to her surroundings before making his choice. It wouldn’t do Liam any good to invest in the place if the one person in the world he wanted to share it with wasn’t just as much in love with it as he.

“I love you, Gertie,” he said as he settled her into the front seat and buckled her seatbelt.

“Does that mean you aren’t going to... um, you know,” she said, lifting the Butterfinger she still had clutched in her hand.

“Have I ever once given you cause to question my word?” he asked.

“No, but, I wasn’t really naughty,” she said after he’d climbed behind the wheel. “I mean, it really is the store’s name.”

“It is, and if you can look me straight in the eyes and tell me you weren’t pushing it every single time you said the word, then I’ll just eat the candy bar after your spanking and we’ll call it even. Deal?” he asked, holding out his crooked pinkie.

“Deal,” she said a nanosecond before she said, “Hey!”

Chapter 4

Gertie yanked her hand back, closing her fingers into a fist as if worried her pinkie finger might pop free and hook around his, cementing the deal she'd just realized was a trick.

“That’s not fair. You never mentioned anything about a spanking!”

Liam’s laugh filled the car. “Little girl, has there ever been a time when Daddy hasn’t reddened your bottom after you’ve cursed?”

She hated the fact that her body betrayed her. Even as she prepared to argue, she shifted on the very bottom under discussion and knew her Daddy hadn’t missed a single squirm, no matter how small.

It didn’t help when she knew she’d never be able to look him in the eyes and lie. The man had some sort of super-human Daddy lie-detector built in and always knew when she was even thinking about stretching the truth. She shook her head. “No.”

“No, what?”

“No, Sir,” she corrected herself with a sigh before brightening as another thought bloomed in her mind. “And let’s not forget that Butterfinger is *my* treat, Daddy, not yours.”

“Forgive me, you’re absolutely right,” he said sincerely.

“How about we make a new deal? You can give me a stern talking to, and I’ll split the candy with you. How does that sound?”

“It sounds like some Little girl has forgotten who the Daddy is.”

How does one argue the truth?

They don’t.

Ignoring her inner voice who was all too willing to provide the answer, she looked up at the man she loved with her entire heart. “Okay then, how about you spank me until my butt is like cotton-candy pink but not really like Hot Tamales red?” she offered.

Liam laughed and bent to kiss the tip of her nose. “Someone was definitely studying the candy aisle, wasn’t she? You are just too damn adorable.”

“Daddy! You said damn and not the good one!”

Liam sat back and looked a little stunned. “You’ve got me there,” he said, not one to be afraid to admit when he was wrong. “Good thing I’m the Daddy and not the Little then, isn’t it.”

Snorting, Gertie waved the candy bar at him. “I declare a foul. You can always pull the Daddy card while I’ll always be the Little!” she declared, poking him with the Butterfinger which promptly snapped in two. “Oops,” she said, holding it up to inspect it. “It’s okay, I was gonna let you choose the half you wanted anyway.”

He grinned and shook his head. “An adorable Little at that.”

She basked in his praise under no illusion that being considered adorable would keep her from going over his knees. However, if she was lucky, it might keep her from sleeping on her tummy. The sight of the candy bar, now slightly bent in its wrapping, made her smile. What were the chances it would break exactly in the middle between the words butter and finger?

That question reminded her of his language using both those words. Being pretty sure where the combo would be going caused a rush of heat to shoot through her as her buttocks clenched. If what she thought was going to happen happened, it wouldn't matter what position she slept in. Her bottom was going to be tender both inside and out. Why that didn't have her unlatching her belt and leaping from the car was anyone's guess.

You stay because you love your Daddy and every single thing he does to you.

“Duh,” she muttered softly.

“What's that?” Liam asked as he stopped at the drive to consult the map before pulling back out onto the road.

“Nothing, Daddy, I was just talking to my lion,” she said with another giggle before he turned his gaze fully on her.

“Hmmm. From the way you're fighting so hard not to squirm, I have to wonder if our Little girl is telling the truth. What do you think, Sir Danderlion?”

“It's Dand-*e*-lion, Daddy,” Gertie corrected, having named her stuffie Dander because his mane had reminded her of the white puff of that very flower. A giggle escaped, leading to another and another until she was bent in two, Dander trapped in her arms.

“Adorable,” Liam said yet again.

Hearing his words filled her heart with warmth. Even though she knew it wasn't the only part of her that would soon be burning, she didn't care. She was the happiest she'd ever been in her entire life and it was all due to the man seated beside her.

Chapter 5

Gertie's giggles were a sound he would never tire of hearing. Seeing her bent over, both hands splayed over her mouth in a very unsuccessful attempt to keep the delightful laughter from pouring out of her lips, was almost enough for him to forget what he had planned for this evening. But almost didn't count now, did it?

He grinned as he made the last turn and pulled the car to a stop in front of a cabin nestled in a grove of towering trees. After a moment, he said, "Well?"

"Well, what?" Gertie said as she straightened and looked around.

Liam shook his head. "Don't you have something to ask?" he prompted.

Directing her gaze to his, she smiled and gave a little shrug. "I may be Little, but I'm not dumb, Daddy. I know if I ask you to just forget about spanking me, you'll only add more to remind me that you're the Daddy."

He chuckled. "I've never once doubted your intelligence, little one. I was referring to the question you must have asked at least a hundred times today."

Her nose crinkled and then she broke out in a huge smile. “Are we there yet?”

“We are!” he announced as he pushed the button to cut off the engine. “Just listen to that,” he said.

Another giggle was the only sound to fill the car. “Daddy, you’re gonna have to open the doors to hear anything.”

“See, more proof that my Little girl is very, very smart,” he said, opening the door.

She leaned toward him as if the few inches she gained in doing so would improve her hearing.

Liam unfastened her belt and pulled her across the seat to settle in his lap. After a few minutes, she looked up at him. “I still don’t hear anything, do you?”

“Sure, I do,” he said. “If you listen closely, you can hear the leaves rustling, the birds singing, and I do believe there is a game of tag being played by some squirrels if their chattering is any indication.”

Tilting her head, she settled against him and shut her eyes to listen. It took just a moment before Gertie asked, “Do you hear that?”

“Are you talking about that whooshing?”

“Yes, what do you think is making that sound, Daddy?”

“I’m guessing it’s the sound of the river as the water goes over the—” When the next sound he heard was her squeal as he lifted her off his lap and set her outside the car before stepping out himself, he knew he’d almost fallen into her trap. But *almost* still didn’t count.

“Nice try,” he said, giving her a nod of respect for her effort even as he gave her ass a pop of disapproval.

“Ready to check out the cabin?”

“Yes!” she said, twisting out of his grasp and making it about three feet before he snagged the back of her shirt and hauled her against him. “Daddy!”

“Don’t Daddy me,” he said, taking her with him as he opened the back of the car. “You didn’t expect me to carry everything, did you?”

“I’m carrying Dander,” she pointed out, holding up the stuffie as if needing proof.

“And you’ll carry this,” he said, turning her back to him and helping her into the backpack she’d filled with the necessities of life which included several books, some to color in and some just to read or have read to her, a box of crayons, another of colored pencils, a pair of binoculars to bird watch, and god only knew what else. “And these, too,” he said, turning her back around and handing her the pillow and the blankie she’d insisted she couldn’t sleep without.

“What am I? A packing horse?”

“I believe you mean a pack mule,” he corrected as he took their suitcases as well as a second backpack.

“What’s in there?” she asked.

“You don’t think you’re the only one with toys, do you?” he asked, watching as her eyes widened, her head swiveling to look all around them. He chuckled. “Who are you looking for? Are you expecting the toy police to jump out of the woods?”

“Very funny,” she said, tilting her head to look up at him. “I just wouldn’t want you to be embarrassed if someone hears you.”

“Babygirl”—a grin lit his entire face as he wagged his brows—“if our history is any indication, it won’t be me making a lot of noise.” He loved the pink that instantly flooded her face. “But you don’t have to give it a second’s thought. I’m sure I can find something to help you keep quiet if you prefer.”

“Daddy!”

On that note, he turned her once more, this time to face the steps leading to the cabin’s porch, giving her butt another pop to encourage her to take the first step.

“It’s really made of logs!” she said a few minutes later, her embarrassment of possible discovery forgotten as she stood in the middle of the room looking around.

“Isn’t that what log cabins are usually made of?” he teased even though he had to admit the cabin went far beyond his expectations. It was definitely welcoming and very pleasing to the eye. There was no moss stuffed between the logs to keep out the elements. Every massive log rested perfectly within the notch cut for it. Wide planks of hardwood covered the floor. The ceiling was easily twenty feet tall above his head. Light flooded the room through the large windows on either side of the door they’d entered. Mission-style furniture covered in brown leather sat before a stone fireplace. An area rug offered a soft place to lay and watch the flames flicker and dance.

A kitchen was set off to the right, but it was the other side of the room that had drawn Gertie’s attention as she cried, “There’s a loft and a ladder!”

Sure enough, a ladder led to a loft above a seating area. Beneath the window, a built-in, waist-high bookcase was filled with a large selection of books to read as well as a variety of board games. A large ottoman sat between a pair of

overstuffed easy chairs. He could easily see them sitting there in the evenings, sharing a story or, if they had a rainy day, perhaps playing an epic round of Monopoly.

It seemed his Little girl was far more interested in the ladder as she headed straight for it.

“Hold up,” he instructed, once again snagging her, this time by a strap of her backpack. “You can’t climb carrying all this stuff.”

“You’re the one who loaded me up!”

“And I’m the one who can put you right over there so you can inspect the corner instead of the loft if you’d rather?” he said, pointing to a corner furthest from the ladder.

“No thank you, Daddy,” she said politely, standing still as he helped her out of the backpack and then took everything else she’d carried, setting it all on the ottoman.

“Be careful,” he instructed.

“Yes, Sir,” she said.

Liam shook his head as she tossed safety right out the window from the get-go by running to the ladder. He had to admit the ladder was nothing compared to the rock faces they enjoyed climbing together, but he couldn’t help himself. Climbing in professional gear, helmet on and safety lines securely attached and triple checked, didn’t compare to watching his Little girl scurry up the ladder like an impatient spider monkey.

“It’s so cool! Come look, Daddy!”

Accepting the invitation, he was soon standing beside her as she explored the loft.

“We can sleep up here! It’ll be like sleeping in a treehouse!” she exclaimed, pointing to the window where the view was of thick branches of the trees outside.

“We could, but we won’t,” he said.

“Why not?”

“Do you really want to have to climb up and down the ladder every time you need go to the bathroom?” When she seemed to actually be considering the idea, he added, “Of course, I suppose we could put you in a diaper—”

“I’m not that little of a Little, but you’re right, Daddy. It’s probably not safe to climb when it’s dark and everything.”

They climbed back down, his heart in his throat the entire time until both her feet were planted firmly on the lower level, but only for a moment. She ran off to explore the rest of the cabin while he returned to the car to grab the last of their items. He was pleasantly surprised to discover the refrigerator was already partially filled. A half-gallon of milk, the makings for grilled-cheese, and what looked like a container of homemade tomato soup were on the top shelf. They’d need to go grocery shopping, but that could keep for later. Right now, he had far more important things to attend to than picking out cereal and trying to keep as many snacks out of the cart as she attempted to sneak in.

“Daddy, you’ve got to come see the bedroom,” Gertie said when she returned to tug on his hand.

“Anxious to get started, huh?” Liam teased, loving the crinkle of her nose and then the flush on her face as she got it.

“Ha-ha-ha,” she snarked, shaking her head while tugging harder on his hand.

Once he entered the master suite at the back of the cabin, he gave a long whistle of approval. The entire back wall was a giant sheet of glass that went from the floor to the ceiling. It would be like sleeping outside without having to slap at annoying insects or climbing down a ladder. A king-sized bed faced the view, a nightstand on each side. A large chair and ottoman matching those in the great room faced the hearth of another fireplace. It was a room he could easily see himself enjoying with his Little in many various scenarios.

Already imagining one he wanted to try, he looked around only to discover she'd disappeared. "Gertie?"

"In here, Daddy," she called, her voice drawing him toward the door on the right.

He stepped into a bathroom to find her seated in a tub large enough for at least two full-grown adults. It was positioned underneath a window offering another incredible view of the woods. A shower took up one half of the opposite wall, a wide bench visible behind sheets of clear glass. Two sinks beneath matching mirrors claimed the final wall. He grinned as he saw a stool tucked into the opening of the vanity, ready to be pulled out.

Liam could easily picture himself seated on the stool while he gave his Little girl a bath. He could also see that same Little girl sitting on a tender backside turned a pretty shade of red by the bath brush hanging from a hook beside the tub.

"Isn't it just perfect?" she asked.

"Yes, babygirl, it is pretty amazing," he agreed, walking toward her when she stood, ready to lift her from the tub.

"No, I don't want out, I want you in with me," she said, reaching for the top button of his shirt.

Liam stilled her fingers by wrapping his hand around hers. “Not yet. First dinner and then we have something to take care of, don’t we, little girl?”

She gave one of her dramatic sighs and stuck out her bottom lip but that didn’t hide the fact his reminder didn’t excite her at least a little. Her nipples hardened to press against the soft cotton of her t-shirt, and he could feel the shifting of her body as her muscles clenched as if preparing for flight. But he knew his Little one very well. She wouldn’t flee even knowing her cute little ass was soon going to be bared and spanked because she trusted him not to harm her. The amount of trust that required and the very submission to him were gifts he’d never take for granted.

“Do we really hafta?”

“We really hafta,” he echoed with a smile as he led her out of the bathroom but not before giving that bath brush another glance.

Chapter 6

Gertie sat, swinging her feet as she watched her Daddy flipping a perfectly toasted grilled-cheese sandwich out of the skillet and onto a plate.

“Careful, it’s hot,” he warned as he set it and a bowl of soup in front of her.

“It looks and smells super delicioso,” she said, waving a hand over her plate as if to cool the contents. When he joined her with his own plate, she picked up her sandwich and dunked a corner into the tomato soup. She took a huge bite and practically moaned. Or maybe she actually did make a sound because she could definitely feel eyes on her.

“What? Do I have cheese on my chin?” she asked, looking up and lifting her hand to wipe across her mouth only to have it captured in midair by her Daddy as he raised from his seat.

“Napkin, little girl,” her Daddy said, using his own to wipe her face himself before lowering himself back in his chair.

Wow. He’s like a genie or something. I never even saw him move!

Opening her mouth to take another bite, she again felt his eyes on her. Looking over the crust of her sandwich, she said, “If I’m not all cheesie-faced, then why are you staring at me?”

“Do I have to have a reason to look at the Little girl I love?” he asked. “Maybe I’m staring simply because I think you’re cute.”

She narrowed her eyes and gave him a long look before shaking her head. “Nope, that’s not it. I know when you’re looking at me in a cutie-type of way, and that is definitely not it.”

“And what exactly does a cutie-type of way look like?”

Gertie shrugged, gave her sandwich another tomato soup bath, took a huge bite, chewed rather noisily, and gave his question serious consideration. “It’s hard to describe, but your eyes twinkle, you smile, and you shake your head in a certain way that just lets me know you think I’m cute.”

“But you are cute,” Liam said.

She waved the compliment away with her mostly-eaten sandwich, almost losing a long string of melted cheese in the process. Capturing it on her fingertip at the last moment, she stuck it into her mouth and that was when she knew how to answer.

Taking her time, she rolled her tongue around the finger in her mouth, licking, then hollowing her cheeks to suckle as if making sure every bit of cheese was gone. She watched the steel-blue of his eyes turn to the darkest cobalt as they zeroed in on the finger when she ever so slowly began to pull it from her mouth. Opening her lips slightly, she allowed him to see her nibble the flesh just a bit before using the tip of her tongue to give her fingertip a long, slow swipe. Only when she saw his nostrils flare did she close her lips again and give a loud pop, startling him as she giggled and freed her finger.

When his gaze moved from her mouth to her eyes, she said, “And that is definitely *not* a cutie-look.”

“It’s not?”

“Nope, now you’re looking at me like you want to do... ummm...”

“To do what?” he prompted when she paused.

“You know... *things* to me.”

His lips curled and the dimples she adored deepened in his cheeks, his eyes still dark. “Probably because I definitely do want to *do* things to you. Lots and lots of things,” he said. “And do you know why?”

“Uhhh... ummm... hmmm...” was all she could manage as her nipples instantly tightened and her panties immediately dampened. Forget about cursing, good Little girls definitely did *not* actually put words to the images suddenly playing in her head.

“Answer the question,” her Daddy said, definitely not helping the situation.

“Daddeeee...” she whined.

“Do you need Daddy to give you a clue?” he asked.

A clue?

He’d never offered her a clue before so why now? She had no idea what to do other than nod vigorously and try not to be too obvious as she leaned forward in her chair in order not to squirm on it.

“Butter.”

She blinked and then blinked again.

“Huh? Did you say butter?”

“I did,” he confirmed.

“You want butter? On your sandwich?”

He stood, plucked the last corner of her sandwich from her fingers, and dropped it onto her plate. Before she could blink again, her eyes flew wide open as she found herself airborne with his lips wrapped around those same fingers. The heat of his tongue as he licked and the pull as he suckled had her forgetting all about what *good* girls did. All she could do was think about all the *naughty* things she wanted to do and have done to her.

Her free arm went around his neck as he carried her down the hall while continuing to take long, strong pulls on her fingers. By the time they reached the bedroom, she was on the very cusp of an orgasm. It was only when she moaned, her teeth finding his neck to give it a little nibble, that the sucking stopped with a loud pop as he released her fingers.

Arousal clouded her mind and it took her a moment to respond. “Daddy! That’s mean and kinda gross,” she said, looking down at her fingers which were really rather damp. She went to drag them across his shirt when he grabbed her wrist.

“Hey, you’re the one who made me all wet *and* took away my napkin,” she protested. “The least you can do is let me dry them off.”

“Babygirl, I assure you dry isn’t a word that will describe you for a very long time,” he said, ignoring her protest and simply tossing her onto the bed.

“Daddy!”

“Now, where were we?” he asked as she bounced a couple of times before struggling to sit up on her butt in the center of

the bed.

“Ah, right. I do believe I asked you a question for which you still haven’t given me an answer even though I gave you clues.”

“Clues? Call me dense, but I’m afraid I didn’t get one so-called clue, much less more than one,” she confessed, wiping her hand on her own t-shirt and looking up at him.

“You didn’t?”

“Nope,” she said. “Seems you’re pretty lacking in the clue department, Sherlock.”

“Hmmm, that just won’t do,” he said. “I suppose a visual wouldn’t hurt. Stay right there.” He turned away and disappeared.

Gertie had no idea where this was going but couldn’t help but be drawn up in it. Her Daddy was often quite cryptic and it usually turned into some sort of game she enjoyed playing. That didn’t keep her from slipping both her hands beneath her butt just in case he was planning on another finger feast. She much rather he suckled on other parts of her body... naughty, hidden, and yes, very wet parts.

“Ta-da!”

Startled again, she practically fell over when he suddenly appeared in front of her, waving something. It took her a moment to focus and when she did, everything suddenly became clear. She gasped, her face flooded with heat, and he chuckled.

“By jove, I think my Little girl’s got it,” he said. “Tell me, Watson, how did you put the clues together?”

“Ha-ha-ha, very funny,” she said, shaking her head. When he just wagged his eyebrows as well as the candy bar in his hand, she giggled and attempted to grab it only to have him lift it out of her reach. “Fine, clue one was the word butter and the second was when you sucked on my fingers—”

“Exactly, which means...”

His deliberate pause told her he wanted her to supply the answer. Batting her eyelashes, she looked at the rather beaten up candy bar in his hand and said, “It’s time to split the Butterfinger.”

He looked a bit confused and then his lips curled. “I believe you meant to say it’s time to pay the piper,” he said, tossing the candy onto the nightstand. “And speaking of pipe, you may remove mine from my pants and wrap those pretty little lips around it. I think a nice blowjob before we begin is a good price to pay for teasing your Daddy, don’t you?”

Seems like her Daddy didn’t *always* require a verbal answer after all. He simply widened his stance at the edge of the bed, placed his hands on his hips and, well... waited.

With a smile, she rose to her knees and moved toward him. Once she was close enough, she reached out and slowly unbuckled his belt then popped the button on his jeans. Before sliding the zipper down, she laid her hand over the very obvious bulge and gently squeezed. When he pushed his hips forward, she knew teasing time was over. The zipper’s sound as it ran down its track had her holding her breath in anticipation, and she wasn’t the least bit shocked to see her Daddy had chosen to go commando. He wasn’t the type to tarry if he could help it.

His cock sprang free, the head already slick with precum. She was rather proud to see she wasn’t the only wet one

playing this game. When she bent forward, he stepped back. Confused, she could only look up at him through the curtain of her hair.

“Daddy?”

“Strip.”

“What?”

“I need you naked,” he ordered, “right now.”

Sitting back on her heels, she pulled her t-shirt over her head and tossed it to the floor. Her bra followed, freeing her breasts where nipples the color of red currants were growing ever tighter. Evidently, she was going too slow because he none too gently pushed her so she flopped onto her back, grabbed the waistband of her leggings, and pulled them, as well as her panties, down.

When her clothing became a twisted, inside-out mess around her ankles, she giggled and pushed up on her elbows. “Need some help, Sherlock?”

The ensuing growl had her naughty bits slickening even further. Her Daddy had several modes, but this one never ever failed to have goosebumps popping out all over her body. He was still her Daddy, but the man staring down at her with his very impressive cock standing straight out from his body was the one she’d named Sexy as Sin Alpha Daddy.

“It might help if you... eep!” She yipped when he took both her ankles in one of his hands, lifted her ass up off the mattress a good foot or so, and slapped her bare butt with his free hand. “Ow! Daddy!” she cried, wiggling her clothing-bound feet as much as possible. “Shoes! My shoes are still on!”

He popped her ass twice more before dropping her legs, yanking her leggings back up enough until he could get to the pink laces on her sneakers. She watched as they took flight across the room to land somewhere outside her view. Her socks wound up tangled in her leggings and panties, but he had her stripped nude in the time it took to give her poor bottom a couple of quick rubs.

The man definitely had a mission, tugging her across the bed until her head hung over the edge. He pushed curls that had gotten rather disheveled in the whole undressing tussle off her face, gathering the long tresses in his fist.

From her upside-down position, she slowly smiled. “Hi.”

He grinned down at her. “Hi, baby. Are you ready?”

“More than ready, Daddy Sir.”

The change of address, the reverence with which she said the word “Sir,” told him she’d stepped over the line. While his Little girl still resided inside her, the adult Gertrude had come out to play.

“Open.”

When she obeyed, he slid his cock into her mouth and when she sealed her lips firmly around steel covered in the softest velvet, he gave her another one word command.

“Suck.”

His cock was far larger than her finger she’d teased him with, and she had to consciously relax in order to take him further into her mouth. The upside-down position wasn’t one she’d ever tried before and it changed her perspective as she could watch him watching her, which she found incredibly arousing. The firm hold he had on her hair added to his dominance, and when he reached down with his free hand and

began to pluck and pull on her nipples, she knew exactly where the wet spot on the bed was going to be tonight.

Gertie ran her tongue up and down his length, doing her best to taste every inch as he continued to feed her more until she had to concentrate on breathing through her nose. She had no true knowledge of where the need to submit had come from; she only knew that giving this man her complete submission was what filled her heart and made her feel complete.

Her hands flew above her head to brace against his taut thighs as he began to fuck her mouth. Sharp bites of pain as he played with her nipples kept her on the edge, causing arousal to run from her pussy to coat her inner thighs. Time ceased to exist as she did everything she could to perform the best blow job she'd ever given him. It didn't matter that she couldn't do anything but moan around the shaft in her mouth as he took the pleasure she offered. With every thrust of his cock and every pull and twist of her nipples, he was bringing her to the brink with him until she was lifting her hips, wanting so much more.

“Not yet, naughty girl. This one is mine,” he growled. The pull on her nipple released, only to have the hand land between her legs with a smack.

Her back arched and her throat opened at the shock, allowing his cock to slide deeper.

“That's my dirty girl. You love having my cock in your mouth, don't you? You love it when I push down your throat. Come on, open wider. Take every inch. Your Daddy wants to feel his balls slapping against your chin.”

The visual images his dirty talk provided combined with the gruff way he spoke had her pulling him closer, taking him

deeper until she felt the first impact under her chin and knew she'd done it. She had all of her Daddy's cock in her mouth. She might be a naughty, dirty girl, but she didn't want to be anything else, because she was *his* naughty, dirty Little girl.

He pumped a few more times, each withdrawal giving her a brief chance to take a deeper breath before he surged forward, and she felt the heavy swing of his balls against her skin. His fingers were everywhere, nipping, pinching, tugging, rubbing, and slapping her nipples and breasts. When he smacked between her legs, it was as if an electric jolt ran through her. The sound of his fingers slapping against her wet flesh was enough to have a wave of embarrassment run through her even as she spread her legs wider to allow him more access. When he took the hard button of her clit between his fingers and pinched, she screamed around his cock, the vibrations earning her his growls of primal, raw need she adored.

Desperate to come and knowing the price she'd pay if she did so without permission, Gertie worked hard to try and bring him to completion so she might ask for her own. Even in the haze of intense arousal it became clear he not only knew exactly what she was doing, he was having a very good time toying with her.

He'd pull back to allow himself time to regain control while keeping his fingers busy in her sex, slipping and sliding around her engorged clit until she was whimpering and wriggling in an attempt to make it harder for him to tease her. He'd bring her right to the edge and then stop his fingers while driving his cock deep into her mouth again. She had no idea how long he played, but when he finally drove the deepest yet, threw back his head and roared, she felt as if she'd crossed the line of a marathon. She swallowed every drop of his cum and

gently let his cock slip from her mouth. When he bent to press his forehead to hers before saying, "I love you," she felt as if she'd won the gold medal.

"I love you, too," she managed in a soft voice as her throat felt a little raw.

He kissed her before lifting her into his arms.

"Whoa," she said, closing her eyes and pressing her head under his chin.

"Too fast?" he asked.

"A little," she admitted.

"Do you need some time?"

Time?

"No. What I need is to come!"

He chuckled. "In that case, I suppose I need to spank this cute little bottom and give some foul-mouthed Little girl her lesson so that *might* happen."

What?

It was the emphasis on a certain word that had her pulling back to look up at him.

"*Might* happen?"

"Or might not," he said with a shrug. "I suppose we'll see. Are you absolutely positive your tummy is good to continue?"

Oh, he's just concerned I'm nauseated.

Smiling, she said, "I'm a hundred trazillion percent good to go."

"I can't tell you how happy that makes me," he said.

She felt all warm and snug as he carried her across the room to the large chair in front of the fireplace. That was until he dropped into the chair and flipped her over as easily as he'd turned the sandwiches in the skillet earlier. She found herself staring at the design of the throw rug on the floor while he began slapping his palm against her bare bottom.

“Ow!” she cried out within the first pair of smacks.
“You’re spanking me!”

Chapter 7

“Well, thank you for clearing that up for me,” he said as he brought his hand down again to give first her left cheek and then her right a matching smack.

“I thought you meant am I good to... well, you know.”

His laughter filled the room even as the steady cadence of smacks continued. “Babygirl, Doctor Daddy thinks you just might need your hearing tested. I just told you what was going to happen not a full minute ago.”

Her head came up as she looked over her shoulder, her nose crinkled. “You did?”

Nodding, he slid an arm around her waist to keep her secure across his lap and bent down to kiss the tip of her nose. “I did. First a spanking, then a lesson, and then we’ll see about you coming. I’m guessing it’s the ‘we’ll see’ part that was all some Little girl heard.”

Her eyes widened and her cheeks flushed almost as pink as the ones his free hand was currently resting on.

“Oh, I guess I did hear something like that,” she admitted.

“I guess you did,” he said, kissing her nose again before straightening to resume the spanking.

It didn't take long before his Little girl was concentrating on more than what might happen. She was wriggling and squirming and begging to get out of what was currently taking place.

"Daddy, please, I was just teasing," she pleaded yet again.

A pair of harder smacks delivered right to that sweet spot where his Little girl's ass met her thighs had her adjusting her story.

"Owie! Okay, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have kept pushing your buttons! I won't do it again."

"Let's not go making promises both of us know you can't possibly keep," he said, tilting her forward with a simple lift of his foot. That gave him a new, pale canvas to paint a nice shade of crimson.

A dozen more swats, a half dozen more apologies, and he splayed his fingers to rest on well-reddened cheeks and waited for her to realize the spanking was done. Once her body went limp and she stopped attempting to swim off his lap, he gave her ass a gentle pat then flipped her over and stood again. It was a good thing the Dramamine had actually seemed to work because the sudden move could have made her ill. All it seemed to do was confuse her.

"Where are we going?"

"You are going to stand right here," he said, allowing her to slide down his body until her feet were planted on the floor. He didn't move away until he was positive she was steady and wouldn't simply tip over. When her hands snaked back to her roasted rear, he captured them in his before she got the first rub in.

“Nope, these go right here,” he said, lifting them to plant her palms against the glass of the window.

“Daddy! Someone might see me!” she said, her eyes flying from his to the window and back to his.

“I doubt it and besides, if there are any lookie-loos out there, they’ve already had quite an eyeful.”

“Daddy!”

He laughed and shook his head. “There’s no one here but the two of us”—his finger pressed against her lips when they began to open—“and before you mention Mr. Fenstermacher, according to the map he gave me, he and Betty live on the other side of the valley.” When she still looked unsure, he bent a little closer. “And let’s not forget, some Little girl has a bit of an exhibitionist in her, now, doesn’t she?”

He dropped his finger and her mouth opened but closed almost immediately when he added, “Skinny dipping last time we went rock climbing comes to mind.”

“I was just afraid my bathing suit might shrink in the hot spring. Then you’d have to buy me a new one,” she said.

“How very considerate of you,” he said, not buying that story for a single second. “Well, the only thing you’re wearing now are the marks from my hand, so no worries about shrinking. And if they disappear, I can bring them right back without spending a single penny, right?” he asked, swatting her ass to illustrate his point.

She gave an exaggerated exhale but made no more complaints as he positioned her as he’d imagined from the moment he’d stepped into this room. He nudged her feet a bit wider than shoulder width apart and repositioned her hands higher, pulling her body closer to the window.

“Now, place your cheek and those tight little nipples against the glass and stick that red bottom well out.”

A whimper sounded but she did as instructed, yipping a bit when flesh warmed by arousal met glass cooled by the air conditioning. He found it extremely satisfying when her ass pushed back and the next sound he heard was a soft moan.

“Now, stay exactly as you are and think about your behavior. I’ll be back...”

“Where are you going?” she asked, a note of panic in her voice.

He stepped forward, bending until he was eye level with her. “Don’t worry, babygirl. I’m just going to get something. I’ll be back before you know it.”

“O-okay,” she said, the wobble she gave to the word reminding him there was a Little girl inside the body of a full-grown woman.

Liam kissed her cheek, tucked her hair behind her ear, and patted what he considered the most delectable and spankable ass he’d ever seen.

“Wait!” she cried as he reached the doorway.

Instantly, he turned back. “What’s the matter, Gertie?”

“Please tell me you aren’t going to get what I think you’re going to get,” she said.

“I don’t believe worrying about what I’m getting is what you are supposed to be contemplating, now is it?”

“No, but...”

“Uh uh uh—no more guessing. Back in a flash. But first...” After she’d swallowed his seed so sweetly, he’d

tucked himself back into his jeans. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out the item he'd taken from his toy bag.

“You're blindfolding me?”

The fact she asked as he slid the blindfold over her head meant there was really no need for a verbal answer. He adjusted it over her eyes, waved his hand in front of her face to see if she had any reaction and when she didn't, was satisfied she couldn't see.

“Do not touch that blindfold or I will guarantee that *might* will turn into a definite *no*. Understood?”

“Yes, Sir,” she said.

“Good girl.” With a final kiss to her cheek accompanied by a well-placed swat against her bottom, he left her naked and blindfolded pressed against a sheet of clear glass. It was one of the most erotic scenes he'd ever laid his eyes on. The fact that the aroma of her need filled the air as her pussy leaked yet more of her essence had him positive that despite her protests, his Little lady was having as good a time as he was.

Grinning, he knew the evening had just begun as he retrieved everything he'd need to complete the lesson he'd planned. True to his word, he was back within two minutes. It would have been one, but he'd taken the time to strip as well.

Chapter 8

She didn't need to see to know he was back. Lack of sight had her other senses heightening. The sound of his footsteps was light, telling her he'd removed his shoes. The scent of his woody bodywash mixed with his favorite wintergreen mints was his and his alone. Her tongue swept over her teeth and gums as she remembered the taste of his cum.

A smile curved her lips when she felt heat behind her as he pressed his body up against hers. He'd shed his clothing as well and her sex clenched, her nipples hard little diamonds against the glass. He lifted her hair away from her neck, pushing it over one shoulder, and she shuddered at the touch of his tongue taking a long, slow sweep along the ridge of her shoulder all the way up her neck to her ear until she felt his breath against her skin. She moaned, wondering how long her legs could hold her up as she began to tremble.

"You are the most beautiful woman in the world," he whispered. The tip of his tongue ran along the shell of her ear, causing goosebumps to pop out by the millions. "You're also quite the naughty Little girl, aren't you?"

"Yes, Daddy," she answered.

“And what happens to Daddy’s Little girl when she is quite naughty?” he asked.

“You punish me,” she whispered.

Punish was different than spanking. A spanking was exactly that; he turned her over his lap, his knee, the bed, chair, or whatever else he fancied and applied his hand, paddle, belt, or whatever his implement of choice was until her bottom ached and could be any hue of red, from pink to scarlet.

Punish was basically indefinable. It might as well be called “Daddy’s Choice,” because only he knew what was going to happen. And she’d learned that her Daddy could be extremely creative. Despite herself, she always tried to guess and though she was usually way off the mark, tonight she was ninety-nine point nine nine percent positive she knew what he had planned.

“Still good to go?” he asked while continuing to nuzzle her neck.

If she said no, she knew he’d bring the evening to an end by tucking her into bed. And while she wanted to get into bed, it wouldn’t be to sleep and she definitely did not want to be tangled between those sheets all alone.

“I’m green, Daddy,” she said.

He pressed harder against her so she could feel his erection slide along the furrow of her sex. Her moan accompanied his whispered, “I’m so glad.”

The man did seem to enjoy torturing her, didn’t he?

His weight disappeared as he stepped back. “I’m going to help you straighten,” he said a moment before she felt his arm slide around her waist.

Her hands dropped, her nipples pulled away from the glass, and she found she missed the chill as the rest of her was becoming very warm. She smiled with the touch of his lips against the nape of her neck and felt heat flood through her when he spoke.

“Reach back and pull those pretty red cheeks apart for me.”

She so didn't want to obey but want wasn't an option here. It never was when her Daddy donned his Dom hat, which he wore with exceptional skill. Her fingers were trembling as they slid into the cleft of her ass and pulled.

“Now, Gertie-girl, you know better than that. Nice and wide, please.”

Moaning, she pulled herself wider knowing exactly where his eyes were focusing. On *that* place. The place no good girl willingly exposed to anyone. Yet here she stood, naked as the day she was born, holding herself open for him and anyone looking through the glass to see. What did that make her?

An obedient Little girl, one part of her mind said while the other said, *A very dirty, very horny submissive*.

It had taken her a long time and a lot of self-examination, not to mention a lot of love from the man currently staring at her ass, for Gertie to believe both to be true and both to be absolutely okay.

That didn't make it any easier to hold her ass cheeks apart so he could do whatever he deemed necessary, but it did make her able to remain where she was and wait to see what happened next.

“Remember the clues I gave you earlier?” he asked.

“Yes?”

“Is that a question?” he asked.

“No, I mean, yes, I remember,” she managed despite the fact she felt his hand running over her ass.

“What were they?”

They both knew what they were, didn't they? Perhaps she'd missed something?

“Are you telling me you're really, really going to put your finger in my butt?” she asked, though that wasn't exactly the part she was worried about.

“To answer your question, I am. Now, answer mine,” he said, the light rubbing turning into a pair of sharp slaps, one for each buttock.

“Butter and finger,” she said, finally conceding, knowing that unless she said her safeword, there was absolutely nothing she could do or say to keep whatever it was he planned from happening.

“Good girl,” he said, rubbing the spots he'd popped.

“Daddy?” she said. “May I ask a question?”

“You may.”

“Is that finger really going to be covered in butter?”

“What do you think?” he said.

“I think it will be,” she said with a sigh even as she felt her pussy gush.

“I think, Watson, that you are one very smart Little girl,” he said and when she felt something cold and slick rub against her most private hole, she knew exactly what he was holding.

“Is that even sanitary?” she asked.

“Babygirl, you just ate a ton of the stuff on your sandwich, so what do you think?”

“I think you’re part nuts and yet for some reason, I love you to pieces,” she said and then forgot all about the ingredients in butter as he continued to rub the stick he’d gotten from the kitchen between the crack of her ass, sliding it up and down and across the sensitive rim.

She moaned as he slipped one fingertip into her hole, teasing her by making the barest entry only to pull back until she was pushing her butt out as if to ask for more. One finger became two and he began to scissor his fingers in order to stretch her opening and when two became three, she knew it was going to be more than just butter-coated fingers invading her ass. She moaned as her legs started to tremble. “Daddy,” she whimpered, one hand releasing her ass cheek to blindly reach out to find the glass to brace herself.

“I’ve got you,” he said, sweeping her up into his arms. “Hands and knees, chest down, ass up, and cheeks apart,” he instructed.

The leather beneath her hands and knees let her know he’d placed her on the ottoman. She found the position he required and once she had herself spread for him again, his fingers returned to her dark hole. Suddenly, she felt a new sensation, one she’d never have guessed was in his plan. A fluttering against her clitoris set her on fire with pure, unadulterated lust.

“Yes, oh yes,” she said, pushing her hips down to find the head of the vibrator only to feel the tip of his cock replacing his fingers at the entrance of her ass.

“You wanted to come?” he asked as he gently prodded both openings, one with a fake cock, the other with a real one.

“Oh yes, please, Daddy, may I come?” she begged.

“That is completely up to you, Gertie-girl,” he said.

“Then fuck me!” she said instantly.

“I’m afraid it’s not going to be *that* easy,” he said as he barked out a laugh and pulled back his cock and his toy of choice. “After all, this is supposed to be punishment, correct?”

Her answer was nothing more than a growl but was evidently enough as he continued, “If you want to come, then you, naughty girl, need to fuck yourself on my cock and toy.”

That didn’t sound too bad... a bit naughty and a whole lot dirty, but at this point, she felt she was in danger of expiring if she didn’t come soon.

“Oh, one more thing,” he said as he pressed close enough she could feel the cock she so desperately needed. “You have two minutes.”

“What!”

“Make that one minute and fifty-eight seconds.”

The *might* became perfectly clear and she threw any scrap of remaining modesty right out that great big window she’d been pressed against. She forgot about how she looked or what anyone thought as she gave herself completely over to her Daddy’s dark desires. She pressed against the cock she’d sucked earlier and groaned when she felt it penetrate her opening. She whimpered as the thought he’d pull away entered her mind, but realized she didn’t have time for doubts. Pulling forward, she pressed down and found the vibrator’s head. It buzzed against her pussy and not her clit, but a shift in position had more of his cock up her ass and the vibrations hitting her naughty-button.

She rocked back and forth, pressed up and down, and gyrated like a stripper on a pole as she got closer and closer to coming.

“More, I need more,” she moaned. Considering he’d never said she couldn’t use her hands, she reached back to find his hip and pull him closer. “Yes, oh, you feel so good, Daddy,” she panted. “You fill my ass all the way up.” The last statement proved true when she reared up and basically sat down on his cock, the new position letting him sink completely into her.

Her other hand covered his as she moved the vibrator he held the smidge of an inch necessary to send her head back against his chest as she screamed, “Daddy!” Wave after wave of pleasure ran through her from the tips of her toes to the top of her head.

The moment her pussy stopped convulsing, she breathed, “Thank you, Daddy. I’d say I was sorry I was naughty, but I just can’t. That was—”

“Not enough,” he said, cutting her off even as he bent her forward and began to pump into her hard and fast.

She’d only thought she’d done a good job fucking herself. He was proving her wrong with every single thrust of his hips.

“Come again,” he demanded, pressing the vibrator onto her clit and slipping his other hand beneath her to tweak her nipple. “I want you to milk the cum from my cock with your sweet little ass as you come with me.”

They continued to rock together, sharing the steps of a dance they had perfected. It wasn’t long before her scream mixed with his bellow, bouncing about the rafters as they simultaneously exploded.

Gertie wasn't even aware of when the blindfold came off, she simply saw it was gone the next time she opened her eyes to see her Daddy's face as he stood over her. "Hi," she said.

"Hi," he returned with a smile. "How do you feel?"

"I have no words," she said honestly.

His smile widened and he bent forward to kiss her softly. "I have one, want to hear it?"

"Yes, please."

"Perfection."

The warmth enveloping her when hearing the word had nothing to do with arousal. It seeped into her very soul, filling her with the love this man offered her unconditionally.

"I love you, Daddy."

"I love you, too, Gertie-girl," he said, kissing her once again.

"Daddy?"

"Hmmm?"

"I have a word, too."

He cupped her cheek with his palm. "Care to share?"

"Bath. You've slicked me up with so much butter I'm afraid if we ever actually get there, I'll slide right out of bed."

He burst out laughing and she giggled before shrieking, "Daddy!" as he straightened, hauled her up, and tossed her over his shoulder. She suddenly wasn't so boneless she couldn't reach her hands toward her target.

"Oh, thank you, Gertie-girl," he said, causing her to giggle again as he started swinging his hips to the beat she was

tapping against his bare butt. “You’ve just reminded me I was planning on giving you a few more smacks myself.”

“I’ll stop!” she said, instantly rubbing the last spot she’d popped.

“I will, too,” he said, “right after I try out a certain bath brush I’ve been eyeing.”

“That’s not fair! I just used my hands!” she said only to hear the deep rumble of his chuckle.

“Don’t you fret, little one. My hand will be on the brush,” he said as he carried her into the bathroom.

“And you call *me* the naughty one,” she said, rolling her eyes.

Chapter 9

A week later...

The sun was pouring through the window when he opened his eyes to see Gertie curled up beside him. He loved the way the sun's rays turned her hair the color of fire. Picking up a strand, he ran it between his fingers, pushing another curl from her cheek in order to press his lips to skin even softer than the silk of her hair. Her breathing hitched but it took a second kiss to have her eyelids begin to flutter and another before they opened to reveal her incredible violet eyes.

“Good morning, babygirl.”

“Good morning, Daddy, what time is it?” she asked.

“Time to get up,” he replied. “We’ve got company coming, remember?”

“I’m up! I’m up!” she said, throwing back the covers which tossed poor Dander to the foot of the bed. Liam grunted as his Little scrambled over him, her elbow poking into his abdomen. “Oops! Sorry, Daddy.”

He reached out to grab the back of her nightshirt only to remember he’d thrown it across the room sometime after

they'd gone to bed. His fingers brushed bare skin before she dashed out of reach.

"No running," he called, climbing out of bed as she disappeared into the closet.

"Sorry!" she called back.

Shaking his head, he tugged on the same jeans he'd taken off last night. He pulled on a clean t-shirt and headed into the bathroom, looking into the closet as he passed by. It would never fail to amaze him how fast one tiny slip of a girl could make such a big mess. A drawer of the built-in dresser was askew with lingerie, undershirts, and socks threatening to spill out. Clothes once neatly arranged on hangers were now scattered across the floor of the closet.

"You'll be hanging all those back up before you leave this room," he informed her as he reached past her to align the drawer before sliding it shut.

"But I can't find my cowgirl shirt!" she whined, dropping a perfectly good blouse onto the pile.

Half distracted by the fact his girl was standing in only a matching bra and panty set, Liam was wondering why that seemed sexier than being totally naked. Perhaps it had to do with the fact her panties had the cutest little bow on the waistband and though petite, he knew full, round breasts were hiding behind the cups of her bra. Bare feet with pink-painted toenails tapped against the floor as she scrutinized the remaining choices and then snapped her fingers.

"Oops, I forgot, I put my clothes in the bathroom last night so I could save time getting ready," she said.

"And look how that's turned out for you," he said with a chuckle.

Her attempt to slip past him was easily thwarted by simply bracing his arm across the doorway. “Nope. You may turn yourself right back around and hang up those clothes, little girl.”

“But, Daddy, we have guests coming! It would be rude if we’re late!”

“There’s no ‘we’ in this equation. If they’re made to wait, that will be entirely your fault. I’m your Daddy, not your maid. You’ve got to learn to pick up your clothes.”

“I don’t know why,” she huffed, bending to grab a shirt and putting it on a hanger. “All we do is put them on and take them off. Wouldn’t it make far more sense to just go naked?”

Liam grinned and gave her suggestion consideration as he watched the fabric of her panties tighten against rounded globes when she bent over again. The matching bow on the backside drew his attention to the cleft of her ass. It was a sight he’d only be able to enjoy if she continued to wear clothes. Though bending her over to sink into her when her ass was bare and bore his marks was also quite enjoyable. Deciding he wasn’t about to give up either, he simply waved his hand at the hangers and the pile.

“Clean this up, get dressed, and come help me make breakfast,” he instructed.

When Gertie arrived in the kitchen, he was pulling a carton of eggs from the fridge. As she handed each one to him, he cracked it over a bowl, smiling as she pointed out he’d missed a piece of shell. As he was chasing the tiny piece with the back of the spoon, a knock let them know their company had arrived. “Come on in,” he called out, successfully snagging the shell and tossing it into the trash.

Will opened the back door and held it for his wife, who was indeed also his Little as Gertie had guessed the first time she'd met the man.

“Betty!” Gertie said, running across the kitchen to throw her arms around the older woman the moment she stepped through the door.

Liam watched them in amazement as the two women hugged and danced in a circle like puppies meeting for the first time. Despite the snow-white hair and wrinkles, one would never guess that Betty was half a century older than Gertie. The two were kindred spirits, both very intelligent, extremely capable women who found they were happiest when they set aside their adult selves and let their *Little* out.

Will closed the door and stood with his hands on his hips. “What am I? Chopped liver?”

Gertie giggled and flung herself at him to be wrapped in his arms for what experience had taught her would be quite the hug.

“You’re squishing me again!” she said, going up on her tiptoes to plant a kiss on his cheek when he released her, and then remembered her manners. “May I get you something to drink?”

After the couple let her know what they’d like, Gertie brought Betty a glass of orange juice and then carefully carried a mug of hot coffee over to the kitchen table and placed it in front of Will.

Returning to pour herself some juice, she said, “Daddy, can we—”

“No, baby, we’ll wait for Jack”—a single knock sounded before the door opened again to admit another man—“and

here he is,” Liam said unnecessarily.

After another round of hugs and refilling of coffee mugs, the group worked together to finish making breakfast before seating themselves at the table. Gertie and Betty sat next to each other on the built-in bench under the window, with Will taking the chair next to Gertie and Liam the one next to Betty. Jack took a seat across the table from Gertie as they all started in on breakfast.

Liam grinned as his Little girl looked about ready to burst and she’d yet to eat a single bite. She was bouncing in place, the piece of bacon she’d snagged off the platter being used as a lasso as she waved it around in the air while shooting him looks that said she thought he was taking far too long to get to the important stuff. Even Betty seemed a bit surprised at how her fellow Little was acting.

“Do you need to go to the bathroom?” Betty asked, already beginning to scoot across the bench to let her out.

“Huh, oh, no, I’m good,” Gertie said.

“Are you sure? You’re jumping around like that rabbit we saw yesterday,” Jack said from across the table.

“Oh, I’m just... ummm... waiting for a biscuit,” she said.

Liam cocked his brow and mentally put a check mark in the naughty-girl column for that little fib.

“Then why didn’t you take one before passing the basket?” Betty asked, pointing to where Will was pulling one from beneath the napkin that kept them warm.

“Oh, those were biscuits? I thought they were ummm, napkins.”

Check mark number two.

Liam slid a forkful of fluffy eggs into his mouth, never ceasing to be amazed at his Little's antics.

Will placed a biscuit on her plate and then passed the basket to Jack. "This is your napkin," Will said, taking the napkin from its place beneath her silverware and waiting for Gertie to plop down onto her behind instead of sitting up on her knees so he could place it in her lap.

Gertie gave a dramatic sigh and finally seemed to realize she was still clutching the bacon. She took a big bite and gave Liam a look that would have earned her a swat on her freshly seated bottom if he wasn't finding this far too entertaining to draw to an end.

Liam estimated his Little girl gave them approximately ninety seconds of peace to chew and swallow before she simply couldn't bear it another moment. He had to give her points for waiting until Jack stopped talking before she was at it again, waving her hand in the air as if she were a student in school.

Now *that* was a scenario he would be more than happy to expand upon once he had her alone. After all, there was the matter of two naughties on her slate that needed to be cleared.

"Yes, Gertie, do you have something you'd like to say?" Will asked.

"Yes! Um, I mean no!" she said, her pigtails whipping around to almost slap Will in the face as she looked between Liam and Will and back again. "Well, yes, I do, but Daddy has to go first and he's taking forever!" she blurted out.

Liam had smeared a spoon of peach preserves on his biscuit but was finally willing to give her a little break. "We both asked you to join us this morning to let you know how

much we've enjoyed these past two weeks." The smiles of his guests were nice, but it was watching his Little's face as he left it there and began to eat again that had him needing to bite back a chuckle.

"I believe I can speak for all of us and say it's been our pleasure having you and we're anxious to hear your ideas about how to proceed," Will said as Betty and Jack nodded.

"All I want to know is, are you staying?" Betty asked Gertie.

"It's not my turn!" Gertie wailed, already back on her knees, her eyes not on Betty but focused on him. "Did you forget, Daddy? I can give you a hint if you need one," she offered hopefully.

Every head swiveled between Gertie and Liam as if they'd been invited to join a game only to find it already in progress. Over the past two weeks, he'd watched his Little girl closely as they spent their days outside fishing, swimming, and hiking. They'd had picnics by the lake in a meadow and even done some climbing up a rocky ridge to enjoy the morning sunrise. She'd spent time riding horses with Betty as he and the other men had met to discuss the possibilities of going forward with their plans. He'd seen the joy on her face when she woke up every morning and the peaceful smile on her face as she fell asleep every night in his arms. But it was when she began to drop little hints about extending their vacation that he'd known it was time to let her in on the secret he'd been holding close to his chest.

Taking a last sip of coffee, Liam set down his mug and crooked his finger. Before he could even complete the motion, Gertie had disappeared beneath the edge of the table only to pop up at his side, startling him.

She bent forward to whisper in his ear, “Do you need your line, Daddy?”

Of course, it was a Gertie whisper so anyone without the need for a hearing aid heard her hint and while Will and Betty were in their seventies, both still had excellent hearing.

“No, baby, I think I’m good,” Liam said.

“Then what is taking you so long? It’s just one tiny little line!” Gertie said, small fists going to her hips.

“But it’s a big one,” he reminded her.

As if she knew she couldn’t argue with that, Gertie nodded, and her fists opened to allow her fingers to search for something to fiddle with. Finally, they settled on hooking themselves in her cowgirl belt. It was pink, of course, and had her name tooled into the leather, each letter bedazzled with rhinestones.

“What’s going on?” Betty asked, having scooted across the bench to sit closer to her own Daddy.

“I think we’re about to find out,” Will answered, taking her hand and giving her knuckles a kiss.

Liam grinned and wiped his face with his napkin before placing it beside his plate. He scooted back his chair, stood up, and glanced around the table before looking down at his Little girl. “Now?” he teased.

“Oh, for Pete’s sake, yes! Now!” Gertie said, earning another mark in his book of naughties when she added a huge roll of lovely lilac eyes.

He loved teasing, and enjoyed torturing his Little, but knew she was at the point of self-combustion. Still, he took another moment to simply take in the view of her in all her

splendor. She was half his size but matched his inner strength, his intelligence, and most of all, her absolute joy of sharing their lives together.

Wrapping his arms around her waist, he turned her to face him and waited until she looked up at him with a smile. He cleared his throat loudly and delivered his line.

“Are we there yet?”

“Yes!” Gertie shouted, jumping up and trusting him to catch her, which he did.

He twirled her in circles until he had to stop before she got too dizzy. He kissed her deeply and only then let her slide down his body to stand in the circle of his arms again. It wasn't until he heard his Little huff then giggle that he understood their audience didn't appear to understand the *play* was over.

“We mean we're staying...” Gertie offered.

A nanosecond passed before Betty shrieked and slid across the bench to get to her friend while Will and Jack's chairs scraped back and the two came to extend their congratulations. The men weren't quite as vivacious as Betty who had dragged Gertie into yet another Little puppy dance, but they each gave Liam a bear hug.

“It'll be great having you both here,” Jack said. “I've missed you.”

“I've missed all of you,” Liam said as the three stood watching the girls.

“Welcome home,” Will said. “I never had a single doubt.”

Chapter 10

Having abruptly stopped spinning, Gertie squealed when she stumbled, her steps definitely wobblier than the older woman's. Liam grabbed her before she face-planted at his feet.

“One day you're going to remember how dizzy spinning makes you,” Liam said.

Gertie gave a little flap of her hand to wave away the comment as she looked at the people who had become so important to her. Eyes that had been sparkling just a few seconds earlier bore a far more intense expression as her gaze landed on Jack.

“What do you mean you've missed us? You've seen us every day we've been here.” Glancing back up at Liam, she added, “And you've seen all three of them at least to exchange waves every day for the past two weeks, so what did you mean by you've missed all of them?”

When Jack's response was to look around the circle of people himself instead of answering, her gaze moved on to Will. “And how did you know?”

“Well, it seems you might have the balance of a drunken puppy, but you've got the hearing of a bat,” Will said with a chuckle.

Gertie smiled but repeated her question, “Really, how did you know we’d stay when we only decided last night? How could you be so sure when you didn’t even know us?”

Will looked over her head to meet Liam’s eyes. “You still haven’t told her?”

Liam shrugged. “This needed to be her decision without my interfering. She only made it late last night.” He didn’t bother adding she’d told him she couldn’t bear the thought of leaving while lying atop his naked body, his cock still snug inside her pussy after they’d made love, or that she’d fallen asleep mere moments later. He hadn’t had a chance since to delve into the more intricate side of things.

Gertie looked between the two men and then to Betty. “Do you have any idea what they are talking about?”

Instead of answering, Betty poked her Daddy in the ribs. “Tell her, Daddy, we’re not getting any younger here, you know.”

Will chuckled. “You’ll always be young in my eyes, Bets.” When she snorted and just poked him again, he grabbed her finger, kissed the tip of it, and nodded. “Gertie, I might not have known you, but I’ve known your Daddy his entire life. So when he walked into the store with you and Dander, all I had to do was look at the two of you and”—he clapped his hands just once—“I knew!”

Gertie’s shock was evident as her body jerked at the loud clap and her eyes grew to the size of saucers while her mouth dropped open and then closed, opened, and closed again.

Betty shook her head, gave her Daddy a third and much harder poke, and said, “Good grief, you big lug. You could have handled that with a bit more finesse, don’t you think?”

Stepping forward, Betty took Gertie's hand and led her back to the bench where they'd been sitting. Once they were settled, Betty said, "It's okay. You know Daddies, sometimes they think that keeping us in the dark is for the best—"

"My Daddy knows I do *not* like being left alone in the dark," Gertie said, her lilac eyes narrowing as she stared across the table at Liam.

"Don't blame him, sweetheart," Betty said. "He only did as asked. Will and Jackson, they... well, all of us actually, have wanted Liam to return to where he grew up for years now. But, we also knew he needed to discover who he really was, to chase his dream and not just follow those of others—"

"And did he?" Gertie interrupted.

"Follow his dream?" Betty clarified. When Gertie nodded, she smiled. "Honey, he didn't just follow it, he found it. The only reason any of this will be possible is because of his dream and you."

Gertie looked from the woman she'd grown to adore to the man who had captured her heart from the moment they'd met. "Me? What do I have to do with anything?"

"Everything," Liam said, coming to crouch down in front of her. "Will and Betty will never accept the credit they are due for helping me become the man I am. You know most of my story, my struggle when I showed up on a college campus at the age of fifteen with an abundance of brains but absolutely no social skills. Remember I told you about the guy who was stuck with a snotty-nosed kid as his roommate?" He paused until she nodded. "Want to guess who that guy was?"

Gertie looked past Liam to where Jack was seated next to Will and a lightbulb went on in her head.

“Jackson, it was you, wasn’t it? Daddy said the poor schmuck became not only his friend but his mentor even after he graduated and went on to invent stuff.”

“Schmuck, huh?” Jack said, his brow arching.

“No social skills, remember?” Liam grinned and shrugged.

Shaking his head, Jack addressed Gertie. “I just tried to keep him from being... overwhelmed. He had a million ideas on his plate, but the kid had no utensils,” Jack said.

“He means he taught me how to prioritize, to break things down. Let’s just say he gave me the fork and knife to cut things into manageable-size bites,” Liam said.

“And that *stuff* he invented?” Will said. “Those devices not only help surgeons all over the world to perform intricate procedures and save more patients, they made it possible for your Daddy to pursue his dream.”

“What we’re trying to say is that while all that stuff made me richer than I could ever have dreamed, it was Jackson, Will, and Betty who taught me the value of a real dream. They lived their lives in a way that told me no amount of money or fame or recognition would ever make me happy.”

He reached out and took her hands into his. “That’s where you come in. You *are* my happiness, Gertie. You made me want to become a better man, to be the kind of Daddy you deserved, and when I realized how incredibly happy and fulfilled you made me, I started to think about how we could share our happiness with others like us and I remembered my family and the beauty of my birthplace—”

“Wait, you were born in a cabin... here? In the woods?”

“Well, not exactly,” Betty said as she smiled. “Your Daddy was born in a hospital in Austin, but I’d say it’s safe to say a

great deal of his ancestors were born in cabins. Our family originated in Germany and were some of the first immigrants to settle the Texas Hill Country almost two centuries ago.”

Gertie looked around the circle of faces surrounding her. “So, you’re his actual family family, not just nice people?”

Will approached and placed his hand on Liam’s shoulder. “Your Daddy is our grandson. I can’t tell you how it makes me feel to know he has you in his life. We pray that you’ll allow us to be your Opa and Oma when you’re ready. That is if you’ll forgive an old man for keeping you in the dark.”

“I want you to know you were never alone in the dark, Gertie,” Liam said, his voice thick with emotion. “I was always there to keep you safe, even if I wasn’t at your side. The most important thing I’ve learned about dreams is that everyone deserves a chance to find and fulfill their own. I know you have friends in the city, that you have a job you enjoy. If you only enjoyed a short vacation here, then we’d go back—”

“But I love it here!” Gertie said. “I-I think I loved it the moment we stood at the lookout. I felt so Little when we stood there and all I could see was the sky and the trees going for miles and miles, and Mr. Hawk soaring above the river. I felt a peace I’ve never felt before. And that was only because of you, Daddy. You found me and then allowed me to find Wil... I mean Opa and Oma and Jack, and well, I fell in love with it all.”

“So, you’ll share this dream with me?” Liam asked.

Gertie shook her head. “No—”

“No?” Liam said so softly it was almost inaudible as the color drained from his face.

It was Gertie's turn to jump up in order to wrap her arms around her Daddy, but not quite managing it in time as he sat back on his behind. "Oh, Daddy, I'm sorry," Gertie said, immediately crawling into his lap and wrapping her arms around his waist to hug him tight. "I didn't mean that kind of no. I just meant I don't think it's just our dream. It's Opa, Oma, and even Jack's, right?"

Liam simply stared down at her until she took his face between her palms and leaned forward to kiss him. His arms came up to wrap around her and his forehead pressed against hers when the kiss ended. "Just to be clear, you want to stay here with me, with us, as we work together to turn this dream into a reality. Yes?"

"The most definite, unequivocal, you couldn't get rid of me if you tried, pinkie-promise yes! I can work from anywhere as long as I can access the internet. And my friends can be our first guests and will love Betty as much as I do," Gertie said, turning to smile at her newest friend before looking back at Liam. "Even if this was a bug-infested, putrid-smelling squishy swamp covered in spiderwebs and poison-ivy, I'd rather be here than anywhere else as long as you're here with me, Daddy."

Liam's smile began on his lips as she spoke and moved to light his very soul. "Even if there were alligators in that water instead of fish?"

"Even then," she said without hesitation. "Of course, that would most definitely confine any future skinny-dipping to the bathtub, but I'm willing to make that sacrifice because you're my dream, Daddy."

"Really?" he asked, swooping her up into his arms again. "Well, aren't I just the luckiest Daddy alive?"

“I’d say so,” she said and then burst into giggles. “I love you so much!”

“I love you, too, Gertie-girl.”

The couple kissed and after Jack and Will helped haul Liam off the floor, the much larger group followed Gertie’s example and performed a rather comical happy puppy dance. When Gertie paused to sway on her feet, Liam plopped her down on the bench. They all resumed breakfast with Gertie packing it away as if she hadn’t been fed in a week. Evidently putting on a play took quite a lot of energy.

It was another hour before the kitchen had been cleaned and their guests were preparing to leave.

“We still have lots of details to go over and a stack of paperwork to finish,” Will said.

“No rush, we’ve got plenty of time to figure all that out before you go,” Liam said.

“Wait, go?” Gertie cried out. “You’re leaving? Where are you going? I just found you! Nobody said our staying meant you weren’t staying, too. If us being here means you’re going away, then—”

“Babygirl, take a breath,” Liam cut in before she went into full-blown panic mode. “This is their home, they aren’t leaving.”

“But you said go—”

“On vacation,” Liam clarified. “Will and Betty have been steadily working for the past few years on getting all the deeds for the land our ancestors have passed down as well as

purchasing more. Then there were about a million permits required to start before the actual building. Jack has worked on drawing up the blueprints for a variety of cabins. All three have been gracious enough to give their time without any real breaks—”

“Don’t deny your own work is what allows us to do ours,” Jack said. “Without the money you’ve brought in, this would all still just be a drawing on paper.”

Liam smiled and turned to Gertie who asked, “Does this mean I get to help run The Dam Store?”

Jack laughed as if he found her question extremely amusing. “Good try, little one, but an employee who will only focus on restocking aisle two isn’t good for our bottom line.”

Gertie gave him a view of her tongue as she stuck it out in his direction.

“Be nice,” Liam chastised. “We’ll figure out something about the store. Regardless of who runs it, I think it’s time they all go on a nice long vacation. What do you think, Gertie-girl?”

Gertie tilted her head to the side contemplating his words then nodded as she looked at the other three. “Most definitely, but you’re all coming back, right?”

“Of course, we are,” Will said as he hugged her hard.

“You couldn’t keep us away,” Betty said, mimicking a bobble-head doll, her head nodding vigorously, a huge smile on her face.

Their guests left with Betty turning to yell over her shoulder about meeting at the barn for a ride later. Liam had to snag Gertie by the back of her bejeweled belt to keep her from deciding later was right now.

“Not so fast, little girl,” he said once she was in his arms again. “It appears some Little girl needs a lesson on little white lies and we definitely need to address the issue of rolling those gorgeous eyes of yours and sticking that sweet little tongue out at our guests.”

“Is this lesson going to involve a bath brush on my backside?”

“It is,” he confirmed with a grin.

“What would you say about making a deal? Two swats of your hand, one from the brush, and we’ll call it even for keeping secrets from me,” Gertie said.

“I’d say your Daddy still doesn’t make deals,” he growled.

Giving a long dramatic sigh, Gertie put her hands on her hips. “Is this lesson going to include butter?”

“Did I hear you say a naughty word?” he returned.

“Ummm, maybe?” she said with a snarky little grin.

“Then, babygirl, there’s your answer.”

Their guests were serenaded by her shriek as he tossed her over his shoulder and added, “I think this lesson is at least two sticks worthy. What do you say?”

“I’d say you’re the Daddy, Daddy.”

Epilogue

A year later

The last year had been crazy. It had started from the moment he and Gertie had announced their decision to stay. Will had finally taken Betty back to Germany to visit family they hadn't seen in years. Post-cards would arrive every few days documenting their trip and while Gertie was missing her new Opa and Oma, they were both glad the couple were having the time of their lives.

The night they'd taken the couple to the airport in Austin, Liam, Gertie, and Jack had dinner at The County Line where the men enjoyed the BBQ while keeping their eyes on Gertie who was constantly hanging over the railing to point out yet another fish or turtle swimming in Bull Creek, which ran alongside the restaurant.

“Listen, Jack, you need a vacation just as much as Opa and Oma do. Why are you being so bull-headed about taking some time off?” Liam asked, reaching out to pull Gertie back into her seat. Without even looking, he tapped the edge of her plate, silently instructing her to eat.

“And do what? Sit around and twiddle my thumbs wondering if anything is getting done? Nope, I need to stay right here so we can get this show on the road,” Jack said, biting into a beef rib.

“You don’t need to twiddle your thumbs, Jack,” Gertie said, swiping a french fry through the puddle of ketchup on her plate. “You can spend your vacation doing some wooing, and when you come back, it better be with Penny on your arm.”

Putting his fork down, Liam gave his mentor his complete attention. “Penny? Who’s Penny? Care to elaborate?” he coaxed as Jack just shook his head.

“Nope.”

“He’s just scared Penny is going to say no,” Gertie said, “but she won’t.”

“How exactly could you know that?” Jack grouched. “Unless there’s something I don’t know, how can you be sure she’s a Little if you’ve never even met?”

Gertie rolled her eyes as she swallowed the bite of hamburger she’d taken. “Like Opa met me for what? A split second and knew I was the one for my Daddy? Please, I don’t need to meet her. When I met my Daddy, I just knew he was a good one. I knew Opa was a Daddy practically from the first moment I met him in The Dam Store. And you proved you have a good heart the moment you protected a younger kid when you didn’t have to. A man who works with different types of wood and rocks and turns them into such beautiful homes and furniture has to have the soul of a man who would make a great Daddy. And Daddies’ hearts recognize Littles when they meet them, so it doesn’t take Sherlock to know Penny is a Little waiting for her own Daddy and that Daddy is

the one and only Mr. Jackson Stone. Penny would be a fool if she doesn't agree. So, is she?"

"Is she what?" Jack asked, looking a little befuddled.

"A fool," Gertie said.

"No," Jack said, his tone softening. "She's a great many things, but she's not a fool."

"Then she's just waiting for you to get off your butt and go get her," Gertie said as if it were a certainty.

"From your mouth to her ears," Jack said. "One thing I'm gonna want in return, though."

"For being my Daddy's friend, just name it and it's yours if I have anything to say about it," Gertie assured him.

"If you're going to be all up in my business, you'll call me Uncle Jack. Deal?"

Gertie looked astonished and giggled, sticking out her pinkie finger to hook around his. "That's easy-peasy. It's a deal, Uncle Jack."

As they shook pinkies, Liam chuckled. "Babygirl, you do understand this means Jack is not only your friend, he is now your family."

"That's okay, I already considered him family," Gertie said. "Can... I mean, may I have my dessert now?"

"Yes," Liam said, passing her the dessert she'd ordered even before choosing her dinner. As she picked up her fork, he continued to make his point. "And as family, that means when he catches his *niece* being naughty, as her Uncle, it's his responsibility to smack your bottom," Liam said.

Gertie's mouth dropped open and she glanced from Liam to Jack, who was looking rather pleased with himself. Gertie shrugged. "The operative word being 'catch me'," she said, rolling her eyes and practically purring in pleasure as she took a huge bite of her pecan pie.

So, the men had compromised. Jack had stayed to help Liam, but had taken several extended weekends to, as Gertie said, "woo Penny". She and Gertie had become fast friends, and while Penny had not yet moved in with Jack, she visited often and was working alongside him on a few projects.

They had made exceptional progress, drawing plans up and hiring crews to work all over what would soon become a camp for Littles and their Caretakers. Liam had a sneaky suspicion the main incentive to get Gertie to actually leave the small cabin they'd been using was the fact their new home was built high on a ridge and included a huge loft with its very own balcony overlooking the valley. The day they moved, she'd held Dander as they stood at the railing. "We moved from the trees to live among the clouds, Daddy," she'd said, leaning back against him as they watched a pair of hawks riding the airstream to glide effortlessly across the sky.

A new lodge housing their administrative offices and offering a few rooms for guests, as well as a large mess hall, was in its last stages of construction. They'd decided to install a series of pools that would take up several levels of the hill the lodge was built on. There was a pool for swimming laps or playing water volleyball on the top level. A ramp led to the next level down where a huge pool meandered like a lazy river with a waterfall one could swim behind and several

waterslides that Gertie was impatiently waiting to give her stamp of approval. A hot tub big enough for several people took up a portion of the lowest level for those guests who'd rather sit and enjoy the view of the water below them instead of dodging canoes, kayaks, inner tubes, and rafts guests could use to float down the river.

Several half tent/half cabin buildings had been built in a circle encompassing a large meadow. They'd decided the meadow would be the perfect gathering spot for bonfires, outdoor movie viewing, star-gazing, and other group activities for guests wanting a more communal camping experience. Additional cabins were to be tucked into the trees all over the property, spaced far enough apart to appease those campers who preferred a more private experience.

Liam looked up from the papers on his desk when he heard Gertie shouting, "They're here!" He didn't even bother to remind her to use her inside voice as he left his office to see her flying across the living room. "No run—" he began but didn't bother to finish as his Little girl had already flown out the front door, jumped off the porch instead of using the steps, and was running down their flagstone path toward his grandparents.

He shook his head and smiled when she screamed, "You're back!" before throwing herself into her Opa's open arms.

After a long bear hug that had Gertie grunting she was being squished, Will kissed her cheek and let her go to be hugged by her Oma while Liam gave his grandfather a bear hug of his own.

"You're lucky we're here," Will said as the foursome walked back toward the house. "I barely recognize the place

now. So much has changed since we've been gone. I wasn't even sure where to turn."

"We're going to have new maps printed up to give guests so they'll know where to go. Opa, you can give them out at The Dam Store because it's the first place they'll stop," Gertie said with a big smile.

Will gave Liam a smirk that had him wanting to pull a Gertie and roll his own eyes. "She absolutely refused to consider another entrance," he explained.

"It's the first place I fell in love with when we came here," Gertie said. "I couldn't even dream of not giving other Littles the same experience... though hopefully without the need for Dramamine."

"So, what you're saying is you've already put in a large order for those tickets your Daddy and I discussed," Will asked with a huge grin.

"Yes. I wanted these really cute pink ones but for some reason, Daddy insisted they be red," Gertie said, swinging both her grandparents' hands as she walked between them back toward the house.

Will's belly laugh rang out as he looked over her head to give Liam a wink.

Liam grinned, shook his head, and said, "We can talk over lunch. Jack's been grilling all day and Gertie has the table set."

Lunch had been a whirlwind with Gertie and Betty chattering practically non-stop while Will drilled Jack on timelines as he finished loading the dishwasher and Liam prepared a tray of iced tea and cookies to be enjoyed while the group settled in the living room to continue catching up.

Will said, “I really am amazed at the progress. You boys have done an awful lot since we’ve been gone.”

“We’ve hired a great crew, Opa,” Liam said. “We’ve got a ways to go before we can open—”

“Like name the place? I see all these shiny new cabins and the fancy-smancy lodge, but I haven’t spotted a single sign with a name on it,” Will said as he waited for Betty to lead her to the living room.

“Wait!”

Liam almost dropped the tray at Gertie’s yell and watched her jump to her feet on the bench she’d been sitting on. “Gertie! Sit down before you—”

Before he could finish, she was gesturing for them all to return to the table. “Sit, sit, sit,” she instructed.

“Gert—”

“Oopsie, sorry, Daddy,” she cut in as she flopped to her bottom like a ragdoll. She looked up the moment her butt met the cushion and said, “Hurry, everybody come back and sit down. I’ve got it!”

“Got what?” Betty said, the first to plop down beside Gertie.

Gertie didn’t answer until the men all sighed and finally pulled out the chairs they’d just vacated and sat down again.

“Okay, you’ve got our attention,” Liam said. “And fair warning, there had better be a really good reason for taking another ten years off my life. You’re my Little girl, not a demented jack-in-the box.”

Gertie grinned then pulled Dander from where he’d been reclining on the bench and plopped him in the middle of the

kitchen table. “Ta-da!”

The others looked at the stuffie and then at each other before all eyes went back to Gertie.

“I’m afraid I don’t understand,” Betty said. “What is Dander doing?”

“He’s our mascot,” Gertie said as if that made all the sense in the world. When she was met with four pairs of eyes, one of blue that were darkening and narrowing by the second, she hurried to continue, “We’ve all been trying to come up with a name, right? For the camp, remember?”

Liam sat back with the understanding that his Little girl hadn’t attempted to scare him to death but was truly excited about some idea that had popped into her head. He was a bit confused as to why they would need a mascot, per se, but he was willing to listen.

“Go on, babygirl,” he said, pleased to see her beam a smile at him.

“What do you three men and Dander have in common?” she asked cryptically.

Jack looked at Will who looked at Liam who just shook his head.

“Really? None of you wants to even guess?” Gertie said, looking profoundly disappointed.

“Gertie, is this a trick question?” Jack asked.

“I wouldn’t trick you about something as important as this, Uncle Jack!”

“Maybe you can give us some hints,” Will suggested.

Betty proved that while she couldn't walk as fast or dance quite as vigorously as Gertie, she could bounce just as enthusiastically.

"Pick me, pick me!" she said, waving her hand in the air.

"Go ahead, Oma," Gertie said, not seeming the least bit surprised when Betty reached over to grab the stuffed animal.

"They are all lions!" Betty said. "Dander might be stuffed, but inside he does have a heart," she said, holding out the paw where a heart could be seen. Pressing it, they all could hear the faint but distinct sound of a heartbeat. "All of you have hearts, too, but not just any hearts, right?"

"Right!" Gertie said, reaching over to hug her Oma. "You aren't just men, you are all Daddies. Like lions, you want mates to stand beside you throughout your lives, and you will fight to the death to protect the ones you love. You're all strong and tough on the outside, but inside, you have hearts that simply want to keep the Littles you've chosen safe and happy and share that love with us. Right?"

Finally, three male heads bobbed as what she was saying started sinking in.

"And," she continued, "Littles love knowing they are protected and no matter if they are good or naughty, their Daddies, Mommies, Aunts, Uncles, Partners, or whatever, offer unconditional love and *that* is what we are trying to show with building this place. Correct?"

"Correct," Will, Jack, and Liam all chorused at the same time.

Gertie beamed and nodded, accepting Dander back from Betty. "That's what you have in common. You're all Lionhearts." She looked around the circle. "We will welcome

all those who come here not only to vacation once but to return again and again because they will know we've built Lionheart as a sign we care and want our guests to become friends who know they are safe to be whoever they are."

Jack nodded, a soft smile curling his lips. "Beautifully said, little one."

"Yes, that's exactly it," Will said as he watched a tear slide down his Betty's face as she nodded.

"*Löwenherz*," Liam said reverently.

"So, you think it's a good name?" Gertie asked.

"No, babygirl, we think it is the *only* name," Liam corrected, standing and pulling her off the bench and stroking her curls back as she beamed at him. "You are simply incredible, little one." He patted the stuffie's head, adding, "And you, Sir Dandelion, are going to make one mighty fine mascot."

The End

About Maggie Ryan

Maggie Ryan is a USA TODAY multi-published and Amazon Top 100 bestselling author. She loves *flirting with the forbidden* to bring you stories about strong, stern alpha males and sassy, capable women. Maggie believes life without a bit of fire and a dash of spice isn't worth living. She hopes you will curl up in your favorite chair and take the journey with her. Happy Reading!

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Maggie.ryan.writes@gmail.com

Twitter [@authorMRyan](#)

Instagram: [Instagram.com/Maggie.ryan.writes](https://www.instagram.com/Maggie.ryan.writes)

Marnie's Champion by Laylah Roberts

A MF story by Laylah Roberts

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Chapter 1

Marnie was strangling the swan.

But she couldn't let go or she'd die.

“This is it. This is where my life ends. Clinging to a floating swan in the middle of a pool with a wet, sleeping cat on my lap. Seriously, Moose, how can you be sleeping right now?”

If it wasn't for the darn cat, she'd be dry and safe right now instead of on the cusp of death.

“Not cool, Moose. Not cool.” She glared at the huge white cat wearing a blue collar with his name on it.

Moose didn't answer. Rude.

She found him drowning in the pool, risked her life to rescue the damn thing and now when she needed some support, he was sleeping!

She sniffled. “And this isn't even the shittiest thing to happen to me this month. Swannie, I need you to swim me to the edge of the pool. Swim, Swannie, swim!”

The swan did nothing.

Jerk.

“What the hell are you doing?” a deep voice demanded.

She screeched, falling backward.

Right into the swimming pool.

Yep. This was it.

Resignation filled her. Why fight it? Her life was a freaking mess and she couldn't see any way through.

Suddenly, she was grabbed under her arms and thrust up through the water to the air above. She gasped for air, coughing as she was dragged to the stairs and carried up them.

Whoa. He was strong.

At five-foot-ten, Marnie was tall, and this guy was carrying her around like she weighed nothing.

He laid her down on the warm concrete around the pool.

He was like a guardian angel, sent to save her.

“What the fuck was that?” he yelled.

A cranky guardian angel.

“Aren't guardian angels supposed to be nice?” she muttered.

“What? What are you talking about? Shit, did you hit your head?” Crouching, he placed his fingers over the pulse on her neck. His stern green eyes held hers.

He wasn't classically handsome; his features were a bit too big for that. But there was something compelling about him.

He had the longest eyelashes she'd ever seen. Chiseled cheeks, a light five o'clock shadow and dark-brown hair that was longer on top than the sides.

“Your pulse is a bit fast.”

“I’m fine! I didn’t hit my head.” She suddenly remembered the cat. “Moose! Oh my God! Moose!” She tried to get up, but a wave of dizziness hit her. He grabbed her, sitting her back on her ass.

“Sit down,” he ordered. “The cat is fine.”

“He was drowning!”

“No, he wasn’t. He can swim.”

“He was drowning! I saw him.”

“Look.” He pointed at the water, where the darn cat was slowly swimming toward the stairs.

“He’s ... he’s doggy paddling.”

“He prefers to call it kitty paddling,” her rescuer said dryly.

She studied him, noticing the way his clothes clung to his firm chest and biceps.

Yum.

Stop it, Marnie.

“Take it you’re Marnie,” he said.

“Um, yes. And you’re Deke?” Great first impression to make on her new roommate.

He grunted. “What the hell happened? You’ve got no business near a swimming pool if you can’t swim.”

“I thought Moose was drowning. I looked out the kitchen window, and he was in the middle of the pool.”

“He likes to swim. He does it all the time.”

“That is so weird. I never knew cats could swim. I thought I was rescuing him. And, you know, I was quite safe on the

swan until you scared me.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Are you seriously trying to blame me?”

“No,” she grumbled.

“Don’t go near the swimming pool again until you know how to swim, understand me?”

“Yes, Sir.”

Oh drat. Why had she called him sir? He studied her. So she added a salute.

Standing, he crossed his arms over his chest. Whoa, the dominance rolling off him was intense. She shivered, hoping he’d think she was cold.

“So, um, thanks for letting me stay with you. I really appreciate it.”

He didn’t say anything. Right. She could tell he was *super* pleased to have her here.

Marnie hated imposing on people. But she didn’t have money for a motel. Her cousin Ronnie was the only family she had, and he was deployed for the next six months. Her best friend Shayla had offered to put her up, but she already lived with five other people in a small house.

So when Ronnie said she could stay here for the next six months, rent-free, well, she’d jumped on it.

But yeah ... she hadn’t really considered how his roommate might feel about her.

She attempted to get up, but she felt so shaky and ended up back on her ass. With a huff, he grabbed her under the arms and lifted her onto her feet.

“Sorry,” she muttered.

“Why?”

“Um, for being a nuisance?”

“Yeah. I’m going to get changed. Ronnie told you the house rules?”

“There are house rules?”

“So that’s a no, then. I work twenty-four-hour shifts at the station, so I’m not always around. You won’t have any parties. You won’t have anyone over that I haven’t met before. Every time you leave the house, you set the alarm and lock the door. You finish something in the fridge or pantry, you replace it. Don’t go near my room. And if there’s a game on and I’m home, that’s what’s on the TV. And no swimming. That’s just for you.”

“I feel like a teenager again. Have I got a curfew? What happens if I break the rules? Am I grounded?”

“We can talk about punishments if you like. I prefer a hands-on approach, though.”

Huh? What did that mean?

“Take it easy for the rest of the day.” Turning, he walked off.

“Meow.”

She glanced down at Moose as he weaved around her feet.

“That went well, didn’t it?”

The cat just looked at her in disbelief.

Yeah, that’s what she’d thought too.

Chapter 2

Marnie stumbled into the kitchen.

Coffee.

Why did her head hurt so much?

Maybe because you've worked over sixty hours in the last week. And it probably didn't help that you barely drank any water yesterday.

Right. That could be it.

Half-asleep, she moved toward the coffeepot on autopilot. However, before she could reach it, she bumped into a tall, unmovable object.

Why was there something standing in her way?

Her eyes focused on a chest.

A very naked, muscular chest.

“Yum.”

“Did you just say yum?”

“What? Huh?” She took several steps back, bumping into the island behind her. “Nope. I said ... bum.”

“You said bum?”

Shit. Couldn't she have thought of a better word that sounded like yum?

Idiot.

She ran a hand over her face. Fatigue was kicking her ass.

She fought back the urge to cry.

Crying wasn't going to solve anything. If she ever wanted to get back on her feet, she needed money. Which meant taking all the extra shifts she could. It wouldn't be forever.

She had this.

Maybe.

It would help if she could sleep. But she really missed Jammy, Nutter, and Squiggles. She hoped Lucas hadn't hurt them.

Don't think about that.

"Why would you say bum?"

"It's just what I say. I stub my toe, I yell, bum! I bang into someone standing in the middle of the room, I say, bum. It's a thing. Lots of people do it."

He took a sip from his coffee, then wrinkled his nose. That was ... adorable.

Not something she ever thought she'd think about Deke Fraser. The man was a grouch. He was moody and bossy. Over the past two weeks, she'd barely seen him but that didn't mean he hadn't made his presence felt.

In the form of notes. Left everywhere.

There had been one telling her to keep it down when she got home at night.

Another one telling her to stop feeding the cat so much. How did he even know how much she'd been feeding Moose?

He was anal.

Yesterday, there had been a note telling her off for leaving her shoes at the front door.

Who was he? The tidy police?

This is his house. You're living here rent-free.

Well, technically, Ronnie still paid his share of the rent. But she really couldn't afford to piss Deke off.

"Coffee's no good?" she asked in a husky voice.

"We're out of creamer."

She winced. Fuck.

"What was the house rule about finishing things, Marnie?" His voice was calm, but that just made it worse. It felt like the calm before the storm.

"I'm sorry. I was going to pick some up last night. I'll go get some creamer now." Although how the hell she was going to do that when she was due at her other job in an hour, she had no idea. She'd picked up some extra hours helping Shayla at the nail salon where she worked.

"Don't bother, I'm going back on shift. I'll get some coffee there." He stepped toward her.

Oh hell.

All of that fine muscle was coming her way.

Breathe, Marnie. Breathe.

He reached past her, placing his cup in the sink.

Lord, he smelled good.

Closing her eyes, she took a discreet sniff.

“Did you just sniff me?”

Her eyes flew open. “What? No. Of course not. That would be weird.”

He drew back and her gaze went to his chest again. She couldn’t help it.

Reaching out, he placed a finger under her chin, closing her mouth.

“We tidy up our own messes around here, little girl.” He moved back with a smirk.

“What? I didn’t make a mess!”

“I was talking about the drool pool.” Turning, he walked off.

What was he talking about? What did he mean by drool pool ... oh my God!

Was he implying that she was drooling over him?

Well, weren't you?

Yes. But it was rude to point it out.

She sighed, looking at the coffeepot. Damn it. She was desperate enough to drink it without the creamer. But she needed to add that to her shopping list, which comprised of toilet paper, peanut butter, and bread. Those were the things she basically lived on now, except for the free meal she got as part of her job at the bar.

After getting ready, she walked out to her car. The grouch had already left, thankfully.

The sun beat down, adding to the pain in her head. Usually she didn’t mind Austin in the summer, but for the last week the

temperature had been climbing above a hundred and it was getting to her.

Drat. She'd forgotten her water bottle. Heading back in, she winced as she realized she hadn't set the alarm.

Again.

The last thing she needed was Deke riding her ass.

Would you like him to spank it instead?

No!

Grabbing her water bottle, she left, setting the alarm this time. As she neared her beaten-up old car, she noticed a yellow sticky note on the windshield.

For fuck's sake. What now?

She grabbed the note, reading it.

Lord. That man was too much.

With no time left to spare, she jumped in her car and took off.

Shayla gave her a shocked look. "He left you a note telling you that your tires needed replacing and not to drive your car until they were?"

"Yes, but he didn't call it a car. He called it a heap of junk."

"Well, it kind of is."

They were sitting in the alley behind the nail salon having their break. The pay was crap, but Marnie was desperate.

“Yeah, it is. Kind of like my life right now.” Marnie leaned back against the building as she sat on a crate and tried to pretend this alley didn’t smell like garbage and pee.

“You look like shit.”

“Tell me what you really think,” Marnie joked.

“You’re obviously not sleeping. You’re losing weight.”

“I was well-padded to begin with.”

Shayla smacked her thigh. “Stop that! That’s Lucas talking. He was always on at you about your weight. You’re gorgeous, Marnie. Curvy and beautiful. You have the most stunning smile and I’d kill for those boobs.”

“You’re beautiful and you know it,” Marnie countered.

“Sure do.” Shayla grinned. “I’m a fucking catch. And so are you.”

Then why did her ex cheat on her?

If you’d lose a bit of weight, then I might find you more attractive and I wouldn’t have had to fuck someone else.

This is your fault, Marnie. Not mine.

She shook off those thoughts.

Fuck. Him.

“I’ve got some savings if you need money.”

“What? No! I’m fine, really.”

“Fine? You’re exhausted. You’re working too much. And you haven’t really dealt with your break-up.”

“I’ve dealt with it. You helped me. You and a bottle of tequila.” She grimaced, remembering that hangover. “And while Deke can be a grouchy jerk sometimes, I hardly ever see

him. The house is in a good neighborhood and I only have to pay my share of the utilities. I'm fine."

"What about your tires?"

"They're fine too. Deke's just ..."

"Overprotective?"

That implied that she meant something to him.

"Overly cautious. Must come with being a firefighter."

Shayla sighed dreamily. "Do his firefighter friends come over? Firefighters are so damn sexy."

"He doesn't really have friends over."

She wasn't sure he even had friends.

"Why don't you ask for his help to get your stuff back from Lucas? You'll sleep better with your toys."

Marnie felt herself growing warm.

"You don't need to be embarrassed. After all that tequila, you were talking in your sleep. You were begging Lucas to let you take your toys with you. Sweetie, I'd never judge you for who you are."

Marnie hugged her tight. "You're the best."

"I know." Shayla patted her back. "But you need to get your stuff."

Marnie drew back. "I'm scared."

"You think that fucker will hurt you?"

"He doesn't need to touch me to hurt me."

"I'm going with you," Shayla stated. "You need your stuff."

“I only want my clothes and toys.”

He could keep everything else.

She'd left Lucas three weeks ago with just the clothes on her back, her handbag and her car. She'd stayed in a cheap motel for a week, which had pushed her finances into the red.

That's when she'd swallowed her pride and called Ronnie.

She'd tried to go back and get her stuff while Lucas was at work, only to discover that he'd changed the locks.

The bastard.

Now he was insisting she make a time to collect her things.

“Ask Deke to go with you. He's likely got some buddies who will help. Lucas will shit himself if a bunch of sexy firefighters turn up with you.”

“I don't know if he'd do it.”

“Bake him something, take it over to the fire station so they all get a taste. All men think with their stomach. Or their dicks.” She waggled her eyebrows.

“Baking, it is.” She'd need to buy some ingredients, but if it meant getting her stuff back, it would be worth it.

Chapter 3

Marnie stood outside the fire station, staring down at her basket of chocolate chip cookies and lemon honey muffins.

This was a stupid idea.

These guys wouldn't want to help her. They didn't even know her. And Deke didn't exactly like her.

She should just go home and go to bed. She was exhausted, and she was working a double shift the next day.

Her phone buzzed with a text.

Lucas.

Great timing, as always.

As much as she wanted to block him, she couldn't while he was holding her toys hostage.

Lucas: *I'm not a storage facility. Be here Sunday afternoon at two to get your stuff or I'm throwing it all in the garbage.*

Fucking asshole.

Right. Now she had to do this.

What was the worst that could happen?

“Yo, Deke!”

Deke frowned over at Jamie, the newest member of their crew. He was young and cocky and he smiled far too much.

It just wasn't normal to be that cheerful.

“What?”

Cormac, one of his closest friends, shot him a sharp look.

Right. Be nice to the new guy. He didn't understand why when he was never nice to anyone else.

But he noticed Jamie's grin droop. With a sigh, he turned off the stovetop and turned. “What is it?”

“Uh, there's a girl downstairs for you.”

“A girl?” Cormac asked, looking shocked.

“Who?” he barked.

“Um, well. She said she's your roommate?”

He should have fucking known. What the hell did that girl want? Ronnie had stitched him up good. He'd said his cousin was quiet and shy and that he probably wouldn't even know she was around.

Right.

Like it was possible to ignore Marnie. She was everywhere in his house. Her scent lingered in every room and even his damn cat had decided he liked her better than him.

Not that Deke blamed Moose. If he could curl up between her legs each night, he'd die a fucking happy man.

Fuck.

Get that out of your head right now.

She's trouble. Way too young. Reckless.

“What the fuck is she doing here?” he muttered.

“Your roommate?” Cormac asked.

He stormed down the stairs to where she stood, holding a woven basket.

Her auburn-colored hair was pulled back in a high ponytail. She was wearing a pair of cut-off shorts that were so short he'd never allow her to leave the house in them if she were his.

But she's not, dickhead. She's none of your business.

Except he couldn't stop thinking about her. He'd even started leaving her notes throughout the house and on her car.

She was tall. And curvy. Although, she seemed to live on just coffee, bread and peanut butter.

He didn't like that. Was she on some crazy diet? She was definitely looking thinner than when he'd first met her. And those dark marks under her eyes were growing bigger.

Not that they detracted from her beauty.

Hazel-colored eyes stared up at him nervously as she chewed on her lower lip. He wanted to storm over and release that lip from its punishment. Then he'd sweep her up into his arms and kiss her until she melted.

Before he spanked her ass. Because he'd just spotted her car parked by the curb behind her.

“What are you doing here?” he demanded in a harsher voice than he'd intended. But seriously ... she was going to get into an accident driving that car. Hadn't she read his note?

The tires should have been replaced long ago. And her wing mirrors were held on with electrical tape.

“I, um, I made cookies and lemon honey muffins f-for you.” She held up the basket she was carrying.

What the hell?

“Why?”

“Oh, because I thought you might like them?” She was giving him a confused look as if he was the one not making sense. She pulled back the lid of the basket. There was enough food there to feed a football team.

Or a hungry group of firefighters.

“Yes!” Jamie said, rushing forward to grab the basket. “These look delicious.”

She blushed. “Thanks. It didn’t take much. I like to bake.”

She hadn’t baked before today. Deke stared at her suspiciously as the others gathered around, sampling the food and praising her. She could barely keep her eyes off the guys.

Right. He got it now.

She wasn’t here to bake for him. She was using him to get close to his crew. Probably liked the idea of fucking a firefighter.

Moving forward, he grabbed her arm. Shocked filled him as she flinched. He let go immediately, staring down at her with a narrowed gaze.

Had he hurt her?

She took a hasty step back.

He didn’t like that at all.

“Come with me. Now.” Yeah, he could have made his voice gentler. But he didn’t have a lot of softness in him.

She nodded shakily and followed him out of the station, waving with a smile as everyone called out their thanks.

Those greedy bastards had better leave some food for him.

“I told you not to drive your car until you replaced the tires. They’re worn.”

She just stared up at him. “Sure.”

Sure? What kind of answer was sure?

He didn’t like it. While Ronnie was gone, she was his responsibility. And Deke always took his responsibilities seriously.

“You need to replace them.”

“I will.”

She moved her hand behind her back. What was she doing?

“What are you doing here?”

“I, um, baked.”

“You haven’t baked before. Why now?”

“I just haven’t had time.”

That felt like a lie. And he didn’t like lies. He crossed his arms over his chest, drawing her gaze to his biceps and chest. He smirked. He could tell that she liked what she saw.

“That so?”

“Well, um, actually.”

Here it came.

“I was wanting a favor—”

“No.”

“No?” She gave him a surprised look. “But you don’t even know what it is.”

He knew it was going to be something about introducing her to his team. Wasn’t the first time he’d been used this way.

“What is it, then?”

She shook her head, a brittle smile crossing her face as she wrapped her arms around herself. “You know what? It doesn’t matter now. I need to go. I’ve got things to do. Have a great night.”

She headed to her car, climbing in. He frowned, walking toward her. But before he could reach her, she’d taken off.

Had her car been unlocked? Sure, no one was likely to steal the piece of crap, but what if they crawled in the back and hid there? Anyone could hurt her.

Did she have no sense of self-preservation?

Resolving to lecture her about vehicle safety when he saw her next, he turned to find Cormac waiting for him.

“What was that about?”

“Fucked if I know. Anyone leave me some muffins?” Because they’d looked fucking delicious and that pissed him off, too.

How come she’d never baked them before today?

Oh, because she’d wanted a *favor*.

“So you really have no idea what she wanted?” Cormac asked as they walked inside.

He shrugged. “Probably just using me to get an intro to you guys.”

Cormac sighed. “Not what it looked like to me.”

“What did it look like to you?” he asked as they reached the main room upstairs. He turned to frown at the other man.

“Looked like she was scared and in need of help.”

“This isn’t the club, and she’s not a Little in need of one of your cuddles.”

“Not everyone needs to be a Little to need a cuddle. Bet you’d like a cuddle right now.” Cormac moved toward him with his arms open, as though the fucker thought he was actually going to let him hug him.

“Do not even think about it, you dipshit!”

He evaded Cormac then found the basket, peering inside. “You bastards ate all of them? You couldn’t leave me one muffin?” He glared at Jamie, whose cheeks were so full that he looked like a chipmunk.

Warren walked in, a muffin in his hand. “Fuck, it’s hot out there. Great muffin, though. Tell your girl thanks.”

“She’s not my girl.”

“Game at your place this Sunday?” Cormac asked as he moved back into the kitchen. “You’re the only one with a pool.”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Yes! I’ll bring my swimming trunks,” Jamie hooted.

Deke’s scowl deepened

Cormac grinned. “Could be worse. He could leave his trunks at home.”

Fuck. That was a visual he didn't need.

Chapter 4

Marnie stared nervously at the apartment building where her ex lived.

In *his* penthouse. Even though she'd lived there for two years, it had never felt like hers.

She leaned back against her car and tried to take some calming breaths.

Just go in, get your stuff, and get out.

Marnie threw back her shoulders. She could do this. She just couldn't let him get to her.

Striding up the stairs, she hit the buzzer for his apartment.

“Yes?”

“It's me. Marnie.”

The front door buzzed as it unlocked, and she stepped into the foyer. Memories assaulted her.

Of her fleeing down the stairs, tears dripping down her face as his harsh, parting words chased her.

I'm sorry, Marnie. But you must see that this is your fault. You haven't been going to the gym or making any real effort to

lose weight and keep yourself looking good. A man has needs, and you weren't meeting mine, so I found someone who would.

Fucking prick.

God, she wished she'd socked him in the face as he stood there with his dick out, a woman hiding in his bed.

Marnie headed toward the stairs. Lucas always insisted that she take the stairs, telling her that it would help her tone her thighs.

Well, fuck him.

She veered away from the stairs and headed to the elevator.

The elevator stopped at the penthouse entrance.

Knocking on the door, she forced herself not to fidget as she waited for him to answer.

She glanced down at her watch. Her heart sped up. It was right on two. She couldn't be late or he'd throw her stuff out.

She felt sick. Jammy, Nutter, and Squiggles were the only things she really wanted.

But he knew that. How often had he threatened them to gain her compliance?

They might be toys, but they were also her best friends, her confidantes. Without them, she didn't feel like herself.

Keep it together. He wants you to break. You cannot show weakness.

At two minutes past two, the door opened.

And there he was. Lucas McCauley. Dark hair slicked back. Immaculately dressed as always. He was charming and kind when others were around.

And the devil when they were on their own.

“You’re late.”

“I’m not. I was here on time. You took three minutes to answer the door.”

“Did I? I don’t believe I did. I can’t tell you how sorry I am, Marnie. But you knew the terms for getting your things back.”

Panic filled her. What did that mean?

“I want my things. I was here on time.”

“You were late. And now, I’m getting rid of them.”

“Just give them to me, Lucas!” she yelled.

His eyes narrowed. “You will not yell at me.”

She sucked in one breath, then another.

Be strong. He can’t do this to you anymore.

She glared at him. “If you don’t give me my things, I’ll go to the police.”

He smirked. “You know that poker game I attend once a month?”

Fuck. Where was he going with this?

“Well, the son of the police chief attends. He’s always made it very clear he can get his old man to do whatever he wants. And he will. For a price.”

Tears threatened, and she blinked them away.

“Poor Marnie. You can make this all go away. All you have to do is come back to me.” He ran his gaze over her. “At least you’ve managed to lose some weight. But these clothes you’re wearing make you look like a slut.”

A slut? She thought she looked good. But maybe he was right and she should ...

No! He wasn't right.

“Give me my things. They. Are. Mine.”

“Not until you earn them. Why don't you get down on your knees, open your mouth and then we can talk.”

“Fuck. You.” Anger filled her and she threw herself at him, screaming.

All she wanted was her toys.

He grabbed her wrists before she landed a blow, squeezing them until she screamed in pain. Raw agony engulfed her.

Fuck! Was he going to break her bones?

He pushed her back, and she fell on her ass with a cry.

“That was your last chance, Marnie. Say goodbye to your stupid toys. What kind of adult has stuffed toys?” He sneered at her as tears dripped down her cheeks. “So pathetic. Scuttle away like the useless little roach that you are.”

The door slammed shut as she sat there. She couldn't move. Her wrists were throbbing in pain and so was her ass.

But worse than that was her pride. Why had she stayed with him? How had she ever believed that he loved her?

Get up, Marnie.

Jammy. Nutter. Squiggles.

They're just things, Marnie.

Find some pride, get on your feet and move.

Eventually, she managed to roll onto her hands and knees. Then she leaned one hand on the wall and heaved herself onto

her feet. Moving on auto-pilot, she made her way out of the building. Getting into the car, she made it two blocks before she broke down. Parking, she placed her arms on the steering wheel and rested her head on them as she started to cry.

What had she ever done to deserve this?

Chapter 5

“Where’s your roommate?” Cormac asked, entering the kitchen at halftime.

Deke was getting some more food ready.

“I don’t know. Probably out partying or something,” Deke muttered as he poured more potato chips into a bowl.

Cormac frowned. “On a Sunday afternoon? Do you think she’s okay?”

“I’m not her Daddy. I don’t keep track of her movements.” He winced at that word.

Daddy.

He hadn’t been anyone’s Daddy in a long time. Not since Charla. And that had fucking ended in disaster, hadn’t it?

He let out a breath.

“You ever gonna come back to the club?” Cormac asked. “The subs miss you.”

“They’ve got you.”

Cormac was a teddy bear Dom. All the subs searched him out when they needed some praise and a cuddle.

“I’m not a replacement for you. The club could use some more Daddy Dom supervisors. You wouldn’t have to participate. Just keep them safe in the playroom.”

“Do we have to fucking do this?” he asked gruffly. “We’re here to watch the game, not have a fucking therapy session.”

Cormac sighed, but nodded.

The sound of a car backfiring made him frown as he moved from the kitchen to the living room, which faced the front.

“Whoa, that’s a piece of shit car,” Jamie commented from where he was looking out the window.

Cormac whacked him over the back of the head.

“Hey, isn’t that your roommate?” Jamie asked as Marnie climbed out of the car.

“Yes. Get away from the window and stop ogling her,” he commanded.

They all left, but he couldn’t move. There was something wrong with her ... she was moving like she was stiff. Sore.

“Game’s back on!” Warren called out.

Deke sat down and decided to ignore her. He heard door opening and closing, then the shower go on.

What had she been doing?

Deke attempted to push her from his mind and concentrate on the game. But she kept infiltrating his thoughts.

By the end of the third quarter, Deke was grumpy as fuck. Not only had he barely paid attention to the game, but his team was losing.

He glanced around, frowning as he realized that Jamie was missing. What the hell? How long had he been gone?

Getting up, he walked into the kitchen to find Marnie smiling up at Jamie. His damn cat was weaving its way around her legs.

Traitor.

“What’s going on in here?”

She jumped, letting out a small cry.

Fuck. He hadn’t meant to scare her. He thought she’d be used to his gruff ways by now.

Jamie frowned at him. Yeah, he got it. He was a dick.

A jealous dick.

Was he attracted to her? She left her shoes lying around for him to trip over. She ignored all of his notes. And she didn’t replace the creamer when she used it all.

And you’re being overly critical.

“Chill, man,” Jamie said. “Was just seeing if Marnie wanted to come for a swim. She looks hot.”

What the hell? Was this Jamie’s way of flirting?

Then he noticed she was wearing jeans and a long-sleeved sweater. It was a hundred and four degrees out there. Sure, he kept it cooler inside. But not so cool that she should be rugged up for winter.

“What are you doing in those clothes?” He studied her face, noting how pale it was. “Are you ill?”

Deke strode over to her, his hand coming up to check her forehead. To his shock, she let out a terrified whimper as she threw herself back, falling to the floor.

What the fuck?

Had she thought he was going to hit her?

Who the fuck had hit her?

He heaved for breath, fury filling him.

“Marnie!” Jamie cried out, reaching for her.

But she didn’t seem to recognize him as she drew herself into a ball.

“Who hit you?” he demanded.

“Shit,” Jamie swore. “Deke, calm down. Fuck, Marnie, it’s all right.”

“What’s going on? Why is Marnie on the floor?” Cormac asked, entering the kitchen.

“I think she’s having a panic attack,” Jamie replied as Marnie gasped for breath. “She seemed to think Deke was going to hit her.”

“What the hell?” Cormac demanded.

He had a temper, but he’d never in a million years hit a woman.

“Marnie? Marnie, can you look at me?” Cormac crouched and placed his hand on hers. She flinched back, drawing her hand away. As she moved, her sleeve slipped.

And what he saw had him dropping to his knees. “Who hurt you?”

“Deke,” Cormac warned.

“There are red marks on her wrists.”

“Jamie, can you go tell everyone that we have to cut things short?” Cormac asked.

Jamie nodded and left.

“Deke, you need to help her,” Cormac said in a low voice.

“She’s scared of me.”

“Has she been scared of you before?”

Deke shook his head.

“Then it likely isn’t about you and has more to do with those red marks on her wrist.”

Fuck. He was right.

Deke crouched as Cormac stood and moved back. “Marnie, I need you to take some deep breaths for me. Okay? You’re going to pass out if you don’t breathe, baby.”

The endearment fell from his lips without thought.

“You’re safe here with me and Cormac. No one is going to harm you. Can you look at me? Please?” He tried to keep his voice low and soothing. Like he was talking to a scared Little.

Fuck. She wasn’t listening to him.

“Marnie. Look at me.” He added some command to his voice. He didn’t want to scare her, but she was close to passing out.

Her head rose, those big eyes staring up at him.

“There you are, baby,” he said with relief. “Tell me what you can see.”

“Y-you,” she said after a moment.

“What else?”

“K-kitchen.”

“Keep going.”

Her gaze darted around. “Floor. Cormac.” Her breathing was starting to ease.

Thank fuck.

“Good. What do you hear?”

“Do I h-have to answer?” she sassed.

Yeah, she was definitely feeling better.

“Little girl, you don’t want to test me right now,” he said firmly. “Do as you’re told.”

“Fine. I hear you. Scolding me as always.”

“That reminds me. We need to schedule a time for me to scold you for continuing to drive on bald tires.”

She rolled her eyes.

Oh, she definitely needed someone to keep her in line.

“Stop being a brat,” he warned.

“Or what?”

“Or you’ll feel my hand on your ass.”

“Deke, do you really think this is the time?” Cormac asked.

Fuck. He was right. Deke was making a complete mess of this. She’d just had a panic attack because she’d thought he was going to hit her and here he was threatening to fucking spank her!

He needed to leave this to Cormac. The other guy knew how to be soft and kind. Deke wasn’t what she needed right now. But as he moved, she let out a cry and grabbed his arm. “Don’t leave me.”

Deke’s heart leaped at the fear on her face. The need.

For him.

It was all he could do not to puff out his chest like a proud rooster.

He sat in front of her. “Not going anywhere. I love sitting on the kitchen floor. Whole new perspective from down here. The cupboards need cleaning.”

She groaned. “Did I just give you ammunition for a whole new set of yellow sticky notes?”

“Yellow sticky notes?” Cormac asked.

She gave Cormac a nervous look, but when he didn’t make a move toward her, she relaxed again.

“We don’t need to talk about that,” he said hastily.

Fuck.

“Oh, now I have to hear this,” Jamie said.

Deke turned to glare at him. When did he return? The younger man grinned as he leaned against the counter next to Cormac.

“He leaves me sticky notes. Reminding me on how to use the dishwasher properly, or to clear the lint out of the dryer after using it. Or to return the TV remote to the right place.”

“Ahh his OCD,” Cormac said. “Yeah, he’s like that at the station, too. Although he doesn’t go as far as leaving sticky notes.”

“I don’t have OCD,” he grumbled. Christ, he just liked things in a certain place and done a certain way.

That’s all.

He glanced down at her wrist. Her sleeve had ridden up further, and he could see more of her bruises.

Motherfucker.

Do not lose it. Do. Not.

“Marnie.”

She turned those huge brown eyes on him.

“Baby, who hurt you?”

Blinking, she stared down at her wrists. He carefully pulled her sleeves up, revealing the red marks on her pale skin.

He rolled her arm over, sucking in a breath. “Who?”

“I don’t ... I don’t know if I should tell you.”

“We can help you, Marnie,” Cormac said. “Just tell us who.”

Secrets. He fucking hated secrets and lies.

Instead of demanding she tell them, he forced himself to think. What had Ronnie told him about her?

That she needed a place to stay after breaking up with her ex.

“Your ex?” he snapped.

She jumped, and Cormac put a warning hand on his shoulder.

“Careful,” Jamie warned.

“Don’t you lie to me, Marnie.”

“Deke, maybe you should go take a walk or something. Chill out.” Cormac’s voice took on a stern note.

To his shock, Marnie threw herself at him. He caught her, settling her trembling body in his lap.

What the hell? Women always preferred Cormac to him. He ran his hand up and down her back as she burrowed in deeper, her face pressed to his chest.

“Marnie? You good?” he asked.

Of course she’s not good, dickhead.

“I’m s-sorry.”

Huh?

“What? Why the fuck are you apologizing?” he asked.

Cormac sighed and shook his head at him.

“Sorry. I, uh, I meant to say, why are you apologizing when there’s no need?”

“Don’t do that,” she whispered.

“Do what?”

She leaned back, wiping her cheeks. She was fucking killing him. He wanted to bundle her up and keep her safe. The urge to protect her was so strong that it took all of his control not to lock her up in his room and keep her there.

Chill, dickhead.

“I like that you’re blunt. That you say what you think. It means I know where I stand. I dislike people who say one thing and mean something else.”

“Same.”

She grinned up at him and that twisting in his chest eased. “I figured.”

Cormac huffed out a laugh.

All right, so she wanted honesty and uncensored Deke? He could do that.

He drew the sleeve back on her other arm, examining the red marks. “Your ex do this?”

“Yes,” she admitted.

“He was abusive?” Cormac asked. “Is that why you left him?”

She shook her head, then nodded.

“Which is it? Yes or no?” he demanded.

“He never abused me physically.”

“Got the evidence right here that says otherwise.” He ran his thumb gently up and down her lower arm.

“Before today, he never hurt me physically.”

“But he abused you in other ways?” Jamie asked.

She grimaced. “I guess so.”

“Marnie,” Deke warned, not liking these half answers.

“It’s hard to talk about.” She ran her free hand over her face. “I’m so damn stupid. Such. An. Idiot. I really thought he was going to play fair.”

“Stop that,” he demanded. “I won’t have you calling yourself names, understand me? You are not an idiot. Or stupid.”

“Aren’t I? Then why did I stay with him for two years? Huh? Does that sound like a smart thing to do? To stay with a man who constantly belittled me. Do you know what he bought me for Christmas last year?”

“No. What?”

“A gym membership. Because the exercise bike he’d bought for my birthday wasn’t slimming me down enough.

Oh, and he prepaid an appointment with a dietician for me. Because I was eating far too much. But it's okay, because he was only doing it to help me. He only wanted me to be healthy so I could live for a long time."

What. The. Fuck.

"Joke's on him. Turns out, leaving him was a great weight loss method. I've lost ten pounds in three weeks."

That didn't sound healthy at all.

"He thought you needed to lose weight? Is he nuts? You're fucking perfect."

"I'm not, but it's kind of you to say so."

He snorted. "Kind is the last thing I am, right, Cormac? Jamie?"

"I've never experienced it," Jamie said with a grim smile. "I need to go do some things." He walked out.

"I'll check on him," Cormac said, looking concerned.

"Is Jamie all right?" she asked.

Fuck. "Don't worry about him, baby. Right now, we've got to worry about you."

"I'm fine."

"No lying to me," he warned. "Understand?"

"You can be kind. It was nice of you let me move in here," she pointed out. "You didn't even know me."

"You're Ronnie's cousin. And his room was just sitting there," he said dismissively. "Let's get back to talking about you. Your ex was gas-lighting you, baby. There's not a damn thing you should change." Although he'd need to keep a closer

eye on her. He didn't like that she obviously wasn't eating properly.

"I know that deep down. He wasn't always like that. In the beginning, he was so kind and caring. But over time, he started making these suggestions. Like how I should eat smaller meals and take the stairs rather than the elevator. He said that I couldn't be trusted with money, so he should take care of it all. His name was on everything. He'd claim to be too tired for sex after working so hard, but that a blow job would really help him sleep. However, he never returned the favor."

She stiffened as though she'd realized what she just said. "Sorry, that was TMI."

"Fucking asshole. What a selfish prick. And short-sighted. Nothing compares to eating pussy and making a woman scream with pleasure. It's a fucking high."

She gaped at him.

"Now, do you see me apologizing for TMI? And I hate fucking acronyms. If you're going to say it, just say it properly."

A smile ghosted her mouth.

"So what happened today?"

"He texted me and told me to come to his place at two to get my stuff or he would dump it."

He frowned. "Wait, you went to his place?"

"Yeah."

"By yourself?"

"Uh-huh."

“Why would you go see your emotionally abusive ex on your own?”

“Who was I meant to take with me? My best friend is at her cousin’s wedding and Ronnie is overseas. There is no one else.” There was a note of shame in her voice.

He bet that asshole had tried to isolate her from her friends. There was no way someone as sweet as Marnie hadn’t had a bucket load of friends before he came along.

“You could have asked me.”

She gave him a sad look. “I tried.”

Chapter 6

Tension had him clenching his jaw. Why was she lying?

“You didn’t.”

“I tried, but you said no before I even managed to ask.”

The favor she’d wanted.

Fuck. Him.

He took a deep breath in and blew it out slowly. He probably sounded like an enraged bull, but he was trying his best not to explode.

“Deke?” She stared up at him with a mix of trepidation and fear.

“I know you don’t know me that well, but you looking at me like you’re worried I’ll harm you, it kills me. I’m a blunt, grouchy, short-tempered asshole, but I would shoot myself before I harmed a hair on your head.”

She blinked. “I know that. I’m not scared of you. I mean, yeah, you’re an uptight dick at times. But I don’t think every man is like Lucas.”

Lucas. That was the asshole’s name.

“You’re completely different from him. He was charming and kind in front of other people, then when we were on our own, he changed. He flipped just like that. But you, well, you’re a dick all the time.”

He knew she was teasing when she smiled. However, that wasn’t far from the truth.

“Marnie. I owe you a huge apology. I should have listened when you wanted to ask me a favor.”

“It’s okay. I get it. You don’t know me. And you’re already doing me a huge favor letting me stay here. I can never repay you for that.”

No. Nope.

“You don’t have to repay me. And it’s not a huge favor. I should’ve listened to you, but I thought you wanted something else.”

“Like what?”

“To use me to get close to the guys at the station.”

“Why would I want to do that?” She looked genuinely confused.

He shook his head. “My reaction was due to my past. It had nothing to do with you, and I shouldn’t have let it color my perception of you. So, I’m sorry.”

“That’s okay. You’re forgiven.”

“No, I’m not. I need to make it up to you.” He also needed to get her off his lap, because his dick was starting to take note of how her ass was pressed up against him. “You good now?”

“Yes.”

He lifted her off him, placing her on the floor before standing. Then he reached down and helped her to her feet. Moose appeared, rubbing against her and meowing.

“You’ve already been fed, Moose,” he grumbled. “You’re getting fat.”

She gasped. “That’s not very nice.”

Oh hell. What was he doing?

“Sorry, I, uh, I didn’t mean to, uh, bring up, uh, oh fuck! I’m no good at this.”

To his shock, she started to giggle. “No good at what? Talking like a normal human being?”

“Seems that way,” he grumbled.

She grabbed his hand, squeezing it. Fuck. Why did her touch light him up from the inside out?

“I’m not upset that you called Moose fat. I mean ... I am. Poor Moose isn’t fat. He’s just fluffy.” She picked the cat up, letting out a small grunt.

Uh-huh.

“Fluffy, my ass.”

“Hmm, they have things you can do to take care of that, you know.”

“Take care of what?”

“Your hairy ass.”

He gaped at her. A loud burst of laughter came from behind him. Of course, that was the moment that Cormac returned.

“Yeah, you need to take care of that fluffy ass,” Cormac said.

“You offering to wax it for me?” he asked dryly.

“No way I’m touching your ass, man. Not even for a million dollars.”

“Then shut up.”

Marnie had her hand over her mouth, her eyes dancing with amusement.

He pointed at her. “Nope. Stop.”

Opening a drawer, he drew out a sticky notepad. Where the fuck had his pen gone? He searched through the drawer before turning back to Marnie, who was trying to inch her way out of the kitchen, his cat in her arms.

“Marnie?”

“Yep.”

“Where the fuck is my pen?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Maybe you misplaced it. Uh-huh, I bet you lost it. You should be more careful with your things, Deke.”

This brat.

“I didn’t lose it. I never lose anything. You have until the count of five to tell me where it is or you’re going to be in trouble.”

“You wouldn’t hurt the woman carrying your cat!” she cried.

“Deke, I’m sure there’s another pen.” Cormac sent him a warning look.

Right. Ease up.

“It’s all right.” Marnie grimaced. “I know it might not seem like it, but I’m not normally a complete wimp. I know Deke wouldn’t harm me. It’s just that no one has ever hurt me before and I think part of my head was still stuck on Lucas grabbing and pushing me. I ran at him first, though. I was so mad at him. So, I guess he could argue he was defending himself.”

“He bigger than you?” Deke asked.

“Ahh, yeah, he’s several inches taller and muscular. Not as big as you, though.”

Few people were.

“You think he couldn’t have stopped you without squeezing your wrists so hard that they’re going to bruise?” he asked.

“Um, I suppose.”

“He could have. And don’t let me hear you call yourself a wimp again.”

To his shock, she smiled at him.

“Pen.”

She sighed. “It’s in the next drawer down.”

“Right. Address?” he asked once he’d found it. Had she put it there to mess with him?

So naughty.

“Uh, for where?”

“His apartment.”

Her eyes were wide. “You can’t go to his apartment.”

“Sure, I can.”

“W-why?”

“To get your stuff back.” He’d have thought that was obvious.

“I ... you’re going to come with me to get my things?”

“No.”

“Oh.” Her face fell.

“Cormac and I are going to go get your stuff. You’re going to stay here and rest.” Like fuck was he letting her anywhere near that asshole.

“Um, I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Why not?”

“Well, he won’t even let you in the building to begin with. And he said he was going to throw it out after I left.”

“No garbage collection on a Sunday. Your stuff is probably still there. Either way, Cormac and I need to pay this guy a visit.”

She glanced between them both. “I don’t want you guys to get in trouble. Lucas has connections.”

“Like who?” Cormac asked.

“He plays poker with the chief of police’s son. He said that even if I went to the cops he’d make the complaint disappear.”

“Loser Lenny?” Deke asked.

“That’s not a very nice nickname.” She frowned.

“It’s an apt one,” Cormac told her. “Lenny is the chief of police’s forty-two-year-old deadbeat loser son. He still lives at

home, hasn't worked a day in his life, and he likes to throw his considerable weight around."

"But he has no real power," Deke added. "His old man can't stand him. No way your ex could use him to harm you."

"Oh." Instead of looking happy about that, she just appeared sad. "Another lie I just believed. Shame on me."

"No," he said fiercely. He slowly moved toward her, cupping her face between his hands.

She jumped slightly, but didn't step away.

"Not shame on you. Shame on him. Understand me?"

"Yes."

"Good girl." He stepped back before he did something foolish.

Like kiss her.

"Now, address."

"I'll tell you on the way."

"Uh, I don't think so. You're not coming."

"I am."

"No. Way. You're staying your ass here. No arguments."

Chapter 7

Ten minutes later, he was grumbling as he walked out of the house with Cormac. To his surprise, Jamie was standing by his truck.

“We gonna go fuck that asshole up?” Jamie asked.

Deke eyed him. “You okay?”

“Course I am. Just don’t like assholes who go around picking on people smaller than them.”

Deke grunted. Right.

“Don’t mind Deke, he just got his ass handed to him.”
Cormac grinned.

“I fucking did not.”

“That girl has got you twisted around her little finger,”
Cormac replied.

“Don’t be ridiculous.”

He glanced over as Marnie walked out, shutting the door behind her. She’d changed her clothes. She was wearing those same cut-off shorts and a tight T-shirt. Part of him wanted to order her back inside to put on some longer pants.

But the other part fucking applauded her.

Flaunt those gorgeous legs in front of that fucker, baby.

“Did you set the alarm?” he asked.

“Yep.”

“Got your keys?”

“Uh, no. But I’m with you.”

“What if we get separated? How are you going to get back into the house?”

“We’re going to get separated?” She looked alarmed.

“Not with helicopter Daddy here,” Cormac said.

“What? You can fly helicopters?” she asked him.

“No.” He frowned at Cormac. Fucker thought he was so funny. He was clearly saying that he was like a helicopter parent. But this girl needed some close watching and protecting.

“Got your phone?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Wallet?”

“Uh-huh,” she replied.

“Jacket?”

“It’s over a hundred degrees out here.”

“Might get cold later.” He was aware they were all staring at him like he was a lunatic.

He certainly felt like he was losing his mind.

“Fine.” He opened the front passenger door. “Get in.”

“Um, Cormac or Jamie should sit up front. Their legs are longer. Although you don’t all have to come.”

“We do,” Cormac told her.

“Wouldn’t miss it,” Jamie said cheerfully as he walked around and climbed into the back of the truck.

“You’re right. It’s safer in the back.” Deke opened the back passenger door. “Watch your head.” He put his hand on the back of her head, just in case.

Once she was settled, he grabbed the seatbelt and pulled it across her, plugging it in before testing it was working properly.

Drawing back, he gave a nod of satisfaction, then turned to Cormac, who smiled slyly. “You gonna open my door?”

“Fuck off.” He shut Marnie’s door, then stomped to the driver’s seat. He could hear Cormac laughing.

Asshole.

Was she really doing this? Taking her roommate and his friends to her ex’s place to get her stuff?

It had been a heck of a fight to get Deke to let her come with them. It wasn’t that she wanted to see Lucas again. But she knew he wouldn’t let them in without her. And she didn’t want to explain to Deke that what she most wanted back were her soft toys.

That would be too embarrassing.

“What is this guy’s full name? What does he do?” Deke asked.

“Lucas McCauley. He’s an insurance broker. He makes good money at it.”

“When we get there, you do exactly as I say, understand?”
Deke commanded.

She sighed. “Yes.”

“Cormac, you’re in charge of her safety. I say go, you take her away.”

“Got it,” Cormac replied.

“Deke, I really don’t think—”

“Just do as you’re told.”

Yikes.

“I’ve only lived here a few months and I’ve never been to this end of town,” Jamie commented. “It’s fancy.”

“Why did you move here?” she asked.

“Heard a lot of the guys working at Fire Station 66 were kinky as fuck. Figured they might be more accepting of a bisexual Little firefighter.”

“You’re not that little,” she said.

“Not that sort of Little, darlin’. You never heard of Littles? Daddy Doms?”

“Umm, no, I haven’t.”

“Jamie, we should talk about this later,” Cormac said quietly. “But I promise, you are an accepted part of the team.”

Jamie nodded, although he still looked unsure.

Taking a risk, she reached across and laid her hand over his. He squeezed it tight.

Ageplay? Littles? Daddies?

Okay ... that all sounded like something she wanted to know more about. Jamie must have sensed her curiosity

because he winked and mouthed the word, later.

Her nerves grew as Deke pulled into a parking spot right outside Lucas's building. She took a deep breath, letting it out slowly before reaching for the door handle.

"Don't even think about it," Deke barked.

She shied back, staring at him in surprise as he climbed out and stomped around to her door.

"Umm, I can't touch his truck?" she asked.

Cormac turned to wink at her. "He's got some old-fashioned views."

Cormac and Jamie exited the car as Deke opened her door. She tried to move, only for the belt to strangle her.

"Shoot! Stupid thing."

Deke reached across and undid the buckle.

"Thanks," she muttered.

"Seat belts are tricky things," he said solemnly.

"They are!" she agreed, even though she knew he was making fun of her. "I think I'm going to stop wearing them in protest of their restricting ways."

"That's not happening. I catch you without a seatbelt on, Little girl, and you won't sit for a week."

She stared after him in shock as he headed toward the building.

"Which number?" he called out.

"Wait. You guys need to stand back away from the camera. He won't let us in if he sees you all. And we can only access the penthouse with his permission."

The guys stood away from the camera as she hit the buzzer.

There was no answer.

Please be there.

She hit it again.

“I told you, Marnie, that if you weren’t here at two, I was going to throw out your things,” Lucas stated through the speaker.

She wanted to tell him that he was a dick. But she knew that he wouldn’t let her in if she fired off at him.

“I know. I’m back because I want ... I want to apologize for the way I behaved earlier.”

There was a pause. Fuck. He wasn’t going to let her in.

“Please, can I come in? I think I’ve made a mistake.”

“It’s a bit late for apologies, Marnie.”

“I know. I just ... everything is going wrong, Lucas. And you’re the only one I know who can help me.”

Lucas was a smart guy. She couldn’t lay it on too thick. But he also loved his ego stroked.

“All right, Marnie. I’ll listen to your apology in person.”

The door unlocked, and she pushed it open quickly, hoping he wasn’t still watching the camera.

The guys followed her in.

Jamie stared around with his mouth open. “This place is nice.”

“It’s ostentatious,” Deke countered as they entered the elevator.

She nodded, feeling sick. This was a dumb idea. She really wanted to go home and hide in her bed.

Deke grabbed her hand, holding it gently in his big paw. Her breathing eased, and a sense of safety filled her.

Deke wouldn't let anyone harm her.

As the elevator doors opened, she let go of Deke's hand and walked out. She knocked on the penthouse door. Lucas opened it, eyeing her with a sleazy grin. Then his gaze snapped to the three men standing behind her.

"What is this? Who are these men? They your new fucks? Whoring yourself out now?"

Asshole.

"I'm not the whore in this scenario," she shot back.

Whoa. Where had that come from? She'd never been able to stand up to him before.

Anger filled his face, and he raised his hand. But before he could slap her, Deke moved between them. She gasped as Cormac grabbed her, pushing her behind him.

"What the fuck? Let me go! I could have you fucking arrested for this!" Lucas yelled.

"Do not speak to her. Do not even look at her. She is so far above you that you haven't got a hope in hell of reaching her. And you're not the only one who can threaten people, asshole. How would your clients feel about you being arrested for abusing your ex-girlfriend?"

She peered around Cormac to find that Deke had Lucas pressed to the wall, his arm over his neck. Lucas was clawing at him, but Deke didn't even seem to notice.

She darted around Cormac. “Deke, let him go.”

Deke turned to frown at her, then he glanced at Cormac.

Cormac pushed her gently behind him again. “He wants you to stay behind me, Marnie. Just do as he says. It will be okay.”

Jamie moved next to her, wrapping his hand around hers.

“I’m not worth Deke getting into trouble,” she explained.

A low growl came from Deke.

Cormac sighed. “Marnie, stop winding him up.”

She hadn’t meant to. It was simply the truth.

Wasn’t it?

Had Lucas gotten so far into her head that she actually believed all the things he’d said about her?

Shit.

Maybe Deke was right to scold her for being so down on herself. Perhaps she should set up some sort of disincentive system. Every time she said something negative, he could smack her ass.

Hmm. Was that a disincentive or an incentive?

“Listen to me, asshole,” Deke snarled. “We’ve seen the proof of what you did to her. And we know about your threats to stop her from going to the cops. I’m far more connected than you are, and I’m not afraid to bury you in so much shit that you’ll never paddle your way out. Got me?”

Deke stepped back, removing his arm and Lucas took a gasping breath. “I am going to ruin you! You—”

“He still hasn’t got me,” Deke said to Cormac.

Cormac shook his head. “Nope. Hey, dickhead, you might have some money, but Deke’s grandfather? Well, he’s the former chief of police.”

He was?

“Oh, and his cousin is the current district attorney for Travis County,” Cormac added.

Holy crap.

Deke was connected.

“I don’t usually throw my weight around. Don’t need to because I’m not a small-dicked narcissist,” Deke told Lucas. “But if there’s one thing that riles me up, it’s people abusing women and children. And you abused someone who belongs to me. So you’re going to fucking stand here with your hands on your dick while we go get Marnie’s stuff.”

“Why would I put my hands on my dick?” Lucas asked, just as Deke drew his leg back and slammed his knee into his cock.

Ouch!

But also, fuck yes!

She might have high-fived Jamie. Maybe.

They all walked into the apartment, leaving Lucas lying on the floor and heaving for breath.

“That was ... that was ...” She stared up at Deke.

“Save your thanks,” he replied grumpily. “Let’s get your stuff and go.”

She threw herself at him, hugging him tight.

“What’re you doing?”

“Hugging you.”

“I don’t need it.”

“Just take it and stop grumbling,” she ordered.

“It’s cute how you think you’re in charge.”

She rolled her eyes. Then she drew back and took a look around. God, she hated this place. Everything was high quality, but it was sterile and cold.

“Christ, this place is as comfortable as riding a rollercoaster with hemorrhoids,” Jamie said as he attempted to sit on the hard sofa.

They gaped at him.

Then she grinned. “You’re so right.”

Cormac whacked him around the back of the head. “Idiot. Go watch Lucas while we help Marnie.”

Jamie grumbled, but moved out into the foyer to stand over Lucas. “Are you crying? That must’ve hurt. Bet your balls feel like they’re coming up your throat, huh?”

“Let’s move,” Deke ordered.

“My stuff is in the spare room.” She headed that way.

“That’s where he moved it all to?” he asked.

“Oh no, it was always kept in the spare room.”

She opened the door before he could reply, coming to a sudden stop.

Oh.

Oh no.

Chapter 8

A high, keening noise escaped her as she took in the destruction. Her clothes were in tatters, her shoes destroyed. But that wasn't the worst of it. She stumbled forward, spotting a bit of fur.

“Jammy,” she cried. She picked up his tail, holding it to her face. Then she saw part of Nutter's face. Tears blurred her vision. She found a piece of Squiggles and gathered that up.

Her poor toys. She couldn't believe he'd done this. Why did he hate her?

“What were they?” Deke asked, coming forward.

“M-my toys. They were chipmunks. I k-know I'm an a-adult. But they ... they meant a-a lot to me.” A sob escaped.

There was a beat of silence.

“I'm going to murder that motherfucking bastard!” Deke roared.

She stared at him in shock.

Oh shit.

He strode toward the door, but Cormac got in his way. “Deke, calm down. You can't do anything more to him.”

“Like fuck I can’t! Look what he did to her stuff! To her toys!”

Shoot. She needed to stop him. She dropped the pieces of her toys and ran over to Deke, wrapping her arms around him.

“Deke, please.”

“Let me go, Marnie. This has to be done.”

“Please. Please, don’t. I ... I n-need you. And if you g-go to jail, I’m on m-my own.”

He let out a deep sigh. “I want to kill him.”

“I get that, but let’s be smart about it,” Cormac advised.

“Fine,” he gritted out. “But he pays for this.”

“Promise, man.”

She sighed, letting go of Deke. He spun around and drew her against him, holding her.

Damn. That set off the waterworks again.

“Sorry. I keep crying on you.”

“Do not apologize.” He drew back, grasping her chin. “What do you want to do with all of this?”

“I ... I know it sounds stupid—”

“Nothing you say is stupid. Spit it out.”

She didn’t take offense at his snappy tone. She knew he was just upset for her.

“I don’t know. None of it is salvageable, but I don’t want to leave it all here.”

“Then let’s gather it all up, take it with us. Cormac, find some bags?”

“On it,” the other man said.

“I k-know it’s weird being upset o-over some toys. But my mom gave them to m-me. I can’t sleep without them. What am I going to do?”

He cupped her face with his hands. “You know how Jamie was talking about Littles before?”

She nodded, confused. “Uh, yes?”

“Have you heard of BDSM? Doms and subs?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Well, some Dominants like to take on the role of a Daddy or Mommy and some subs ...”

“Are Littles?”

“Yeah. Some Littles have special items. Things that might help them sleep or feel safe.”

Was he saying that she was a Little? Could she be? She felt so confused.

“Come on. Let’s gather everything up and get you home.”

Home. That sounded good.

Deke was so angry he was shaking. He watched Marnie search through the fucking disaster in the spare bedroom where her stuff had been kept. As though she hadn’t lived here for two years with this dick. Had she slept in here too?

“Was this your bedroom?” he asked.

She jumped, then grimaced and nodded. “Yeah. Lucas said I snored.”

“You don’t.”

“I know. But at least this way, I got to sleep with Jammy, Nutter, and Squiggles. My toys,” she explained.

The ones that motherfucker tore to bits. What sort of psychopath was he?

Sick bastard didn’t deserve to keep breathing the same air as her. He’d find a way to destroy him. Deke sent a text off to his cousin, Joel, who was a private investigator.

He might be able to dig some dirt up on this fucker. Something that could bury him. Joel hated people who picked on those smaller than them, so Deke knew he’d help.

Deke was going to destroy this bastard’s life.

And enjoy every single minute of it.

Chapter 9

Later that night, Marnie sat on the side of her bed. Well, Ronnie's bed. She couldn't believe that Lucas had destroyed all of her stuff.

Why?

Did he really hate her that much?

She'd been in a state of shock as they'd gathered up the ripped tatters of her life. As they'd walked back past Lucas, she'd paused to kick him in the thigh. It had made Jamie laugh, but unfortunately, it hadn't made her feel any better.

She hugged herself tight. She was already dressed in her pajamas after taking the world's longest shower. It hadn't helped her feel much better.

She just wanted to close her eyes and forget. Except she knew she wouldn't be able to sleep in the bed. It felt too exposed. Too open. Gathering up a pillow and blanket, she headed into the walk-in closet. This would have to do tonight.

The scream had him sitting straight up in bed.

Marnie!

Deke was a light sleeper, and part of him had been waiting for her to fall apart. She'd been too composed after her tiny breakdown at that bastard's house.

Getting out of bed, he took off down the short hallway to her room. Stepping inside, he moved to the bed. There was a small bedside lamp on, but it wasn't until he was close that he realized she wasn't in the bed.

Fuck.

Where was she? As he spun to race back out, he heard a muffled sob.

Was that ... was that coming from the closet?

Moving closer, he heard another cry. Opening the door, he peered in. There was a lump lying on the floor.

On the fucking floor!

Not acceptable.

His protective instincts were riding him hard. And every part of him was screaming that she was his to take care of.

Fuck, how did he do this without scaring her more?

More sobs. She was killing him.

"Marnie? Marnie, wake up. Right now."

Crap. That wasn't exactly soothing, asshole.

"Marnie? Baby?"

"D-deke?"

"It's me, baby."

"What are you doing?" she asked.

“I came in to check on you. You were having a nightmare.”

“I woke you? S-sorry.”

“We’ve talked about you saying sorry,” he said gruffly.

“But I woke you. You need your sleep.”

“I’m fine. Not like this ugly mug is gonna get better with beauty sleep. And my mood never improves. This is as good as it gets,” he said, trying to get her to smile.

Instead, she let out a disgruntled noise as she sat up. “You are not ugly, Deke.”

“Baby, I know what I look like. Been staring at this face in the mirror for thirty-six years.”

“You’re not ugly. You’re kind and honest and smart. And you’re sexy.”

Jesus. Was she blind?

“I think you must be delirious.”

“Deke! If I’m not allowed to talk bad about myself, then neither are you.”

“Not the way it works.”

“Well, it should.”

He grunted. This was a stupid argument. “What are you doing in the closet?”

She rubbed at her temples. Headache? She probably needed to hydrate. And she hadn’t had dinner last night. She wasn’t taking care of herself.

He didn’t like that.

So step in.

It wasn't his right. Not that he'd let that sort of thing stop him before.

"I like small spaces when I'm upset," she admitted. "I like to feel enclosed, like I'm being hugged. My mom gave the best hugs and I miss them. Lucas never used to hug me. The only time he'd touch me was in public or when he wanted something."

Fuck. Just fuck.

"Come here." He crouched and held out his arms.

"It's okay, Deke. You've done enough for me. Don't expect you to become my snuggle buddy, too."

"And what if I need a snuggle buddy?" Yeah. Even he heard how ridiculous that sounded.

She smiled sadly. "A snuggle buddy? You don't need a snuggle buddy, and even if you did, you wouldn't choose me."

"Why not?"

"Because you don't like me."

Fuck. How wrong she was. Because he had the exact opposite problem.

The smart thing would be to walk away right now.

But Deke wasn't all that smart.

"Not true, Little girl."

"You thought I was using you when I asked for a favor. I guess that's fair, since I was. I shouldn't have asked."

Fuck. He couldn't take this anymore.

"I'm picking you up now." Thankfully, she didn't flinch as he stood, then grabbed her. He wasn't sure he could've taken

that.

He held her in his arms as he walked her out of the bedroom.

“Where are we going?” she asked.

“My bedroom.”

“Why?”

“Because I like my bed. It’s way more comfortable than the floor. Where you shouldn’t be sleeping.”

“Um, but why are you taking me with you?”

He entered his room and placed her on the bed. “Because you’re my snuggle buddy.”

“Deke ...”

“My snuggle buddy needs to be with me.”

“Deke ...”

“If it makes you uncomfortable to touch me, you don’t have to. But I’d prefer you slept close. And you’re not sleeping on the damn floor, got me?”

She stared up at him. “You’re so confusing.”

He ground his teeth together. “I like you, Marnie. I know I’ve acted like an ass. I’ll never forgive myself for not listening to you when you came to me for help.”

“It’s all right. You barely know me. I had no right to ask.”

“You have every right to ask. You’re living under my roof and that makes you my responsibility. I won’t make the same mistake again.”

Marnie gaped up at him. She didn’t know what was happening right now. His responsibility? No, she wasn’t.

He sighed and sat on the bed next to her. “This is gonna sound like a cop-out, but the way I reacted had nothing to do with you. It was all me.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ve never been the best-looking guy, or the nicest.”

She was tired of this. “I don’t know if you’re fishing for compliments or what ... but Deke, you’re freaking hot.”

“No lies between us, Marnie,” he warned.

“It wasn’t a lie. Really.”

He cleared his throat, shifting around uncomfortably.

Shoot. She hadn’t meant to make things awkward. “Although you are a grouch.”

However, she could now see that his hard exterior hid a marshmallow center. What other man would do everything he had for someone he barely knew?

“I know what I am. About a year ago, I met this sub, Charla, at the BDSM club I belong to. She was a Little and we went on a few dates. I thought she was into me until I heard her talking to one of her friends at the club. Turns out, she was only using me to get closer to Warren, one of the guys in my crew. Apparently, she figured that as the ugliest guy at the station, I’d be the weak link and her way in because I’d be happy for any attention she threw my way.”

What. The. Hell.

“That fucking bitch! Gimme her name. I’m gonna teach her a lesson.” How dare she treat this kind, generous man like that? Like he wasn’t a person? As though he was someone to use?

Ugly? Was she insane?

Deke let out a bark of laughter. “Easy there, Little girl.”

“What? You think I wouldn’t do that?”

He ran his hand up and down her back. He was probably trying to soothe her, but instead, pleasure filled her.

She was exhausted. Emotionally wrung out. And yet, if he made a move on her, she knew that she wouldn’t turn him down.

“I know you would. But she’s gone now. She fucked off after Warren let her know what he thought of her play.”

Marnie didn’t feel so forgiving. But at least the bitch wasn’t hanging around anymore. But now she understood why he found it hard to trust.

“Do you still go to the club?” *Are you still a Daddy Dom?*

“No. Not anymore. I’m going to get you some water and painkillers for that headache. You need sleep.”

He returned a few minutes later. She took the pills, giving him a grateful smile.

“Come on, under the covers.”

Once she was in the bed, he tucked the blankets around her. Then he moved around to the other side of the bed and lay down on top of the covers.

She rolled toward him. “I can go back to my room if you’re uncomfortable with me here.”

“What? No. You’re staying here.”

She rolled her eyes at the command. “I can sleep on top of the covers, then.”

“Stay where you are, Marnie.”

“You’ll get cold, though.”

He sighed and got up to pull the covers back, then he climbed in. “Are you happy now?”

The words were grouchy, but she wasn’t upset.

Nope, she went to sleep with a smile on her face.

Lord, she was hot.

She tried to shift away from the heat at her back, but it just followed her. Finally, with a grumble, she rolled onto her other side and opened her eyes.

And stared at the muscular, naked chest in front of her.

Holy. Moly.

The man was ripped. Why hadn’t she noticed his bare chest last night?

Probably because you were still recovering from a nightmare about Lucas.

A nightmare where he’d had his hands wrapped around her throat rather than her wrists, and had been strangling her.

She sucked in a deep breath.

His eyes opened suddenly and he stared at her for a long moment.

“Morning,” she whispered.

“Good morning, baby.”

Her eyes were focused on his lips ... could she kiss him? Did he want her to kiss him? She leaned in and she brushed her lips against his. She buried her hand into his thick hair as he pressed his tongue between her lips.

God. How long since she'd been kissed like this?

Had she ever been kissed like this before?

More. She wanted more.

Suddenly, he drew back, staring down at her with a mix of hunger and regret. "I apologize. I didn't mean to do that."

Wait. What? Was he saying that he regretted kissing her? It was the best kiss of her life and he ... he was sorry?

Horror filled her and she rolled away, attempting to climb out of the bed. Only she got all caught up in the covers. "Get off me! Stupid covers!"

"Marnie! Little girl, stop before you hurt yourself."

"D-don't call me that! I'm not a Little girl!" Well, she probably sounded like one right then. And as soon as she got free of the bed, she stomped her foot.

That was kind of ridiculous. Where did that come from? Fuck. She was a mess.

"Sorry. I'm sorry." She fled, ignoring his calls, and locked herself in the hall bathroom. He had a bathroom off his bedroom, so this one was all hers. He knocked on the door, calling her name, but she ignored him.

Real mature, Marnie.

What had she been thinking? She'd kissed Deke. Oh God. What if he thought that she'd kissed him to use him?

She rubbed her hands over her face. What had she been thinking? Why would she think he'd want that? She looked in the mirror and let out a small cry of horror. She looked awful! Her hair was a mess. Her face was red and blotchy, her eyes swollen, and she hadn't brushed her teeth this morning.

No wonder he'd pulled away. She looked like an extra in a horror movie. Turning on the shower, she waited until it was barely hot enough to climb in. It wouldn't erase all of her problems, but maybe she could hide in here until he left.

Chapter 10

Marnie couldn't sleep.

Sometimes she wondered if she'd ever sleep properly again.

A week had passed since she'd discovered her things had been ripped to pieces by Lucas.

Six days since that disastrous kiss.

Six days since she'd really spoken to Deke. He'd been avoiding her, and she wasn't going to lie.

It hurt.

To distract herself, she'd been studying what it meant to be a Little. And everything she'd read had resonated with her.

Rolling over, she grabbed her phone. Jamie had given her his phone number the other day, and they'd been texting.

Marnie: *Do you think I could be a Little?*

Jamie: *You can be anything you want.*

Marnie: *Even a toad?*

Jamie: *Sure, just don't wait for a prince to kiss you. That never happens in real life.*

Didn't it? Her mind went to the kiss she'd shared with Deke. Maybe not.

Jamie: *You have to transform yourself.*

Fuck. He was right.

Marnie: *How did you know you were a Little?*

Jamie: *I dunno. I guess I did some reading about it, then I decided I wanted to explore it. I signed up to some online sites. Do NOT do that.*

Marnie: *Why not?*

Jamie: *Because there are heaps of creeps out there.*

Marnie: *Oh.*

So what did she do? This felt like it was something she had to explore, that she couldn't ignore.

Jamie: *Want to come to the club with me this weekend as my guest? You can just observe or join in. You'll need to fill out some paperwork first.*

Did she want to do that? Lord, she didn't know. It felt scary and weird.

Maybe because you don't want to do this with just anyone. Maybe you want to explore it with Deke.

And that was an issue. Since Deke didn't seem to want to have anything to do with her anymore.

So then, what would it hurt to go with Jamie and check it out?

Marnie: *Can I think about it?*

Jamie: *Course.*

Getting out of bed, she moved to the kitchen to get a bottle of water. Opening the fridge, she rolled her eyes as she saw a covered plate of food sitting on the top shelf with a sticky note on it saying: *Marnie, eat me.*

Still looking out for her even when he was avoiding her. Like how her car now magically had new tires. She didn't know how he'd managed that. But she was going to pay him back.

Somehow.

She walked through to the living room, coming to a stop as she realized Deke was sitting on the sofa. There was a lamp on behind him.

He shifted, hiding whatever he'd been holding so it was under him.

That wasn't suspicious.

“I’m sorry,” she said awkwardly. “I didn’t mean to interrupt.”

“You should be asleep.”

“So should you,” she countered.

He turned his gaze to take her in. “Not the one with bags under her eyes and losing weight.”

So she looked like shit. Good to know.

“Fuck,” he muttered. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it like that. Just concerned about you.”

“Thanks. I just ... I thought you were avoiding me.”

“And you’re not avoiding me?”

She moved to the chair across from him to sit. “Guess we’re both as bad as each other, huh?”

He nodded, and silence fell.

Crap. Say something.

“What were you working on?” she asked.

“Nothing.”

Okay. She got the picture. “I guess I’ll go back to bed.” She waited for him to say something. To stop her. But there was nothing.

Disappointment flooded her.

When she got back to her bedroom, she grabbed her phone.

Marnie: *I’m in.*

Chapter 11

Where was she?

Out partying? Deke walked back and forth across the living room. He had a rare full weekend off, and he'd decided it was time to talk to Marnie properly.

To apologize for taking advantage of her. He'd had no right to kiss her when she was just coming out of a messy relationship.

He also needed to tell her what Joel had discovered about her ex.

Only, she wasn't damn well here.

He'd royally fucked everything up. The other night she'd been trying to reach out to him, and he'd been too busy trying to hide what he was doing to talk to her.

He hated being secretive. It made him grumpy and standoffish.

Fuck. He couldn't stand this anymore.

Sitting, he picked up his phone.

Deke: *Where are you?*

Nothing. Fuck.

Deke: *If you're out drinking, you best not be driving home.*

God, he sounded like a grouchy old man.

Deke: *Call me and I'll pick you up. Don't go anywhere alone. Or accept drinks from anyone.*

When his phone buzzed with a call, he leapt on it. His heart sank as he saw it was Cormac.

“What?”

“Wow, way to greet a guy,” Cormac said dryly.

“I don't have time to talk.”

“Why? You too busy sitting alone, drinking beer, and being morose?”

“Fuck you.”

“Just thought you might want to know where your girl is.”

“I don't have a girl,” he countered.

“Pull your head out of your ass, Deke. Anyone can see you're obsessed with that girl. And for some reason, she looks at you like you hung the moon. You need to stop dicking around and go for what you want.”

“I'm not what she needs.”

“You know, you’re right. I’ll just let her find someone here at the club to look after her. Dan has been paying her special attention. Plenty of Daddy Doms here to look after her, treat her right. She doesn’t need you.”

The world tunneled around him. All he could hear was his own breathing.

In. Out.

In. Out.

“Deke? You there?”

“She’s at the club?” he asked.

“Yep.”

And there were Doms sniffing around her?

“Watch her.”

“No problem. I’m on Little duty for the next two hours, anyway.”

“She’s in the Littles room?” Surprise filled him. He’d gotten a Little vibe from her, but it had been clear she’d had no clue about any of that.

“Uh-huh.”

He ran his hand over his face. He’d never intended to go back to the club. It held too many bad memories.

Except he didn’t give a shit about any of that when it came to her.

“Just keep them all away until I get there.”

“I’ll do what I can.”

This place was both terrifying and exciting.

Marnie was in the Littles playroom at the club. It was a huge room that had different areas set up. There was a reading nook complete with two big armchairs, a fluffy rug on the floor, and bookshelves filled with children's books.

Another area had a large toy garage with wooden cars and trucks. One whole wall was taken up with storage. But the area that appealed most to her was the big toy kitchen with a dining table set up for a tea party.

But she didn't feel comfortable going over there or anywhere.

It wasn't that everyone wasn't welcoming. They were. Even the resident Dom who'd gone through the club rules and her limits had been kind.

Jamie had stuck by her side until she'd told him that she was fine and to go have fun. He was now dressed as a pirate and having a foam sword fight with another Little boy under the watchful eye of the other Little's Mommy.

A woman walked past dressed up as a princess, complete with a tiara on her head and plastic high heels. A man watched over her with a possessive smile, walking behind her to help her when she wobbled on the heels.

That was so sweet.

This all felt so right. So her. And yet, at the same time, it felt so wrong. Like she couldn't connect to any of it.

A sense of loneliness filled her.

"You okay, Marnie?"

She glanced up at Cormac with a small smile. "Of course."

He gave her a stern look. “It isn’t a good idea to lie, sweetheart.”

How come she wasn’t attracted to Cormac? He was handsome and kind.

Maybe because he wasn’t a grumbling, scowling bear of a man who barked out orders like a drill sergeant.

“I just don’t think I belong here. I think I should go.”

“Really? None of these things appeal to you? You don’t want to play? Or maybe you’d like to try the baby room?”

“Um, no. I don’t think so.” She ran her hand over her face tiredly.

“You’re exhausted, sweetheart. Deke isn’t taking very good care of you. I’m going to have to have words with him when I see him.”

“No,” she said sharply. “It’s not up to Deke to look after me.”

“Isn’t it?” He glanced at the door.

She looked over, her heart skipping as she saw Deke walk in.

“I thought ... I thought he didn’t come here anymore.”

“Seems he does when given the right motivation.”

Deke spotted her and his face filled with determination as he strode toward them.

She braced herself. “You called him?”

“Of course I did. He needed a kick up the ass to make him face the truth.”

Before she could question Cormac further, Deke was looming above her. His gaze roamed over her simple dress. It was a pale blue with short sleeves and tiers at the bottom. It ended about mid-thigh.

His frown deepened. “What are you doing here?”

“I, um, I ... I wanted to see if I was a Little or not. I thought coming here might ... help.”

“You shouldn’t have come on your own.”

“I didn’t.”

He scowled.

“She came with me.”

Marnie peered around Deke’s wide body to see Jamie standing there, frowning up at Deke. His body was braced as though he expected Deke to lash out at him.

She wouldn’t let that happen, though.

Deke turned to stare down at Jamie.

“There an issue?” Jamie asked.

Deke’s eyebrows rose. “With what? With you bringing my girl here without telling me? Yes.”

Jamie threw his shoulders back. “Wasn’t aware she was your girl.”

“Yes, you were. You did this to provoke me. All of you did.” He shot a glare at Cormac.

“I didn’t,” she whispered. “I thought you didn’t like me. After I kissed you, I felt so bad for forcing you.”

“Forcing me?” He gaped down at her.

“Deke, maybe you want to take this somewhere private?” Cormac suggested.

He glanced around and she tried to as well, but he was pretty much blocking everything.

“Everything okay here?” The kind Dom who’d tried to get her to play when she’d first arrived walked over with a frown.

“Everything is fine, Dan,” Deke replied shortly. “Just need to talk to my girl.”

“Your girl? You let your girl come to the club on her own?” Dan challenged.

“She wasn’t on her own. Cormac was watching her. And she came here with Jamie. He wouldn’t let anything happen to her.”

She watched as Jamie’s chest puffed out with pride.

A lot of the time, Deke seemed to have zero social skills. Then sometimes he said something that made you forget all of that.

“I need to go find a private room. Come on, Marnie.”

“Marnie?” Dan asked. “You okay with that? You can say if you don’t want to go with Deke.”

She stared down at the hand Deke held out to her. This was it. Her moment. Her choice.

And there was only one choice she wanted to make. She slipped her hand into his. “I do. But thank you for checking in with me.”

Dan gave her an assessing look. “You can always use your safeword. And even the private rooms have panic buttons.”

Deke’s jaw tightened, but he didn’t say anything.

“Thanks,” she told the other man.

Dan nodded and walked away.

Deke turned to Jamie. “Jamie?”

“Yep.”

“Don’t bring my girl here without me again.”

Jamie nodded, his gaze shifting down.

“Also, Jamie?”

“Yeah?”

“Go have some more fun playing. And be safe. All right?”

Jamie stared up at him, his mouth parting.

“I don’t care if you’re a Little, bisexual, or you worship the fucking moon God every Wednesday.”

Jamie smirked. “How’d you know?”

Deke huffed out a breath, his lips twitching up into a smile.

“Being a Little doesn’t mean that you can’t be a damn good firefighter.”

“Thanks.”

“Although you ever steal the last muffin again and we’ll have words.”

“That was nice of you,” she told him as they moved out of the playroom and down the corridor to a staircase. There was a tablet sitting on the wall, which he started searching through.

“Good, it’s free.” He turned to look at her. “And I’m rarely nice, remember?”

“That’s not true.”

He huffed out a breath as he led her upstairs.

“Where are we going?” she asked.

“Private room. To talk.”

“Just talk?”

He shot her a look at the top of the stairs. “We’ll see.”

He moved down another corridor and stopped at a door, punching in a code.

She stepped inside, feeling a bit nervous. He wasn’t exactly being chatty, even for him.

Surprise filled her as she studied the room. There was a sea mural on the walls and a double bed in the middle of the opposite wall with a pale blue quilt. An armchair sat in one corner and next to it was more storage like downstairs. Another corner held a single chair that faced the corner. How odd.

Why was he just standing there, staring at her? It was nerve-wracking.

“Do I make you nervous, Marnie?”

“Yes.” It was obvious, right?

He took a step back. Shit.

“But not necessarily in a bad way. It’s just ... I’m not quite sure what’s going on. You’ve been avoiding me and I get it. I made things super awkward. I never should have kissed you. It wasn’t right and I’m sorry. The thing is ... I like you. But it isn’t right for me to kiss you if you don’t feel the same way. So I’m sorry. There, I said it. I’ve been trying to get that out forever.”

He just stared at her.

“Deke? Are you going to say something? If you want me to move out, I will.”

“Marnie?”

“Yes.”

“Shut up.”

And then he was drawing her toward him. His hand wrapped around the back of her head as he lowered his lips to hers.

This kiss ... it was even better than their last kiss and she hadn't thought that was possible.

He drew back, staring down at her. “You're not going anywhere. And you didn't force a kiss on me. For fuck's sake, I'm twice the size of you.”

“That ... that doesn't always matter. You're too nice to push me away.”

“If I was nice, I would've kept my distance until you had time to work through your break-up with your ex. A nice guy wouldn't be about to throw you on the bed, stick his face between your legs, and make you come so many times you'll lose count.”

“I don't know. That seems pretty nice to me. Wait ... is that why you were avoiding me? Because you thought I needed time?”

“I know you need time. Lucas was emotionally and physically abusive. Those scars don't just disappear. You need a place where you feel safe. I wanted to give that to you. Not to feel like I'm fucking jumping on you. Like I was taking advantage of you. Your home should be your safe space.”

She stared up at him in amazement. That's why he'd backed away? Because he'd thought he was taking advantage of her?

"You idiot."

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me. You're an idiot. And so am I. I thought you didn't want me. You thought I wasn't ready and didn't want to hurt me. You don't get it, do you?"

"Get what?" he asked, watching her warily as she stalked toward him. He backed up until he hit the side of the bed and sat.

She climbed onto his wide lap and placed her hands on his shoulders. He didn't touch her, but she wasn't concerned.

The big old softie had just been looking out for her. Like he always did.

"Don't you know that wherever you are is my safe space?"

Chapter 12

His eyes widened. “What?”

“You make me feel so safe, Deke. You have since you first saved me from the swimming pool.”

“You’re still forbidden from going near the pool without me there.”

“I know.”

His grabbed her ass, squeezing it. “You saying you want this? There are no fuck buddies, no half-measures. You’d be mine, and I’m a possessive bastard. Not like that fucking ex of yours. I’d never cut you off from your friends, isolate and degrade you. But you know I’m protective. I want you safe. And I’ll be bossy about it.”

“I know. I understand there’s a difference between how Lucas treated me and your protectiveness. He only ever wanted to put me down to make himself feel good. You’re so bossy because you want me safe.”

“Because you come first.”

She shook her head, and he reached up to cup her chin.
“Yes, you do.”

“We’re equal.”

“Nice you think that, but it’s not how it works. You come first. Your needs. Your safety. Your health. I’m going to take care of you. But you need to let me, yeah?”

“I want to do that. I’m just not used to someone looking after me.”

“I’ll teach you.” He nipped her lower lip, and she moaned. She might be sitting on top of him, but she wasn’t the one in charge.

And that was more than okay with her.

“There will be rules. Can you handle that?”

“Pretty sure you’ve already given me rules.”

“Hmm, but if you’re mine, then there’ll be more. And I’ll be enforcing them.”

“How?”

He stood with her in his arms. She let out a small squeal.

“Whoa, you’re tall. I’m not used to feeling so small.”

“You’re just a Little girl.”

Did he want to be with a Little again after that bitch? It didn’t matter. Marnie didn’t need to explore her Little side. She wanted him whatever way she could take him.

He walked over to the tablet on the wall, searching through it. She wasn’t sure what he was doing or why he’d carried her over here. She looked around the room.

“What’s in the storage cupboards? Toys?”

“Yep. And other things like soft blankets, baby bottles, and pacifiers.”

“Really?”

“Yep. That something you’re interested in? They’re all new in their packaging. They get added to my tab if we use them.”

“I don’t know. The pacifier seems intriguing.”

“There’s hardly any information on this form you filled in.” He gave her a questioning look. “Spanking is a hard limit?”

“I didn’t want someone else spanking me.”

“Someone else?” He moved over to the bed and sat with her on his lap again. “Someone other than me?”

She nodded.

“But you’re okay with me spanking you? Or is it a hard limit between us?”

“I’ve never been, uh, spanked before. But when I was doing research into, uh, all of this ... well, I thought about the times you’d threatened to spank me. And I’m interested in that. With you.”

“You know you can tell me anything, right? I want to make you happy. I’d give you anything you want. Well, unless it involved truly harming you or someone else. Or animals. Or children.”

“Jesus, what do you think I’m going to ask you to do?” she asked.

“Just making it clear. Communication is important in this sort of relationship.”

He was lecturing her on communication?

“This sort of relationship?” she asked.

“Yeah, this sort of relationship. I can help you explore your Little side. Guide you through it as your Daddy. Isn’t that what you want?”

Deke held his breath as he waited for her answer, worried she would say no.

“But I’d never force you to do anything you didn’t want to do,” she told him.

He smirked. “You keep thinking I’m a good guy, baby. I’m really not. I don’t do anything I don’t want to do.”

“You mean ... you want to be my Daddy?” Her shy look was so damn adorable.

Killing him.

“I do. And I want you to be my Little girl. What that means to you ... to both of us, is something we can explore together. But it means that there will be no more working yourself half to death. No more taking everything on yourself. You share your burdens with me, understand? No skipping meals. That stops right now.”

“I have to work, though. I need the money.”

“You don’t.”

“You’re not paying for me, buster.” She pointed a finger at his chest.

Buster?

“You might want to remove that finger, Little girl. Before I tip you up over my knee for an attitude adjustment.”

“Attitude adjustment? I don’t need an attitude adjustment just because I want to pay my own way. That’s not going to be

a rule.”

He frowned, not liking that. Her health was suffering working all those hours and he couldn't allow that.

“You shouldn't have to work so many hours.”

“I need the money, so I take all the extra shifts that I can. I mean, I guess I could cover all of my bills, even with my share of the rent, if I just worked my normal hours. But there wouldn't be anything left for savings and I'll need that for when I have to move out.”

“Nobody said you had to move out. Or pay rent,” he grumbled.

“But Ronnie will want his room back eventually, and I should pay my share.”

“It's my house, Little girl. And I say you don't need to pay any of that. I'll stop charging Ronnie if that makes you feel better. He doesn't pay while he's away, anyway.”

“He ... he what? You mean, I've been living there for free?”

“Yep.”

“But ... but that's not right.” She tugged at her hair. “Now, I owe you backpay for rent. I'll need to sort out some more shifts, not less. Why didn't he tell me?”

“Because you were in trouble and he's your cousin. And I told him not to.” He untangled her fingers from her hair. “And you won't be taking on more shifts. I'd never see you. See? I have selfish reasons for not charging rent.”

“Deke ...”

“And you’re not a roommate, you’re my girlfriend, my Little. I want to take care of you.”

“It’s not right.”

“How about this? You don’t pay rent or utilities, that’s non-negotiable. But you keep me supplied in muffins and cookies. I’ll pay for the ingredients, though. Wait, you’ve barely been eating any of the food in the house. Is that because you couldn’t afford to replace it?”

“Uh, yeah.”

“That stops now too,” he grumbled. “Jesus, girl. You can eat anything in the house, understand me?”

“I don’t want to use you, though.”

He cupped her cheeks. “I know you’re not Charla.”

“Promise?”

“Promise. We’ll sort things out. But no sixty-hour weeks. Please?”

“Was saying please painful?” she asked with a smirk.

“Very. Don’t expect it often.”

She grinned. “All right. I won’t take any extra shifts.”

“That’s my good girl. You’re so brave. I’m so proud of you.”

“I haven’t done anything.”

“You left an abusive relationship. You moved in with a grumpy dictator who leaves you bossy notes. And now you’re willing to take a chance on that old grump. As well as embracing a part of yourself that you knew nothing about two weeks ago. My brave, beautiful girl.” He ran his finger over her mouth and she parted her lips.

“Are you going to kiss me again?” she asked.

“Do you want that?”

“Yes.”

His mouth moved to hers, sipping from her before diving deeper.

“Will you do more?” she asked. “Touch me? Kiss me in other places?”

“Are you mine, Marnie?”

She cupped his face in her hands. “I’m yours, Daddy.”

“Then, hell yeah.”

Chapter 13

She watched as his face filled with happiness and hunger.

Calling him Daddy felt so right. She still had so much to explore and understand about this dynamic. But with him guiding her, she knew that she couldn't go wrong.

Deke would always take care of those around him. That was just who he was. And she was lucky enough to be important to him.

She didn't feel like she'd had that since her mom died.

He lifted her off his lap, and a sense of loss filled her. But then his hand ran up her leg and he grabbed the bottom of her dress, tugging it.

“I want this off.”

She quickly stripped it off. She'd worn her only matching underwear set. Did he like what he saw? Or did he think she should lose weight?

“I'm the luckiest fucking man in the universe.”

It took her a moment to understand his words.

“What? You ... you like what you see?”

He scowled. "I'm going to fucking murder that asshole. I knew I should have done it before rather than wait."

"Wh-what do you mean?" She gaped as he stood, his hands clenched into fists.

"That fucker you dated. I should have caved his face in."

"Why? I mean ... I know he was a jerk ... but why do you feel like that right now?"

"Because I know the reason you're shocked when I tell you that you're fucking beautiful is due to him. You're gorgeous, sexy, sassy, and right now it is taking every part of my control to keep my hands off you."

Her breathing grew more rapid. "Then don't."

He smiled wolfishly. "I won't. Take off your bra." He sat back down and watched her.

Normally, she'd be nervous as hell about getting naked in front of someone.

But he thought she was beautiful and with his gaze on her ... she felt it.

She knew that all of her hang-ups, all of her scars from Lucas weren't magically fixed. But she was determined not to let Lucas ruin this for her.

Once she was standing in just her panties, he grabbed her around the waist and drew her between his open legs.

"Fuck me," she begged.

"I'm planning on it."

He cupped her breast, placing a soft kiss on her nipple before running his tongue over it.

Oh Lord.

She whimpered. That felt so good. More. She wanted more. He sucked on her right nipple as his hand moved to her other breast, pinching that nipple lightly.

More. More.

He played with her breasts until her legs were weak, and her breath was labored. Until she didn't think she could take any more.

Suddenly he lifted her so her legs straddled one thick thigh.

"Please, Deke. Please." She rocked against his leg, wanting some pressure on her clit.

"What do you need, baby?"

"You."

"Do you need my tongue on your pussy? Do you want me to fuck you with my fingers while I lick your clit?"

"Yes ... yes ... but I also want you to fuck me."

"What my baby wants, she gets."

Grabbing her around the waist, he laid her down on her back on the bed. Then he stood and stripped off his shirt.

Damn, he was sexy. Those muscles just made her want to lick him all over.

Sitting up, she reached for his jeans. "Can I?"

"Fuck, baby. You don't know what you're doing to me right now. Yeah, you can."

With hands that trembled, she undid his jeans and drew them down, along with his boxers. He stepped out of them. And then he was standing there.

Naked and delicious.

And all hers.

And let's just say ... he was completely in proportion. All. Over.

Leaning forward, she sucked the tip of him into her mouth. A hum of pleasure escaped her.

He tasted sooo good. She took him deeper, moving her mouth up and down his dick until he drew back, panting heavily.

“On your back, baby,” he commanded.

“Did I do something wrong?” she asked as she lay down on the bed.

He crouched on all fours above her. “Fuck no, baby. Your mouth is amazing. Felt so good around my dick that I almost blew my load after a few seconds.”

“Then why did you stop me?”

“Because I don't want to come in your mouth. I want to come inside you.”

“Ohh. You could do both?”

He gave a brief laugh. “I like your belief in me, but I'm not a young guy. Takes me a while to recover. When it comes to sex ... how do you feel about me taking control? Is that a limit? Or something you want to explore?”

“I think it would be a relief. I know that sounds weird considering my relationship with Lucas. But basically our sex life for the last year has been me sucking him off so he could sleep. I didn't want him to see me naked, to have him tell me that I needed to work harder to make myself attractive.”

“I should have torn his balls off his body,” he said darkly.

Reaching up, she placed her hand on his cheek, trying to calm him. “But I think it would take a lot of worry off my shoulders if you took charge.”

“Just know that you always have the ultimate stop button with your safeword, which you will use if you need to, understand me?”

“Yes, Daddy.” She gave him a sassy look.

“Fuck. Killing me.” He kissed her again before moving his mouth down her body. When he reached her nipples, he played with them until her cries of pleasure and need filled the room.

He moved away just as she was beginning to wonder if she could come from nipple play alone.

“Are you wet for me, baby? Do you need me to clean you up? Do you want my tongue driving deep inside you?”

Holy. Crap.

He wasn't really going to do those things, was he?

Then he drew off her panties before spreading her legs wide. And she discovered that, yep.

He was definitely going to do those things.

After parting her lower lips with his fingers, he ran his tongue over her slick lips before flicking her clit.

“Ohh. Deke!” She thrust her hips up, searching for more. Her hands drifted down, trying to touch him.

“Hands above your head and keep them there,” he commanded. “Lie there and let me clean you up.”

She raised her hands, concentrating on lying still as he drove her utterly insane. He placed his hands under her ass,

lifting her hips so his tongue could slide deep into her pussy.

Her first orgasm hit her hard. He lowered her hips to the bed, slipping his tongue free. And that's when she learned he wasn't finished. Because then he started sucking on her clit as his fingers drove deep inside her.

That was orgasm number two.

By the time orgasm number three rolled through her, she was a mess. But she wanted more.

"Please, Daddy. Deke. Please."

"What do you need, baby?" He sat back on his heels, licking his damp lips.

So. Hot.

"You. I need you."

"Good girl for telling me."

Did she have a praise kink? She'd read about that too. And yeah ... she thought she might.

He moved up the bed, reaching into a drawer to pull out a condom, which he rolled onto his thick, long erection.

His dick slowly entered her. Inch by inch.

She couldn't take it. "More, Daddy! More!"

"Stay still, baby. I don't want to hurt you."

"You won't! Please!" She drove her hips up, taking more of him. Fuck. That felt so good.

"Naughty girl," he growled at her.

She opened her eyes to find him scowling down at her.

"Were you given permission to move?"

“I’m sorry, Daddy.”

“You will be soon. I should pull out of you, deny you my dick to punish you.”

Her lower lip trembled. He wouldn’t do that, would he?

“But that would punish me, too. So I’ll have to settle for spanking your ass.” He pushed himself in deep and she took a moment to adjust to his girth.

“Ready?”

“Ready, Daddy.”

Then he fucked her in earnest. He started off hard and fast, before slowing his movements. He shifted her around like she weighed nothing.

She came again as he took her from behind, his finger playing with her clit.

“Oh! Ohh!” Her cries filled the room as she pulsed around his thick dick.

That seemed to be all he needed to follow her over the edge, his own yell of pleasure filling the room.

He quickly took care of the condom before joining her in the bed and wrapping her up in his arms, her face resting on his chest.

“I should be spanking you.”

“What? Why, Daddy? I’m a good girl.” Where had that come from? Her voice sounded younger. Was this what it was like to fall into Little headspace?

She didn’t feel like she was fully there. But when she was sleepy, her defenses came down.

“Of course you are. You’re always a good girl. But good girls can be naughty, and you moved when I told you to lie still.”

“I’m sorry, Daddy.”

“You could have caused me to hurt you. And that isn’t acceptable, Little girl.”

“I knows, Daddy. Sorry. Please don’t spank me.”

“I won’t tonight. But next time, I won’t hesitate to take you over my lap. Understand me?” He grasped her chin, tilting her face back so he could stare down at her with those serious green eyes.

“I understand, Daddy.”

“That’s my precious, good girl.”

“I know it’s probably too early for this ... and I hope I don’t scare you away ...”

“Just say it, baby,” he told her.

“I love you, Deke.”

He shifted them so they faced one another. “That’s good, Little girl. Because I love you, too.”

Epilogue

“What the hell are you doing?”

Marnie nearly dropped her book into the water as she jumped with a squeal. A sense of déjà vu hit her as she glanced over to find Deke scowling down at her.

“Jesus. You scared me, Daddy. That wasn’t nice.”

“It wasn’t nice?” He stomped over to where she sat at the edge of the pool. “What are you doing?”

“Um, reading a book with my feet in the water. Maybe you should cool down, you look ... a bit ... hot.”

She jumped to her feet and turned to race off.

“Oh, no, you don’t!” Deke grabbed her around the waist and started walking with her toward the house.

“Daddy! What are you doing? Put me down this instant!”

“Who is in charge, Little girl?” he asked.

“Me!”

“You? Well, seems I got home just in time.”

“Just in time for what? And how come you’re home early?” She should have had another hour before she needed to

go inside and pretend that she hadn't been spending her afternoon by the pool ... without him.

Which was one of those silly rules he had for her.

"In time to cure you of these delusions. What is the rule about the pool, Little girl?" He set her down on her feet in the living room.

She pouted up at him. "But, Daddy—"

"No buts. Rule."

She sighed. A long, exaggerated sound which probably wasn't in her bottom's best interests.

"No going by the pool without you until I can swim. But I was down at the shallow end, Daddy. I can't drown in waist-deep water."

"The rule is the rule. No exceptions."

That was a saying he was very fond of. She'd thought about getting it printed on a coffee cup for him. But that would just encourage him.

"And I'm not early. You lost track of time."

"I did not." She glanced at the clock. "It's ... oh, I lost track of time. Oops. Hi, Daddy! I'm glad you're home." She wrapped her arms around him.

These last two weeks had been amazing. Sure, there had been ups and downs. Like when she'd hidden his sticky note pad from him and then hadn't been able to sit for dinner that night.

But every night she pinched herself to make sure she wasn't dreaming. Well, until he'd caught her one night and put a stop to that.

Living with Deke was so different from living with Lucas. Instead of pushing her down, he was constantly holding her up. Supporting her. Loving her.

And spanking her.

“Off to the corner you go, Little girl.”

“Not corner time, Daddy! That sucks.” She stomped her foot.

He gave her a stern look and just pointed at the corner. She dragged her feet as she walked to the corner and stuck her face in.

This was the worst.

Yeah, there were things she could have done differently ... but they wouldn't have been as much fun.

“Come here, Little girl,” he called out after she'd been in the corner for hours.

Well, okay, minutes.

Turning, she saw him sitting in the middle of the sofa. She ran to him, throwing herself into his lap. “I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't mean to be naughty.”

“You know that rule is there to keep you safe. I don't want you slipping into the water and drowning.”

“I know, Daddy. I really is sorry.”

“Starting tomorrow, I'll be giving you swimming lessons.”

“That would be a good thing, Daddy.”

“Right, over my lap you go.”

He helped her lie over his thighs before he pulled up her sundress and drew down her panties, baring her bottom.

“It’s a count of fifteen.”

“Fifteen? Daddy, no!”

“That was a big rule you broke and you need to learn.”

The first five were difficult. But the next five nearly killed her. By the time he finished, she was lying limply over his lap, just crying.

“Shh. That’s it. All over. Good girl. All done.”

He turned her so she straddled his legs, facing him. Wrapping his arms around her, he held her tight until she stopped crying.

Then he grabbed a tissue from the coffee table and wiped her face before holding it to her nose. “Blow.”

It was embarrassing, but she blew her nose and let him clean her up.

He kissed her lightly. “I love you, Little girl. I don’t ever want to lose you.”

“I know, Daddy. I love you, too.”

“There’s something I need to show you.” He glanced up at the clock. “It should be on now.”

Huh?

Deke spun her, so she was facing the television. When he turned it on, she saw a video of someone being escorted from a building by two deputies.

“That’s the building where Lucas works. Oh my God! That’s Lucas! He’s been arrested?” She turned to look at him.

“Yep, turns out Lucas is as crooked as they come. You know how I told you that my cousin Joel was looking into him?”

She nodded. She'd been shocked when Deke had told her what he'd done. Hiring a private investigator seemed expensive, but he'd assured her that he would get family rates.

"Well, he discovered that Lucas has been skimming from his clients for years. He'll be going to jail for a long time."

"He's going to jail? Really?"

"Really," he confirmed.

She held him tight, relief filling her. "He can't come after me now?"

"I would never allow him to touch you again," he grumbled. "But yes, baby, you're safe."

"Thank you, Daddy."

"You don't ever have to thank me for taking care of you. I will always do that." He was silent for a moment. "There is another surprise. One I've been meaning to give you." There were slashes of red on his cheeks, as though he was embarrassed.

"What's that, Daddy?"

"It's, uh, well, it's the thing I was working on that night when you found me in the living room. When I barely spoke to you."

Ooh, she'd forgotten about that.

He stood, setting her down on her feet and righting her clothing before he led her into the bedroom. From the top of the closet, he drew out something fluffy.

It was a strange, lumpy shape and made up of different bits of familiar-looking material.

But she suddenly realised what the material was. Tears filled her eyes, and she grasped hold.

“D-daddy ... you did this. F-for me?”

He cuffed the back of his neck. “I know it isn’t very good. But I hated that he took them away from you, so I sewed them back together as best I could—oomph.” He caught her as she threw herself at him.

She hugged her toy tight. The one he’d created from bits of Jammy, Nutter, and Squiggles. It was ugly and lumpy, and oh so precious.

“It’s perfect, Daddy. Just like you.”

The End

About Laylah Roberts

Laylah loves to write books filled with sexy, protective heroes, a bit of humor, and lots of happy ever afters (of course!). When she's not writing, she's chasing after her daughter, reading as many books as she can, and ignoring the housework.

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Dial-A-Daddy: Cas by
Lizzie Day

A MF story by Lizzie Day

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Chapter 1

“Annie, we are going to decorate this place to the hilt for Halloween!” Gloria said, gesturing with arms wide. “Thanks so much for filling in to help out.”

Annie looked up from the plastic crate filled with strands of orange lights, streamers, and packages of black and orange balloons. “I was glad to, although I’m sorry Miriam got sick and couldn’t make it. You know I don’t usually feel comfortable being my Little self in a public setting, but for you—and Club Sweet PEA—I’m happy to make an exception.”

Her friend smiled at her. “Well, I appreciate it, especially because I know the club isn’t really your thing.”

“I just...I like to keep that part of myself a bit more private. Maybe because of my general social anxiety? Crowds just make me nervous sometimes, and I never know when it’s gonna hit me like that. I’m so glad this place is here for all of the folks who enjoy it, but I do wish there was some other option for those of us who get too overwhelmed in crowds.”

“We do have the quiet rooms here for that very reason, but even so, I know the club is not for everyone.”

“It’s honestly *huge* that you offer the quiet rooms! I know a lot of us appreciate that. But still... like, for instance, I have two Little friends who really couldn’t even walk into a club, even one that caters to Littles and Middles, like this place. It’s something that’s been on my mind a lot. Like, what if there was some kind of... I don’t know. Service, or something? Where Littles and Middles could meet Bigs and get their needs met.”

“That would be a gift to so many people,” Gloria said, nodding her head. “I don’t know how anyone would go about it, but it sounds like something that people absolutely need.”

Annie nodded in agreement.

“Do you think you might come to the party tomorrow night, even for a little while?” Gloria asked. “No pressure, of course.”

“Of course I’m coming! I need someplace to wear my costume. I’m pretty sure I’ll be in Big mode the whole time, anyway, but I want to see how everyone is dressed up, and see how all the decorations look with the lights, and the dry ice going. You know how much I love holiday decorations!”

“I’m so glad you’re coming. But, Annie, is Halloween actually a holiday?” Gloria asked, tapping her pen on her clipboard.

“Don’t let any of your Littles hear you say that! And it’s only the best one *ever!*” Annie insisted as she pulled a plastic skeleton from the box.

“Better than Christmas or the Fourth of July?”

“I do love fireworks, but yes, Halloween is the absolute best.”

“Why is that?” her friend asked.

“Candy, silly! Plus the costumes, of course!”

“You do love any opportunity to wear a costume. What are you dressing as this year?”

“I decided to go with Alice in Wonderland.”

Gloria smiled at her. “That seems perfect for you. And the blue dress will go with your eyes. Plus, you’re already blonde, so you won’t even need a wig. Hey, want to help me get these lights untangled?”

“Sure!”

Several hours later, they had most of the lights up, streamers strung all over the club, and pumpkins on tables and in corners.

“Tom will be here in a sec with the dry ice to test the fog machine. Want to wait to meet him, or do you need to get into your costume?” Gloria asked.

“I could use a bath. Is it okay if I head back home to clean up?”

“Of course. I’m so grateful to you for helping. I’ve got the rest handled—you go on and rest a bit. I know all the socializing tonight will wear you out.”

Annie smiled at her friend. “You always take such good care of me. You’re going to make an amazing Mommy to the right Little someday, Gloria.”

“I hope so,” Gloria agreed.

“It’ll happen. I’m sure of it.”

“We shall see. Now go on and get rested and cleaned up. And maybe eat some real food. We’ll have plenty of sweets tonight, but I don’t want your blood sugar to crash.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Gloria shook her head. “Go on now, Miss Annie, before Mama has to spank—and you and I don’t do that.”

Annie couldn’t help but giggle, her Little side emerging just a teeny bit. Gloria was right. Despite the fact that her bestie was pansexual, Annie was really only interested in a man Daddying her, so despite their close friendship, they never went any further than some good-natured teasing.

At home at her condo a few miles away, she decided to take a brief nap. She climbed into bed with her white bunny stuffie clutched to her side, and dozed for half an hour. When she got up, she took a bubble bath with her favorite peach-scented bubbles, then went to where her Alice costume hung on a hook on her closet door, her heart beating with excitement. She loved to play dress-up. To get herself more in the mood, she pulled up the Disney *Alice in Wonderland* on her iPad while she got into her costume.

“What do you think, Alfie?” she asked her stuffed bunny, lifting him to give his pink nose a kiss. “I hope you like it, because tonight you’re going as the White Rabbit. I sure hope the waistcoat I bought fits you. Let’s get you into it.”

She unwrapped the brocade waistcoat she’d custom ordered and slipped the bunny’s arms into the sleeves, then buttoned it up, marveling over the teeny brass pocket watch that was attached by a short chain.

“Ooh, Alfie, you look perfect!”

She hugged the stuffed bunny to her chest, nerves rolling over her as she thought about how many people would be at the party.

“Alfie,” she whispered to her stuffie, “I’m glad you can be part of my costume tonight, ‘cause you know how I get nervous around lots of people.”

She almost wanted to call Gloria and tell her she wasn’t coming, but it would be too much of a shame to waste her Alice costume, which, she had to admit as she did a little spin in front of her mirrored closet doors, was pretty much perfect on her. She patted down the white apron, checked the narrow ribbon around her neck, and decided she just *was* going to the party.

She grabbed her phone and ordered a Lyft, then tucked her keys and some lip gloss into the pocket of her dress. Then, holding Alfie close, she went downstairs to meet her ride.

“Great costume,” her driver said as she got into the car. “You even have the White Rabbit. Very cool.”

“Thanks,” Annie answered the woman before giving her the address of Club Sweet PEA.

She remained quiet on the ride there, her heart pounding a bit. She tried to focus on the music the driver had playing quietly. When “Father Figure” by George Michaels came on, she had to suppress a giggle. There was no way to explain to this stranger why it was funny, especially given where she was going tonight.

She sure could use to find her own father figure. Maybe the magic of Halloween would bring her own Daddy to her tonight?

They reached the club, and the driver pulled over.

“Looks like a big party in there—have fun!” the driver told her before pulling away, leaving Annie on the sidewalk, clinging tightly to Alfie.

It did look like a big party, with the whole parking lot almost full already. Her nerves jangled like loose coins in her veins.

“You can do it, you can do it,” she whispered to herself.

But she couldn't make herself go in.

She should text Gloria and have her come meet her outside—maybe that would help? But when she reached into her pocket, she realized she'd left her cell phone at home.

“Ugh! What am I gonna do?” she asked herself aloud.

Taking a few steps back from the doorway to allow a group of people in costume to go inside, she hugged Alfie tight.

“Miss Alice? May I be of some assistance?” came a deep voice, almost making her jump out of her skin.

She spun around, shaking. “Oh!”

Count Dracula stood before her: dark, slicked-back hair, flowing black and red cape, and the tips of fangs peeking from his lips.

“Ohhhh...” she repeated as she realized he was the most handsome Dracula she'd ever seen.

He had a square jaw and dark eyes that somehow caught the light from the street lamp, making them sparkle.

He smiled, and her tummy did a little flip.

“I didn't mean to startle you. But it seemed as if you're in some sort of distress?”

“Oh, I... maybe?”

“Is there anything I can do to help?” he offered again.

“Well, it’s just that... well I... I left my phone at home and my friend is inside, and I kinda was thinking I might... need her to go in, maybe?”

“Ah, I see. If you like, I can go inside and find her for you. If you feel comfortable telling me who you’re looking for, that is,” Count Dracula offered.

“It’s Gloria. Um... everyone here calls her Miss Gloria. She works here. At the club.”

“I’m happy to go find her for you. Will you be okay out here by yourself for a few minutes?”

By herself?

Oh, that sounded even worse than going inside, suddenly. Her body shook with a wave of anxiety, and tears pricked behind her eyes.

“Miss Alice? Are you okay?” the man asked.

“I-I, um...” she started, but she couldn’t quite get the words out.

The stupid tears were pooling in her eyes, and she wiped at them with the back of one hand. And suddenly there was a white handkerchief being held out to her.

“It’s all yours, if you like,” the man said, his deep voice gentle.

She sniffed. “Th-thank you.”

“Would it help at all if I walked you inside? Then, if you want, we can find your friend together.”

“Yes, please, Mister...uh..”

“It’s Count, actually,” he said, and when she looked up at him, she saw he was smiling.

He had dimples.

Her tummy tumbled again, but it wasn't nerves this time.

"You're funny," she said, smiling through the last of her tears.

"Nothing cures what ails you like laughter," he said, his smile widening, and her heart beating faster in response. He offered her his arm. "May I escort you inside, Miss Alice?"

"It's Annie, but yes, you may," she said.

Instead of taking his arm, she grabbed onto his hand, and his warm fingers closed around hers. How was it this stranger could make her feel so instantly safe? Was it because she knew every Daddy had a thorough background check and was personally vetted by Daddy Tom before they got to go to Club Sweet PEA? Or maybe it was just his kindness and his gentle manner?

He opened the door for her and let her go in before him, and immediately she could smell popcorn and candy. And there was Gloria at the front desk, talking to the receptionist.

"There you are, Annie!" Gloria said. "And how adorable you look! I knew you'd make the perfect Alice. And I see you've met Tom's friend, Cas."

"Good evening, Gloria," the man said. Then, turning to Annie, he said with a grin, "Casimir Kovacs, but my friends call me Cas for short. Or Count Dracula. I'll let you pick."

Annie giggled. "I think I'll call you Count for the night."

"Gloria, I found your Little Alice a bit forlorn outside and wanting to locate you, so now I deliver her to you."

It was then that Annie realized he had a slight accent, which only made this handsome, charming man even sexier.

“Thanks, Cas. But I’m not so sure she wants to be delivered,” Gloria said, her gaze narrowing on Annie. “Do you, Annie?” she asked, one eyebrow arched.

“Oh! I, um... maybe not?”

“I’d be honored to escort you into the party, Miss Alice. Er, Miss Annie,” he said, his mouth quirking into a grin and revealing the tips of his vampire fangs.

“As long as you don’t bite me,” she said, feeling a bit more her saucy self.

“Of course not. That would be most inappropriate. Not before midnight, anyway.”

“You’re in excellent hands,” Gloria told her. “Cas is one of Tom’s oldest friends, and you know I would never let anyone near you I didn’t trust completely. So you two enjoy the party. I’ll be around if you need me, Annie, okay?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Shall we?” Cas asked, gesturing toward the doors leading into the club.

“We shall,” she answered, gazing up at him. She was only a little over five feet tall, and he loomed over her, making her feel very, very Little. She liked it.

He opened the door and music wafted out as they stepped into a Halloween wonderland. Even though she’d helped decorate all day, the club was really transformed, with dim purple and orange lights everywhere, the fog billowing from every corner, and the gaily lit Jack-o’-lanterns all over. The snack tables were draped in black and orange cloths, and everyone was in costume. As they walked through, they saw adorable witches and ladybugs, Littles in unicorn and tiger

onesies, Daddies dressed as knights and pirates, and the entire staff wearing striped prisoner uniforms.

“Where shall we go first?” Cas asked.

“How about the snack table?”

“We can do whatever you want,” he said. “Lead the way, Miss Alice.”

What she wanted was for him to never let go of her hand, but she didn't think she could ask for that. A snack would have to do. But meanwhile, he was making her feel safe, even in the club filled with probably a hundred people. Very few people had ever made her feel truly comfortable in a crowd, and certainly neither of her previous Daddies, or the other men she'd dated. How could he do that, when they'd only just met? She didn't understand it, but maybe she didn't have to.

“This way, Count Daddy,” she said, pulling on his hand.

Chapter 2

The long snack table held plates of cookies and bowls of candy, and staff were pouring juice and soda into orange plastic cups and lining them up in rows on each table. And of course, the popcorn machine was working hard while a staffer scooped the fragrant popped corn into little paper bags.

“What would you like?” Cas asked her.

He hadn’t let go of her hand, and it was making her feel warm all over. Warm and Little, which didn’t happen all that often.

“How about popcorn?”

“Popcorn for you, it is, and maybe just some juice for me,” he said, leading her toward the popcorn machine.

“You don’t like popcorn?”

“I love it. But vampires don’t eat, do they?”

She giggled. “I guess not. Or is it that you can’t eat with those fangs in?”

“It would be totally impossible,” he admitted with a grin. “But I’m supposed to drink blood, anyway,” he said, his accent thickening.

“Wow! You sound just like Count Dracula!”

“I’m actually from Romania, which is where Transylvania is.”

“Are you really? Or are you just staying in character?” she asked, skeptical.

“I was really born there, in Bucharest. It’s why I always go as Count Dracula for Halloween.”

“Oh! I thought I heard an accent earlier.”

“Did you?” he asked, grabbing a bag of popcorn and handing it to her. “I thought it was gone, after all these years here in the US.”

“It was just a little bit,” she answered, pumping some of the fake butter from the dispenser on the cart into her bag, then pumping some more, hoping he wouldn’t notice that she was drowning her popcorn. “How long have you been here?”

“Since I was eleven.”

“I guess you’re pretty much an American, then.”

He chuckled as he grabbed a handful of paper napkins. “I guess I am. I have American citizenship, anyway.”

“Oh,” she said, wondering at the sensations rushing through her just from talking to him.

“Why do you sound disappointed?” he said with a small chuckle.

“Because a real Romanian would be the *coolest* Count Dracula!” she said with a giggle.

“I’m cool,” he protested. “I’m still Romanian. I’ll have to show you my birth certificate sometime.”

“You’re silly!”

“Or maybe I’m a real vampire,” he teased, wiggling his dark brows.

“If you were, you’d say ‘I want to suck your blood’”!

He shook his head. “Hollywood has completely misrepresented us fanged folks.”

“I love a good vampire movie, though,” Annie said, popping a piece of popcorn into her mouth. “Mmm!”

“Me, too,” he agreed as they passed the table full of cups. He picked up two. “Shall we go sit down for a bit?”

“Yes, please,” she answered through a mouthful of buttery popcorn.

They found a smaller table at the back of the snack area, and he sat down next to her.

“Is this okay?” he asked.

“Yes, this is perfect. “I... don’t always feel so good with too many people around.”

“Is that why you had trouble coming inside?” he asked, his tone gentle.

She nodded, feeling herself going deeper into Little space at the genuine concern in his voice. “Mm-hmm. I get nervous, and sometimes it’s too much activity ‘n noise, ‘n it makes my tummy ‘n my nerves jumpy.”

“You know, I have a niece who feels the same way.”

“You do? What does she do about it?”

“She learned to meditate a few years ago, and now she teaches yoga. It’s helped her a lot, but she still feels it sometimes.”

“Maybe I should try meditating ‘n yoga.”

“It couldn’t hurt to try, Miss Alice,” he said, before taking a sip of his drink.

The red juice dribbled out the bottom edge of his cup and onto his white shirt.

“Oh no!” She clapped a hand over her mouth. “You’re a messy drinker, Count,” she said with a grin.

He wiped his chin with the back of his hand. “So I am. It’s these fangs...”

She dabbed at the stain on his shirt with a napkin, and his hand went to do the same, covering her fingers with his own napkin. She could feel the warmth from his hand through the paper, and her heart stuttered in her chest. She looked up at him, and he was looking down at her, his dark eyes twinkling in the purple lights.

“Oh, I’m... s-sorry,” she said, forcing the words out.

“No, it’s okay. It’s just fine.”

He smiled at her, and she felt like the purple lights were part of her, lighting her up from the inside.

She realized she was staring, and made herself blink and look away.

“Uh... do you want to walk around and look at the decorations with me?” he asked.

She nodded, still trying to regain her balance. “Yep, I do. I helped Gloria decorate all day today.”

“Did you? Well, you did a wonderful job, Miss Alice. Are you done with your popcorn and juice?”

“I am.”

“Let me clean up our mess,” he said, gathering their cups and napkins, and the empty popcorn bag, and tossing them in a trash can. Then he offered her his arm again.

She slipped her hand into his. It felt too good not to.

They walked around admiring the pumpkins and skeletons, until they made their way to the area where game booths had been set up like a carnival.

“How about I try to win you a prize?” he asked as they approached a booth with a cornhole game.

She let go of his hand to clap hers together. “Ooh, would you?”

“Let’s see what this old man can do.”

“You’re not old!” she protested, despite the silvery-gray hair at his temples.

“Dracula is hundreds of years old, little girl,” he teased.

Something inside her went warm at those words. ‘Little girl’. And it definitely wasn’t anything that felt Little. No, it was her Big girl parts waking up and heating up like crazy.

Luckily she didn’t have to try to formulate an answer in her dry mouth as he stepped up to the counter and the staffer handed him a small pile of beanbags to toss.

“Wish me luck!” he said, flipping one side of his cape over his shoulder and drawing his arm back.

He threw the beanbag, and it landed right in the hole.

“Yay!” she squealed, clapping for him. “Do it again!”

“As the little princess demands,” he said, flashing her a grin as he made a small bow. Then he tossed another beanbag, and again it landed right in a hole on the cornhole board.

“You’re good at this!”

“Thank you, Miss Alice. I played baseball in high school, but it’s been, well...a little while. Or maybe a long while.”

“How long?” she asked, feeling sassy.

“At least a hundred years,” he replied with a wide grin. “But seriously, I just turned fifty-one, and I played through my senior year, so that was over thirty years ago. I’m kind of surprised I can still throw at all.”

“You sure can!”

He tossed two more bags, and each one hit the mark.

“Which prize would you like?” he asked her.

“Ohh, the black stuffie kitty with the rhinestone collar, please?”

The staffer pulled it off the shelf and handed it to Mister Cas, who handed it to her.

“Can you manage to carry the kitty along with your rabbit?”

“I’m not sure,” she said.

“I’ll keep her safe for you until you’re ready for her, then.” He took it from her offered hand and tucked the kitty stuffie into the crook of his arm. “What next?”

She looked around the room, and a cheer went up from the crowd at one of the gaming booths. The sound seemed to echo in her ears, and she hugged her rabbit tighter.

“Um... can we... It’s getting kinda loud in here,” she admitted, feeling funny about saying it to someone she’d just met. But she felt so comfortable with him. Comforted by him.

“Can we... um... go to one of the quiet rooms, please? Is that okay?”

“Of course. I’ve actually been doing some repairs here for my friend Tom, so I know the way. Shall we?”

“Mm-hmm,” she said with a nod, fighting the tightness in her chest. Suddenly it seemed like there were a thousand people in the room. It made it hard to breathe.

She moved closer to him, and he put an arm around her shoulder, then leaned down and asked quietly, “Is this okay, Miss Alice? My arm around you? And are you okay?”

“It’s just... a lot.” She felt the tears wanting to start and tried to squeeze them back, but one slipped down her cheek. “But I like your arm there. It helps.”

“Okay, I’ve got you. Come on, little one.”

He kept his strong arm around her and led her through the club. Then they went through a door and into a hallway, and when he closed the door behind them, shutting out the sound and the people, her chest instantly loosened.

“Shall we find a room? Or would you feel better if I went to get Gloria? It’s okay if you feel funny about being alone with me since we just met tonight.”

“Nah, it’s okay. Being in the quiet is helping already, and since Gloria and Daddy Tom know you, I know I’m safe. Plus...” She trailed off, not sure if she should tell him the rest of what she was thinking.

“Plus?” he asked, one dark brow raised. “Plus what, little Alice?”

“Uh, well... I just feel so comfortable with you. Like... I feel like I can already count on you to just take good care of

me.”

He smiled, the tips of his fake fangs showing. “I would certainly like to, and will to any degree you allow me.”

“Oh, I would definitely like to allow you to, Count Daddy,” she told him, feeling her cheeks heating.

Her cheeks were not the only thing going hot under his dark brown gaze.

He stared down at her, quiet for a moment before he said, “You are the most charming creature, Miss Alice.”

“I am?” she asked, his comment making her swallow hard.

“Yes, absolutely.” He paused, his expression going softer. “I haven’t met anyone in a very long time who made me feel the way you have in less than an hour. Like I want to protect you from the world. Like I *need* to. And you’re so, so pretty and sweet. Where did you come from, little angel?”

“I came from right here in Phoenix,” she said, knowing that wasn’t quite what he was asking. “And before that, I came from Austin.”

“You’re from Austin? I’m from Dallas. I’m only in town to help Tom out with some things here at the club.”

“What kinda things? You said before you fixed some stuff?”

“I’m a contractor, and I’m going to help him do some remodeling they’ve wanted to do since the club opened, then there are a few projects he has for me at his place.”

“Oh,” she said, her tummy dropping. “So you don’t live here?”

“I don’t. But I’m going to be here for a while,” he assured her, seeming to know what she was bothered about. “And I know we literally just met, but I would really like to get to know you better while I’m here. What do you think about that? Actually, never mind. That’s probably moving too fast. You can think about it and let me know when the time feels right, okay?”

“Okay. But Count Daddy? I already think I would like to.”

He leaned toward her, and she was more aware than ever how tall he was—he had to be well over six feet tall.

“Miss Alice? You need to be sure. Okay? You take all the time you need.”

“I will,” she agreed.

“Now, shall we go find a quiet room and see what’s in there?”

“Oh, it’s chairs and a couch, and usually lotsa books and some games ‘n puzzles ‘n stuff.”

“Ah, I love books. Maybe I can read you a story? Would you like that?”

“Mmm-hmm,” she said, nodding her head for emphasis. “But can I sit in the chair with you?” she asked, feeling an overwhelming need to be close to him. Part of it was the lingering social anxiety, but that was already nearly gone. Mostly it was the urge to simply be close to him, to breathe in his masculine scent. To feel his hard muscles next to her.

“Yes, you absolutely may. And I promise not to try to bite your neck.”

“You better not! Or Alfie’s, either! We’re not ready to be one of the undead just yet!”

He grinned, and she felt her cheeks go warm as she smiled up at him. Her cheeks, and that tender, aching spot between her thighs.

He led her into a quiet room and they pulled a few books from the shelf. Then he sat in the big chair, patting the spot next to him, and she scrambled up and settled in beside him. His big body was so warm next to her, and she laid her head against his arm—she couldn't quite reach his shoulder—and she felt safe and cuddled, and her body was burning with the need for him to touch her. Plus, he smelled sooooo good! Like something dark and a little musky, but fresh at the same time. She closed her eyes for a second and inhaled.

“Mmm,” she said quietly.

“What, little one?”

“Oh, um, nothing. Just content to be here.”

“So am I, princess,” he agreed, opening the page of the first book, *Creepy Carrots*.

She snuggled up against him as he read, and he did all the spooky voices in the right places, making her laugh. When they finished that one, he opened *How To Catch a Monster*, which she'd read before and loved it. And by the time they got done with *Duncan the Trouble Making Pumpkin*, they'd been laughing together and snuggling and commenting on the illustrations, and she felt so incredibly comfortable with him, and so entertained. And so *needing* him to kiss her or touch her or *something*, she could barely sit still.

He put the book down and asked her, “Shall we read another?”

She shook her head.

“No? What would you like to do next, little princess?”

She bit her lip, trying to hold the words in, but they came bursting out. “I would like for you to kiss me, Count Daddy.”

A slow smile spread over his face, his dimples flashing.

“I can do that, little one, I can absolutely do that.”

Chapter 3

He turned to cup her face in his hands, and even that made her heart hammer and her body go burning hot all over. Then he pressed his lips ever-so-gently to hers, and her body wanted to explode, but in the best way possible. Every nerve ending felt like it was about to burst in a fiery blast of need, and the gears in her head started shifting.

He pulled back a few inches and said quietly, his mouth still so close to hers she could feel his warm breath on her skin, “Are you okay, princess? You’re shaking.”

“Yes. Yes, I’m good. So good, Daddy Cas. Kiss me again, please?”

“Ah, little one, how can I resist when you ask me like that? But I need to ask you, how Little are you feeling right now?”

“Not very.”

“How much is ‘not very’?”

“The things happening in my body are *very* grown up,” she admitted.

He paused, then took in a long breath. “I should have negotiated with you before we got to this point.”

“Cas?” she said, mustering her Big self. “I know I’m a Little, but I’m also a grown woman,” she said, feeling every inch a grown-up. “And I know what I want. I want you to touch me. Please?”

He let out a low growl before kissing her hard, his lips firm and soft all at once. Then his tongue forced its way between her lips, and she groaned, the ache between her thighs intensifying, blooming.

His hands moved to her shoulders, then swept down over her arms, leaving a trail of goosebumps in their wake.

She pulled back long enough to murmur, “More.”

He kissed her again, harder this time, his lips demanding, his tongue warm and wet and dancing with hers. And God, it *hurt*, she needed him so badly.

Soon she was panting, and so was he, and she looped her arms around his neck, trying to pull him closer. He grabbed her arms, forcing them to her sides, and as much as she needed to touch him, the force of it was hot as hell.

“Touch me, Daddy. I need you.”

“Princess, if I touch you now, or keep kissing you, I’m not going to be able to stop until I feel how wet you are for me,” he told her, his tone low and husky. “And I shouldn’t do that. Not yet. Not without establishing ground rules.”

“Daddy Cas, I understand exactly what we’re doing, what I want. What I need. Please. I need you too much.” He started to shake his head, but she caught it with her hands on his cheeks, his stubble rough against her palms. “Daddy. Do it. Please. You can be the boss later, but right now... right now I need to have a say in what’s happening. And I promise I am enough

my Big self to understand what's happening, that I'm capable of making decisions."

Oh, yes. Almost every trace of Little her was gone, faded away in the wake of her desires.

When he let out a low groan and pressed his lips to hers again, she wrapped her arms around his neck and leaned her body into his. He was so full of muscle. So strong. She wanted to grind into him, to *make* him touch her in all the needy places.

As if he could read her mind, his hands moved down to cup her breasts through her dress, and she moaned.

"Is this okay?" he murmured against her mouth.

"Yes. So okay. So good. I need more, Daddy. I need everything."

He let out another low groan as he kissed her neck, then nibbled on her skin.

"Ooh, yes, please."

His hands went to her waist, encircling it, and she wished she was naked, that his hands were touching her bare skin. Her pussy was tight and wet and burning hot for him. She didn't think any man had turned her on like this before.

"Princess, I am going to take this way too far if I go any further."

"I want you to."

He let out a loud groan and pulled away from her. He stared down at her, looking into her eyes.

"Annie. I don't know what's happening here. Why you make me lose all control like this. Or nearly all of it. But if I

don't stop right now, I will not respect myself. And it would be disrespectful to you, and to this club, and my friends who run the place.”

She let out a disappointed sigh, but she understood what he was saying, and she respected him for it. “Okay. I get it. But I don't have to like it.”

“Neither do I, little one, neither do I.” He ran a hand over his slicked-back hair, and she could see he was just as affected as she was. “May I see you tomorrow night? And we can start fresh, with you in Big headspace, so I feel down to my bones that you're able to consent?”

“Yes, please!”

He smiled. “Good. That's very good. And now I need a moment to collect myself before we go back out to the club. Are you okay to go out there? To be around all the people?”

“Yes, I think so. If you'll still hold my hand.”

“I wouldn't dream of letting you go,” he told her with a smile.

They stayed at the club and chatted a little with Tom and Gloria, and a few other Littles and staff members she knew, and he held her hand the whole time. But soon she was beginning to feel overloaded on people again.

“Are you ready to go home?” he asked her. “You seem tired, princess.”

“I think I am. But Gloria has to stay until the party is over, so I can call a Lyft.”

“Absolutely not. I'm taking you home.”

“You are?” she asked, her body starting to burn again.

“Oh no, little one. A ride home and nothing more for now. We agreed, didn’t we?”

She started to pout, but he lifted her chin, forcing her gaze to his. “Didn’t we?” he demanded.

That got her back on track, but turned her on like crazy, too. She loved the dominance that seemed to be such a natural part of him.

“Yes, sir.”

He chuckled. “We haven’t talked about titles yet, but I have to admit, I like that.”

She grinned at him, happiness suffusing her, even knowing she wasn’t going to get what she so desperately wanted tonight.

“Now let’s go find Gloria and let her know I’m driving you home, and once I get her approval, then we can go.”

Gloria was all smiles when Cas told her the plan, and gave Annie a pat on the cheek.

“You be good for Mister Cas, okay? You’re in very good hands. We’ll talk tomorrow, okay?”

“Yes, ma’am. Goodnight! And thank you for a great party.”

“You’re very welcome.” Gloria leaned over and said something in Daddy Cas’s ear, making him smile and nod.

They left the club together, and the evening air was still warm as he led her to where his rental car was parked. He insisted on not only opening her door, but buckling her in before he moved to the driver’s side and got in.

“Where to?” he asked, and she gave him her address.

They chatted in the car about music they liked, and she was thrilled that he even liked Taylor Swift, in addition to a lot of the same country artists she listened to. Then he asked what her favorite kind of food was.

“I plan to take you to dinner tomorrow,” he said. “So tell me what your favorites are.”

“Well, I’m still a Texas girl at heart, so I love Mexican food.”

“Great! That’s my favorite, too. That, or a good steak, or some good ole Texas barbeque.”

“Ooh, I love barbeque!”

“Too bad we’re not in Texas, or I’d invite you over for some of my grandpappy’s ribs and brisket. Best in Texas!”

“Maybe someday I will be. I mean, I *could* be. I mean... well...” she stopped stammering, unsure as to how to even finish that sentence.

He glanced over at her with a wide smile, then back at the road. “I’d really love that.”

“So would I,” she said with a sigh.

“Let’s spend some more time getting to know each other, then we’ll see what we can do about that.”

When they reached her condo, he parked and they sat just looking into each others’ eyes by the dim light of the streetlamps for a full minute. His were dark and shining a little in the light, and she noticed the tiny creases around his eyes that made him look like he was someone who laughed a lot. She liked it.

“Well, it sure was wonderful meeting you tonight, Annie. Unexpected, and really fantastic.”

“Yes, same,” she agreed.

“I’m going to walk you to your door, but I’m not coming in so I don’t do anything foolish.”

She let out a big sigh that she knew was a bit over-the-top dramatic. “If you must.”

He chuckled. “Oh, I must. You have no idea.”

“I think I do.”

He got out with a warning for her not to move until he got to her side of the car, then he unbuckled her seatbelt and helped her out. Together they walked up to the door of her condo, and she took her keys from her pocket.

He pulled her close and pressed a warm, brief kiss to her lips, making her all shivery again.

“This has been a most wonderful evening,” he said as he stroked her hair from her cheek. “And you are the most wonderful girl I’ve ever met.”

She couldn’t help but smile, warmth and happiness and need rolling together in her belly and spreading over her arms and legs.

“Thank you for the best night ever,” she told him.

His dark eyes shone. “I have a feeling even better nights are ahead for us.”

“Oh, I sure hope so!”

He bent to kiss her cheek, then the tip of her nose.

“Until tomorrow, then? I’ll be here at six and we can go get some dinner, if that works for you.”

“You could come back at six am, as far as I’m concerned,” she said, barely suppressing a giggle.

“If my day weren’t already promised to Tom, I’d be here when the rooster crowed.”

“I guess six pm will have to do,” she said with a small, semi-dramatic sigh.

“Until then,” he said, leaning in to kiss her lips once more. “Sweet dreams, princess. And be sure to text Gloria to let her know you’re home.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Oh, baby, you keep calling me that and I am going to do something we’d both regret.”

He gave her a quick squeeze before striding back to his car, leaving her wishing for those regrets he’d mentioned.

Saturday dragged as she cleaned her condo, watered her houseplants, and caught up on her laundry. But by three o’clock her chores were all done, and she had nothing else to do but wait.

She decided to take a long bubble bath and read her current book. She’d just started it the other day, and it promised to be a great read. She ran the tub, added some of her favorite bubbles, and waited impatiently for it to fill. She got undressed and pinned her blond hair up into a bath bun on top of her head, watching herself in the mirror. Her breasts felt heavier today, somehow, and she noticed her nipples were hard and dark pink, even though the room was warm enough. She ran her hands over the softly curving flesh, and a shiver of need ran through her.

If only he was there, naked in the bathroom with her, getting into the warm water with her.

Oh, yes.

She would ask him to touch her—maybe even beg him. She loved the idea of being made to beg, but only if she knew it would end up with her getting what she needed. Her exes had never understood that—they'd all thought begging should end in denial of her wanting. But she knew Count Daddy would be different.

A shock of desire flared between her thighs and she felt her pussy going wet just thinking about it.

“Ugh!” she said to her reflection. “Why can’t he be here *right now?*”

She shook her head and turned to the tub, which was filled up with mounds of peach-scented bubbles. She set her book and a sippy cup of berry-flavored sparkling water on her tub tray, the book on a book stand that held the pages open so she wouldn’t get them wet, then slid into the bath. The water was warm and sensual on her skin, and she eagerly began to read. It was a romance starring a Little and her Daddy Dom by one of her favorite authors, and she immediately fell into their world.

Even reading the conversations and the scenes where the Little was being punished for being mischievous was turning her on, and she couldn’t help but imagine herself and Daddy Cas in the story, doing all of the things the characters were doing.

When she got to the part where the Daddy put the Little girl over his lap and pulled her panties down, she had to squeeze her thighs together. When he began to spank her bare bottom, she let out a moan.

“Yes, Daddy,” she whispered as she slid a hand down her stomach, stopping just below her belly button. She spread her thighs as she read the sensual punishment scene, the Daddy’s spanking turning hotter as he pressed two fingers into the Little’s wet pussy.

“Oh, yes, please,” she murmured.

She gently teased her clit, which was hard and swollen, and her pussy pulsed, needing more. She slid down a bit in the tub until her head rested on her pink inflatable bathtub pillow, and she opened her thighs a bit wider, allowing her hand the room she needed.

She moved lower, teasing her hole with her fingertip as she read about the Daddy starting to fuck the Little with his thick fingers.

“Yes, Daddy. Please fuck me,” she whispered, breathless with desire that shimmered through her system like wave after wave of electric heat.

Then she slid one fingertip inside herself, and let out a moan of pleasure. She was so wet inside, wet and clenching against her finger already. She added a second finger, needing to feel filled up as she read more about the Daddy finger-fucking his little princess as he spanked her naked ass.

She wished Daddy Cas was spanking her right now. But since she was alone, she would have to make do with what she had.

With her free hand, she stroked and pinched her nipples as she fucked herself, her two fingers buried deep in her pussy. Pleasure built in her system, aided by the gentle warmth of the water sliding against her skin. And soon she was arching her hips into her own hand, fucking herself harder, and she had to

let her nipple go so she could stroke her clit. It was so hard and needy, and she stroked harder, rubbing in circles while she kept fucking herself with her other hand, harder, deeper.

“Oh, Daddy Cas,” she murmured, imagining it was his hand inside her, then his cock.

Mmm,” she moaned, wondering what his cock would look like, feel like. She knew it would be hard and thick, and her core would convulse around it as he slid it in and out.

“Oh!”

Pleasure soared inside her, spearing deep in her pussy, deep in her belly. Her nipples were so hard they almost hurt, needing to be touched, teased, squeezed. And as she closed her eyes and pictured Daddy Cas bending over to suck on her nipples, she came in a torrent of pleasure, sensations rippling like a wave.

“Oh, Daddy!” she called out, fucking herself harder and faster.

She kept coming, so hard she could barely breathe. It seemed like it went on forever, and when she finally came down from the high of her climax, her mind was filled with images of him.

“Daddy Cas. Count Daddy,” she whispered, loving the sound of it on her lips.

He would make her come like that. She just knew it. Knew she needed him more than she’d ever needed any man in her life.

Tomorrow could not happen fast enough.

Chapter 4

He was there at exactly six pm, just as promised, and she opened her door eagerly. He was even handsomer than she remembered in his low-slung jeans and a black t-shirt that fit his bulging muscles snugly. She hadn't realized he had so much muscle, seeing him in his Count Dracula costume the night before, and boy, did he look good! His dark hair was combed away from his face, if not slicked back in vampire fashion, like at the party, and she could see the glint of silver hair at his temples. But the best part was his gorgeous, wide smile.

“Princess, you are pretty as a picture,” he said before leaning down to kiss her cheek.

“You think so?” she asked coyly, doing a little spin in her navy blue dress with puffy lace sleeves, partly to show off her outfit, and partly to distract herself from the feel of his soft lips against her skin.

“I do. Absolutely.”

She smiled and preened, feeling her cheeks going warm.

“Ready to go get some food?”

“Yes, sir, I am.”

He let out a groan. “There you go with that ‘sir’ stuff again. Sweetheart, you’re lookin’ to get yourself into some trouble, aren’t you?” he joked.

“Always!” she replied, making him chuckle.

“Let’s get you out of here and to the restaurant before we both get into trouble.”

“I kinda like trouble sometimes,” she said, and when he arched a dark brow at her, she giggled. “But I am starving.”

“That’s better. Let’s head out.”

She loved how he kept a big, warm hand at the small of her back as they walked to his car, then the way he helped her in, insisting on buckling her seat belt. Then, when they got to the restaurant, which was only a few minutes from her place, he kept his hand at her back again until they were seated at a round booth. She slid in, and he slid in next to her.

They took a few minutes to place their order—tamales for him and cheese enchiladas for her—then they had a chance to settle in and chat.

“Tell me about yourself, Annie,” he said. “Or should I just call you Miss Alice?”

She giggled. “Honestly, you can call me either. Although I have to admit, I do like princess the most.”

“You should always be treated like a princess,” he told her.

“Hmm. Not everyone else thinks so.”

“What do you mean?”

She shrugged. “Just... some of my exes didn’t seem to think so. Most of them. Well, maybe all of them.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. Do you want to tell me about them?” he asked.

“I don’t know,” she said quietly, rolling her red cloth napkin between her fingers, her eyes cast down.

His fingers gently lifted her chin. “You can tell me anything, Annie,” he said. “In fact, I kind of want to know everything about you. And past relationships can be a big part of who we are. So if you feel comfortable talking about it, I’d be very interested to know what your relationship history is.”

“You would? But... why?”

“Because I like you. An awful lot. And—if I’m not making too much of a presumption here—if we’re to continue talking and seeing each other, it might be an important piece of information.”

She looked into his dark eyes, and she felt a sense of comfort along with the giddiness, just like she had the night before. “That’s not a presumption. Not at all, actually.”

“I’m very glad to hear it. So, what would you like to tell me? You can tell me whatever you think might be important for me to know, so I know what you like and what you don’t. So I understand what you need.”

Even him asking to understand her made her feel a cozy warmth all over.

“I guess that... I’ve never really been with anyone who fully accepted my Little self, or if they did—or seemed to, anyway—they didn’t really treat me like... like Littles are treated in the books I read. Or like most of them are treated when I’ve gone to Club Sweet PEA with Gloria. I was only there a few times, but the Daddies there are so nurturing with their Littles, and mine never really were.”

“Do you want to talk to me about what your experiences were like, Annie?” he asked, his tone gentle. “Only if you feel comfortable sharing, of course.”

“See? That’s a much better start right there. None of the guys I’ve been with, Daddies or vanilla dating, have had that much consideration for me. And I just kept blaming myself because... they had me convinced that feeling the way I did was my own fault. Or even if they didn’t give me those ideas, I just have felt like I’m no good at choosing someone.”

“That sort of thing, feeling like you’re to blame for other people behaving badly, usually has some deep roots,” he said, his tone gentle. “It can start when you’re growing up, or when you start dating. Bad relationships can do a lot of damage to people, and I don’t believe that’s necessarily your fault. Do you have any idea when and how it started?”

“I guess it started when I was in college, and I tried to tell my boyfriend about my Little side, but he was kinda freaked out about it, and told me it was weird.”

She had to take a long breath before she could continue. It felt good to talk about it, but hard, too.

“Then I tried again with another guy I was dating when I was about twenty-five, and he *really* made me feel like it was something to be ashamed of. So I kept it all to myself for a long time after that. Then a few years later I found an online forum, and I met my first Daddy there. But he was... really a jerk, which I only realized after I left the relationship.”

“How was he a jerk to you, sweetheart? Do you want to tell me?”

She nodded, feeling her chest go a little tight. Some of it was the memory of how awful he’d been to her, and part of it

was how kind Daddy Cas was being to her now.

“He really just wanted to control me, like maybe that was the only reason he was a Daddy? He just wanted me to do what *he* wanted. And I know that’s a big part of being a Daddy, like setting rules and stuff. But his rules were so... arbitrary. And he knew I had some social anxiety and didn’t want to play in public. He *knew*. But he made me go to a club with him a few times, and he... he spanked me in front of everyone. I was so humiliated, and it wasn’t fun at all. And he didn’t even do it to punish me for anything. It was just because he wanted to. And later, when I met Gloria, I found out how wrong that was. She’s been a big help to me. But then, later I met another Daddy online, and everything seemed fine. He said he understood my social anxiety and never asked to take me to a club. But his punishments were always *so* rough. Like, he’d spank me so hard I couldn’t sit the next day. And it was always like that. There was never any warm-up to a spanking. And there were never the gentler, sensual spankings or funny spankings I’ve seen other Littles get. I’ve read about all kinds of spankings, and I know books aren’t always reality, but from what I saw at Club Sweet PEA, and after conversations with Gloria and some Little friends, I know that stuff does happen in real life. And spankings and sex were always two different things with him, even though sometimes I wanted it to be all one thing. I’ve always felt like being spanked could be sexy for me. And... and now I feel like I’ve said wayyy too much.”

She rolled her napkin between her fingers again, feeling flustered and a bit embarrassed, and hoping she hadn’t said anything to make Daddy Cas not want to see her.

“Princess,” he said, his tone gentler than ever. “I am so darn sorry you’ve had to go through all that. It sounds to me like none of those men knew how to be a good Daddy. And to

be honest, I'm trying real hard not to be mad at all of them for causing you hurt the way they did. You do understand that even as a Little, your boundaries should always be heard and respected?"

"I do now. But I didn't then, so I stayed with each of them for too long. I was stupid."

"No, don't say that. It wasn't you. It was them. That, and I'm sure you were just trying to get your need to be Little met. I understand that can be very difficult. I truly do understand, because my need to be someone's Daddy is so strong, it's hard when I can't get that need met. It's a yearning that doesn't just go away."

"I bet every Little in the country would want you to be their Daddy. You must be able to find a Little any time you want."

"Not the right one. Not one like you," he said, staring into her eyes.

Her cheeks went warm and her stomach did a little flip, and even though she'd felt mostly Big all evening, her Little self was doing a happy dance on the inside.

"That's a really nice thing to say."

"I mean it. Every single word. Would it help if I told you why I don't have a Little of my own?"

"Maybe?"

"Well, let's try it and see. When I was younger I played baseball. I was pretty good in high school—good enough that I got a scholarship in college, then left when I got drafted into a semi-pro league. By then I'd started to feel the Daddy leanings, but I didn't understand it all that well. And the girls who wanted to date me really just wanted me because I played

ball. Baseball kept me busy for a few years, until my grandad, the man who raised me, got real sick, so I came home to Dallas to take care of him. He was around for another few years, and during that time I took over his construction business. He'd taught me everything about construction before I'd gone off to college, and I taught myself the business end of things and got my contractor's license. But during those years when he was sick, and then when I was trying to keep the business going, I was awfully busy. I met two Littles through the kink clubs over a period of a few years, and I loved Daddying them, but neither of them liked that I had so little time available, which I understand. Finally life and the business settled into more of a routine, and I met a Little who I felt was a good fit, that we were a good fit for each other. We were together for eight years."

He paused and shrugged, but she could see the pain in his expression.

"But then," he continued, "she left me for this rich guy she'd met at the kink club. She'd been going without me, telling me she was spending the night with her best friend. And I felt so betrayed by her that I... well, I've been on my own ever since. It's been five years. Not because her betrayal made bitter, or made me shy away from relationships—I understand that was just her, and not all women. But I don't really like the club scene, either, so meeting someone else hasn't been the easiest thing. I've tried. But the right person just hasn't been there for me. No one has felt like the right fit."

"Oh, gosh! I'm sorry, Daddy Cas. That sounds awful. I'm real sorry about your grandad. And about the girl who hurt you."

He shrugged. “We all have our history, and none of us has had it easy. And forgive me for overstepping here, if I am, but I’ve been thinking... well, maybe the universe was just waiting until I could meet you. Because you feel just right in a way no one else has. Is that an odd thing to say? I know we’ve just met. But you really are a very special person, Annie.”

She shook her head, her whole body tingling and her heart pounding in her chest. “I feel the same way about you. It’s like I knew you before, or something. Like I’ve known you forever, but we didn’t meet until last night.”

“Yeah. It’s exactly like that for me, too. I don’t understand it, and maybe we’re not meant to. But I do feel like the universe put us in front of each other for a reason.”

“I do, too! Or, maybe it was Gloria and Mister Tom,” she said, unable to help smiling. “But it almost doesn’t matter, does it?”

“Nope, it sure doesn’t. The important part is we met and we’re here together now. And I know I live far away, but we’ll figure it out, okay?”

“Yes, okay,” she answered, knowing somehow he’d be true to his word.

He reached for her hand and held it, and his was so big and warm and strong. She felt a kind of safety and trust she’d never felt before in her life. No one had ever made her feel this good, this safe and protected. When he leaned in to kiss her cheek, she luxuriated in the feel of his soft lips for several seconds before she tilted her chin.

He smiled into her eyes before pulling her closer and kissing her lips. And oh, his were soft and demanding at the same time. She melted against him with a sigh, and when he

pulled back a few lovely moments later, he smiled down at her.

“I can’t wait to get you home and kiss you some more. Kiss you in a way I can’t in the middle of a restaurant. Is that okay with you?”

“Yes, please,” she said, feeling lit up with happiness inside. Happiness and that electric tingle she was trying hard to ignore because they were in public. She squeezed her thighs together under the table.

“But first,” he continued, “we need to talk about what your limits and needs are, and mine, too, because we can’t really go any further until we do that. Do you feel ready to have that conversation?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Oh, pretty girl,” he said with a groan. “There you go again. So, first things first: I love it when you call me sir. Or Daddy Cas or even Count Daddy. And I hope to eventually earn you simply calling me Daddy. Which, if I’m being honest, will kinda bring me to my knees.”

She giggled. “I’m not sure if I wouldn’t like you on your knees, or if I’d find it sort of exciting!”

He chuckled. “You sure are fun, sweetheart. But back to this talk. When you’re in Little space with me, you can call me any of those, okay? And if you need to be in Big mode for a serious talk, then you just call me Cas.”

“Okay.”

“Now, you’ve already expressed to me that you want to be spanked, sometimes for punishment, sometimes just for fun, yeah?”

She nodded. “Yep.”

“And you’re also interested in experiencing more sensual spankings?”

She nodded, her insides tingling again.

He leaned in closer, his tone low. “I wanna do all of those things with you, princess. And sometimes a spanking will be because you have to learn a lesson.”

“What kind of lessons?” she asked, a little breathless at the thought.

“Things like being kind to yourself, for starters, because I can already see a need for that.”

“Oh! I’m not sure... exactly what that might include.”

“We’ll find out as we go.”

“As we go... tonight?”

“I’m not sure what you mean?”

“Well, because you live in Dallas and I live here in Phoenix, and I know we sorta said we’d find a way to see each other, but I don’t even know how long you’re here for and when I’m gonna see you again and... and...” she stammered, overcome with emotion and her Little’s self rising to the surface.

“Aw, sweetheart,” he said, laying his big palm against her cheek. “I’m sorry I forgot to tell you. I’ll be here for another month. And I’ll be sure to make as much time for you as *your* schedule allows. Tom will absolutely understand, and I can do the work he needs me to do during the days when you work. Then, when I have to get home to Dallas, if you still wanna see me, I’ll fly you out there whenever your job allows. Is that better?”

“Yes, much! But I can pay my own plane fare,” she said. “I have a good job in advertising.”

“Ah, I was going to ask you about work.”

“I’ve been there for almost ten years, and mostly, to be honest, I kinda hate it,” she admitted.

“You do? Why is that?”

“I just... always saw myself doing something more for the community. I feel like my job is sort of meaningless, you know? Just more consumerism. I’ve been looking at jobs at non-profits, but haven’t found anything that feels like a good match yet. I don’t know... maybe I need to really figure out exactly what I want to do before I’ll find the right job.”

“Well, if you like, maybe that’s something we can talk more about. Maybe I can help you figure it out.”

“I’d like that. “ She paused, biting her lip for a moment. “Okay. I’ve had this idea kinda kicking around in my brain about finding a way to help people like me. People—Littles, especially—with social anxiety who are lonely because they can’t really get out and meet people. Plus, the dating sites can be *awful*. You never know who you’re talking to, and for Littles it can be really unsafe. I don’t even know where to go with this, and maybe there’s not really much of a market for it...”

“Hmm. No, I think you could be onto something. Let’s both mull it over a bit, then we can brainstorm, if you’d be open to my input—and if not, that’s okay. This is your idea.”

“I’d appreciate your input. I really would. Also...I’m sorry I got upset about not knowing how we were going to keep seeing each other.”

“You never, ever have to apologize for being upset,” he assured her. “Not with me.”

With him.

Was this really happening? Was this even possible? It seemed like her dreams were about to come true, and she could barely believe it was real.

But he was right there, right in front of her, stroking her cheek and gazing into her eyes.

Her heart beat faster.

Maybe, just maybe, she had finally found a real Daddy. Someone who knew how to be a Daddy. Someone who seemed to want to be *her* Daddy.

Chapter 5

They got to her condo and he took her keys to open the door, then led her inside by the hand. She was so excited for what might happen, and a bit nervous, too. She wouldn't normally move this fast, but Gloria and Mister Tom had given him their approval. And she'd never connected with anyone like this. This quickly, this completely.

“Why don't you show me your Little stuff?” he suggested. “I want to see your stuffies, and anything else you love.”

“Really?” she asked, nearly squealing.

“Yes, really.”

She grabbed his hand and pulled him into her bedroom, her head taking a dive into Little space. She pulled her stuffie collection from the closet and lined them up on her dresser.

“This is Alfie,” she said, pointing to her white rabbit. “He's my favorite, and he sleeps with me every night, but you already met him last night. And this pink teddy is Petunia, the little turtle is Tiny, the clown fish is Gooby, and this is Tina, my new pterodactyl, which I know is kinda weird, but I always loved dinosaurs. And of course, the black kitten you won for me. I think I'm gonna call her Anabelle.”

“They’re adorable, all of them. And I love dinosaurs, too. Maybe we can go to a natural history museum together someday to see the dinosaur bones.”

“Oh, I would love that!” she cried, clapping her hands. Little space was really washing over her. That and a sensual heat she couldn’t deny. It wasn’t something she’d often felt together, and she liked it. A lot.

“Okay, what else have you got?”

She slid open her closet and opened the dresser inside it. “This is my puzzle drawer. I ‘specially love castles ‘n dragons ‘n that kinda stuff. And then I have the Candyland game. I play it all by myself sometimes, or Gloria plays with me. ‘N this is my coloring stuff, but sometimes I like to draw my own pictures to color.”

“Wow, you’re very artistic,” he said, taking time to look at the drawings she had in a bright pink folder, pictures of dragons and dinosaurs, unicorns and puppies and princess beds with flowing canopies. “These are really good.”

“Thanks,” she said, her cheeks going warm.

“Why don’t you grab Alfie and we’ll go back into the living room?”

“Okay.”

She held her bunny stuffie close to her chest as he carefully put her drawings away, then she followed him to the sofa.

“Come and stand between my knees,” he told her.

She did as he asked, feeling Little and Big at the same time, maybe because desire was like hot liquid in her veins. It

was a little confusing, because she was definitely at least partly in Little space. But it all felt good.

He laid his hands on her shoulders and looked into her eyes, then he stroked her hair from her cheek so gently it made her close her eyes so she could feel it better.

“Look at me, Annie,” he instructed.

She did, and he moved in slowly, inch by inch, while her heart beat wildly. Then his lips were on hers, and it felt so amazing her knees went weak.

“Mmm,” she moaned against his mouth. Then he slipped his tongue over her lips and it felt so good, she could barely believe it was happening.

When he slid his arms around her waist, pulling her closer, she melted against him. And when his tongue slipped between her lips, his tongue teasing hers, her entire body lit up, like fireworks in the sky, and her pussy and her nipples ached.

Daddy Cas could kiss like no man she'd ever met. It was soft and lovely and commanding all at once. Even more commanding when his hands went to her bottom and squeezed. He was gentle at first, then his fingers dug in a little, and it sent shivers up her spine and heat to the already-damp area between her thighs.

He pulled away from her mouth long enough to ask, “Is this okay? Because if it is, I'd really like to give you your first spanking tonight. Not for punishment or a lesson. No, that's not true. I want to teach you to enjoy a spanking.”

“Ohhhhh. Yes, please, Daddy Cas. Please?”

“Sweetheart, what you do to me with that sweet voice of yours. With those words. Come here, baby.”

He pulled her even closer and kissed her again, and she kissed him back, and it was like her skin itself was burning for his touch.

When he raised the hem of her dress, she panted into his mouth, placing her hands on his strong thighs to steady herself. Then he smoothed his big palms over her butt and the back of her thighs. His touch left tiny trails of electricity behind, tiny jolts of desire. When he finally slid his hands under her panties, she let out a groan.

“Is that a yes, pretty girl?”

“Oh, yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl,” he told her, the words making her shiver. He moved her body even closer to his and looped her arms around his neck. “Hold on tight, baby.”

He slid her panties down, letting them fall around her ankles, then he helped her step out of them. She felt so naked and needy, her pussy going soaking wet all at once.

He pushed the hem of her dress back up and lightly traced his fingertips over her bare bottom, making her core pulse in anticipation. She *needed* him to spank her, to touch her no matter how hard or how gently. He kept softly stroking her skin until she thought she'd lose her mind. She began to shift from one foot to the other, and when he pinched her bottom she let out a squeal and went up on her toes.

“You won't always get a warning, baby, but are you ready?”

“Yes,” she said breathlessly. “I'm so ready, Daddy.”

“Hold on tight then.”

She tightened her grip around his neck, leaning her face against his shoulder, where she could breathe in his scent: something a bit like clean, very masculine musk and the outdoors.

The first spank wasn't too hard, but the second came quickly. He started an even rhythm: one cheek, then the other. It barely hurt, but she understood he was warming up her skin. She loved the cadence of it, so soothing and almost meditative.

Then he started to spank harder, just a little sting with each smack, and she pressed even closer against him, wanting to feel his body against hers. Soon the smacks began to hurt, but in a way she'd never felt before. The pain felt so good it almost wasn't pain, except that it was. She didn't understand, but it didn't matter. It was Daddy Cas spanking her, and she loved everything about it. He paused now and then to pinch her skin, making her squeak, and that made him laugh, which made her giggle. And it all created a space where they were together and so much on the same page. It was as if the rest of the world had faded away.

The harder he spanked, the needier her pussy became, until it was pulsing and aching. A spanking had never made her body respond with such heady desire before. It was something she'd always imagined and craved, and it was finally—*finally*—happening! She started to arch her hips, needing contact, and when she arched hard enough, her hips met his denim-clad thighs.

“Ohhh...” she moaned.

“Yeah, come here, baby. Spread your legs a little for me. Yeah, that's it.”

One hand slipped behind her and between her sore butt cheeks, and he swiped at her dampness with one finger,

making her jump a bit at the lovely shock of it, but sending shivers of desire through her, too.

“Ah, you’re so wet, princess. Lordy.”

He shifted and slipped his hand between their bodies, and he moved it under her dress, stroking her belly, then lower, trailing his fingers right to the top of her mound.

“Ah, you’re all shaved down here. You feel so, so good.”

She loved being completely shaved—it made her feel Littler and sexier. And it made her even more sensitive to his fingers stroking her.

She was panting as he continued to stroke her skin, and as he finally slid his hand lower, she opened her thighs a bit more.

“Yeah, good girl,” he said, his voice low and gravelly. “Hang on tight, baby. I’m gonna fuck you now.”

She gasped, so turned on she couldn’t find any words. And when he slipped a finger over her tight little clit, she cried out.

“Yeah, baby,” he said quietly, his mouth inches from hers. “Open up that sweet pussy for me.”

She spread her thighs a little wider, and when he pressed just the tip of his finger at her waiting hole, she moaned.

“What is it, baby? Tell Daddy what you want.”

“I need your fingers inside me. Please, Daddy?” she panted.

“Yeah, baby.”

He slid it in an inch, making her walls clench around him. His finger was as thick as she’d imagined in the bathtub. Then he added a second one and her pussy clenched hard.

“Not yet, princess. You hold your come for Daddy. That belongs to me.”

“But it’s *harrrrd*,” she whined.

“That’ll make it even better, I promise.”

He began to pump his fingers in her pussy, curving them a bit until they hit such a sensitive spot, she yelped.

“Ah!”

“Is that good, baby?” he asked.

“It’s... mmm... so good. I’ve never felt it before.”

“That’s your g-spot, Annie. And I am gonna work it until you need to come so bad, you’ll barely be able to hold it back. But you will hold it until I tell you to come. Is that clear?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said on a small sob.

“I am gonna fuck you with my hand and keep spanking you. I want you to understand how pleasure and pain can be one thing, that you can feel both. That both can feel good.”

He pressed his fingers deeper into her pussy and used his other hand to smack her bottom. He created a rhythm that he followed with both hands, fucking her, spanking her, until she was squirming with sensation.

“Try to hold still and take it,” he ordered.

“Mmm... it’s so...it feels so good.”

Good, baby. But you do as Daddy says.”

“I-I don’t think I can!”

He smacked her butt cheek so hard she went up on her toes.

“Owwww!”

“Now are you going to hold still like a good girl?”

“Yes, Daddy. I’ll try.”

He gave her bottom another sharp smack, as hard as the last one, and she cried out.

“Ouch!”

He did it again, then again, and she would have danced away from the pain, but he was still fucking her with his other hand, his fingers pressing into her pussy, pulling out, then thrusting again. She didn’t know what to think, what to do. The spanking hurt more and more, but his fingers inside her felt so, so good.

Soon her orgasm was building again, taking her to that edge.

“Daddy... I need to come!”

“Not yet, baby. You hold onto it. Your come is all mine. It belongs to me.”

“Ohhhh,” she groaned, his words only making pleasure spiral inside her, pulling her clit tight, making her feel like her pussy was sparkling with needy heat, like glitter in a dark sky.

“Daddyyyyyyyyyyy...”

He smacked her ass so hard she yelped.

“Ouch!”

“Ouch is not a safe word, sweetheart,” he said, humor in his voice as his fingers worked that tender spot inside her.

Her insides felt like everything was swelling, filling up, and it felt so amazing. She had to bite her lip not to come. The only reason she didn’t was because he was still spanking her so hard. Or maybe that was making it feel even better? She

couldn't be sure. Her mind was fuzzy, every nerve in her body on high alert, feeling everything so sharply she could barely take it, couldn't begin to figure it out.

“Lord, pretty girl, if I could fuck you right now...I can smell your juices, and it's making Daddy's cock so hard.”

“Oh!” Her pussy clenched at his words.

His cock. Inside her. Ohhhhh, yes!

“You need to come, baby?”

“Yes. Yes, please, Daddy.”

“Please what?”

“Pleasssssse make me come, Daddy! I'll come *for you*, I promise!” she begged, dizzy with need, her entire body pulsing. Even the spanking felt amazing, making her understand what he'd meant to do to her, to teach her.

He murmured right against her ear, “Yeah, baby. You come for Daddy. And think about my cock inside you, about me fucking you while I spank you, baby.”

“Ahhhhhhhhhh!” she screamed as she came, pleasure shimmering through her like lightning. Like a shock. Over and over, one wave after another. One shock after another. He kept spanking, kept working her pussy with his fingers, and she kept coming until tears ran down her cheeks, her body shaking.

“C'mere, pretty girl,” he said, slipping his fingers from inside her and holding her tight, his muscular arms around her. “You did so good. I knew you would. And next time I think you'll be able to take even more. Or was this too much for you? It didn't seem like it, but you need to be honest with me in case I'm reading you wrong.”

“No, not too much,” she said, still trying to catch her breath. “It was... different. In the best way, Daddy.” She nuzzled into his neck, inhaling his scent. “Can we do it again right now?”

He let out a low laugh that was half chuckle and half groan. “Annie, you are the best Little girl ever. And Lordy, what you do to me.”

She giggled at that. “I sure hope so. Because what you just did to me...”

“I’m glad you liked it. There’s a lot more where that came from. I want to do everything with you. To you. I can’t wait to be in bed with you, to spend all day there. To spank you and bathe you and fuck you, pretty girl. I want to buy you presents and treat you like the princess you are to me. You deserve the world.”

She buried her face deeper against his neck. No one had ever said such things to her before. And she believed every word. But did she actually deserve it? That was the part she was confused about, the part she’d need to think about. Because Daddy Cas seemed almost too good to be true. And she wasn’t sure what it would take to convince her this all wouldn’t be taken away from her, that it wouldn’t prove to be some kind of joke.

“You okay, baby? Did I say too much?”

“No, what you said was... perfect.”

It was true. But was ‘perfect’ something that was out of her reach? Or was it possible that she could really have this?

Chapter 6

He'd left her the night before after cuddling her for over an hour, and making sure she was okay before kissing her over and over. Then he texted when he got back to his hotel, and again when he woke up in the morning. She wished he'd have stayed with her, but he didn't want to rush things too much. But her place felt a little empty without him.

After breakfast she'd called Gloria to report in detail, and her friend was so happy for her. She was happy, too. The doubts that had plagued her the night before seemed less serious in the daylight, and she went about doing some household chores, happily humming to herself.

They had plans to see each other in the evening, after he'd done some work for Daddy Tom at Club Sweet PEA, which gave her most of the day to figure out what to wear. Daddy Cas was taking her to dinner again, this time at a fancy country club.

She'd gone through her entire closet, finally settling on a silky, pale blue babydoll dress and delicate white sandals with sparkly jewels on them. She put her hair up in a ponytail and secured it with a jeweled hair band, then added a tiny pair of faux diamond stud earrings—just enough grown-up to go out in public, and just enough Little that Daddy Cas would

recognize it. She wore frilly white panties with silky blue bows under her dress, making her feel like she was walking around with a secret.

Daddy Cas came to pick her up, and once more he helped her into her seat and buckled her in as though she were precious cargo. He looked so handsome, in dark jeans and a deep blue button-down shirt.

The country club was so pretty, with palm trees and fountains lit up, making a contrast against the beautiful sunset that bathed the sky in hot pink and orange. They were seated at a table on an outdoor patio with an amazing view of the mountains in the distance.

Once they'd ordered, Daddy Cas pulled her closer to him in the booth, and she snuggled into his side.

"How was your day, baby?" he asked.

"It was good. I just did some housework and talked to Gloria on the phone. But I missed you."

"Did you? I missed you, too, princess. I'm so glad I get you again tonight."

"Do you?" she asked, batting her lashes at him. "Are you gonna get me?"

"Oh, baby. It's not a good idea to bait Daddy," he warned, but his dark brown eyes were twinkling with humor.

"Why is that?" she challenged, sass in her voice.

"Because you haven't seen the worst of Daddy's punishments. Heck, you haven't seen punishments at all."

"You did spank me, though, and I could take it. You even said I took it well!"

“That was a pleasure spanking, princess. Punishments will be a whole different thing. But don’t worry, I’m keeping a ledger in my head. When you earn enough points or commit a serious infraction we’ll explore your punishment.”

“I earn *points*? What?”

“Oh, yeah. Any time you’re a little too sassy—like now— or if you get bratty, or refuse to do something I ask of you, that’s a point. Or two or three, depending on how bad you are.”

She pouted. “I don’t like the sound of that.”

He immediately took her hand and pulled her to face him, looking into her eyes. “Baby? Are you really upset, or are you playing? Because I know this was an issue in your previous relationships, but we’re still getting to know each other, so I need to be sure I’m reading you correctly. And while you will need to be punished sometimes or I wouldn’t be a Daddy worth my salt, I don’t want to do anything that triggers you.”

“No, Daddy. I was being sassy. I know things are different with you.”

“They are, and they’ll continue to be. If and when you do need a punishment, you’ll always know exactly why.”

“Yep, you said so, and I trust you. I really do.”

“That’s good, baby. It’s important.”

The rest of dinner was just more getting-to-know-you conversation about their families and work and things they enjoyed. They both liked to go camping, to go to the movie theater and gorge on popcorn with too much butter. They both loved to read, and they each wanted to get a dog when they knew they’d be home enough. They had so much in common, and she was surprised. She hadn’t ever connected with a man

like this, on so many levels. She only wished he didn't live so far away.

By the time they got back to her apartment she was a little sleepy from dinner, so they curled up on the couch to watch Peter Pan. She woke up as the movie played, and as Peter, Wendy and the boys flew through the sky, she stood up on the sofa and jumped up and down on the cushions.

“Look, Daddy! I'm flying!”

“Be careful, Annie,” he warned before she fell, right into his lap.

“Ah, this is handy,” he said before flipping her dress up. And before she had time to protest, her panties were around her ankles, then falling to the floor, and his big hand came down in a sharp smack on her bare bottom.

“Daddy, nooo!” she cried, her hands flying back to cover her butt.

“Annie, yes,” he said, grabbing both her hands and holding her wrists together in his grip.

That left his other hand free to spank, and he went to work right away, smacking one cheek, then the other. It stung like mad, but it was also turning her on like crazy. She squeezed her thighs together, trying to ease the insistent ache there.

“Is there something you need help with, Annie girl?” He pried her thighs apart and slipped his hand between them. “Oh yeah. You're soaking wet. Don't ever try to protest too much about spankings, because you obviously enjoy them,” he said with a chuckle and another hard smack.

“Ow! I do not!”

He swiped his fingers along the seam of her pussy. “Absolutely soaking wet, baby. And I love it.”

He slid his fingers inside her, and it felt so good, she ground her hips into his lap, moaning softly. Then he slid his fingers back, taking the dampness with him, and ran his fingertip over her bottom hole. That small touch felt amazing, and she let out a panting breath. When he did it again, she groaned.

“Mmm, Daddy, yes.”

He pressed just the tip of his finger into her bottom, and it felt like pressure, but also met some need in her she’d never been aware of. When he wiggled the tip of his finger, she groaned again and widened her thighs, allowing him better access.

“Ah, baby girl,” he said quietly.

He pressed his finger in a bit further, and when it met a bit of resistance, he said, “Take a deep breath, sweetheart. Yeah.”

The breathing helped. That, and her own wetness, and the fact that she wanted it all the way in, wanted him to fuck her bottom hole, too.

He slid his other hand under her body to play with her clit as he began a slow motion, slipping gently in and out of her ass. And pleasure rolled over her, goosebumps rising on her skin, her pussy aching and swollen. In moments she was clenching with the need to come.

“Now, Daddy? Please. Oh, God...’

“Yeah, now, baby. *Now.*”

She came in a torrent of pleasure, hot and electric and fueled by the full sensation in her bottom hole that drove it all

on. Higher and higher, her mind going blank, her pussy clenching and clenching, until, finally, it was over. She was left panting, but wanting—needing—more.

“Daddy...”

He helped her to sit up, and she stared into his eyes. They were shadowed, and he bit his lower lip slowly, making her want to bite it, too.

“Daddy Cas?”

“Hmm?”

“I need you,” she said quietly, not sure if it was okay to say so.

“I need you, too, sweetheart. But tell me, are you Big or Little right now?”

“I don’t even know. Both? Is that okay? Because Big or Little, all of me wants you.”

“Of course it’s okay. I just wanted to know how to respond to you. You are who you are; you feel how you feel. And I’m so glad you feel good, that you feel needy. Because I really need you tonight after what we just did.” He leaned in and brushed a soft kiss across her lips, making her moan. “I need to taste you, baby.”

“Ohhh,” she moaned, her body lighting up. “Yes, please. Do it all. I want everything.”

He kissed her hard, his mouth coming down on hers, his tongue invading, tangling with her tongue. His arm went around her waist and he held her tight. Her nipples went hard, and so did her clit, everything hot and pulsing and needing to be touched. He kept kissing her, his tongue hot and silky,

demanding, and in moments they were both panting. Need raged through her system.

When he pulled away from her it was to ask her, “Here, baby? Or in your bed? I want to be able to treat you right.”

“Bed. Please,” she answered with a whimper.

He picked her up and carried her into the bedroom and laid her on the bed.

“I need to clean us both up a bit,” he said. “Washcloth?”

“In the bathroom,” she said, hating for him to be gone even for a moment.

But he came right back with a warm, wet washcloth, and he spread her thighs, lifting her legs as if she were a baby to wipe her bottom. She felt it caring and oddly hot, and wondered for a moment if there was more for them to explore. But not now. Now she simply needed him.

He set the washcloth aside, then kicked his boots off and unbuttoned his shirt while she watched.

She sighed as his strong chest and tight abs came into view. He had just a sprinkle of hair on his chest, and a mouth-watering line leading down his stomach and into the waistband of his jeans.

He slipped his belt off, paused to look at her as he doubled the leather in his big hands. “One of these days I’m gonna spank you with this,” he told her, his voice low and gravelly.

“Mmm, I think I might like that.”

“That’s my best girl,” he said, his gaze roving over her body as she lay there in her pretty silk dress. “Time to get you naked.”

He leaned down to slip her sandals off, then he helped her sit upright and pulled her dress over her head, leaving her in the frilly panties and her bra.

“Oh, I love these. Sexy and Little all at the same time. I love that you wore them for me.”

He pressed her back until she had to hold herself up on her elbows. Then he got on his knees and spread her thighs so he could rest his body between them. Her pussy was tight and wet, filled with heat and a desire so powerful, she could barely wait.

“I love this pretty bra, too, but it’s time to take it off.”

He ran his hands over the white satin, making her nipples come up hard as pleasure coursed through her, from her nipples straight to her clit. She watched his expression as he undid the center clasp, letting the fabric fall from her shoulders. His eyes went wide and a slow smile spread on his handsome face.

“Lord in heaven, baby. You have the prettiest tits I have ever seen in my life.”

“They’re not too small?” she asked uncertainly.

“Too small? They’re so firm, and your nipples are the perfect shade of pink. They’re perfect. And I cannot wait one more second to taste them.”

He stroked the curves of her breasts, then his fingertips feathered over her nipples, and a flood of heat rushed through her body. When he leaned in, his mouth so close she felt his warm breath on her skin, she arched her back, needing his mouth on her. But he stopped her with one hand in the center of her chest.

“Hold still,” he ordered.

She bit her lip against the tide of need threatening to drown her as she waited one agonizing second after another. His mouth drew closer, his breath grew hotter, until her nipples ached.

“Please,” she begged, the word coming out on a whisper.

His big hand wrapped around her waist as he flicked the tip of one nipple with his tongue.

“Mmm, Daddy...”

He flicked again, over and over, teasing her. Torturing her. Finally, he sucked her nipple into his warm, wet mouth and she let out a sigh of relief. He sucked gently, then licked, his tongue swirling around the hardened tip until she was shaking all over. Then he moved to the other nipple, giving it the same teasing treatment before fully sucking it in.

“Yes...” she murmured.

He sucked harder, almost to the point of pain, and she arched against his mouth, needing to let him know she loved it. And as if he understood her unspoken need, he sucked even harder, until it really did hurt, but the pain only shot pleasure through her system, burning hot. Electric.

He pressed his body firmly between her spread thighs, his bare stomach coming into contact with her mound, and she ground up into him.

He pulled back to tell her, “Lord, baby, you’re so wet for Daddy. I bet your pussy is sweet as pie.”

He dropped a kiss between her breasts, then kissed his way slowly down her stomach while she trembled with desire, barely able to wait.

When his face was between her thighs, he teased her again as he had her nipples, his warm breath inches from her body. Tempting her. Torturing her.

She needed his mouth on her, and she tried to arch up, but he grabbed her hips and held her down on the bed. And she loved it—the feeling of being so thoroughly dominated. She laid back and whimpered, waiting.

“Good girl,” he said.

His tongue flicked at her clit, and it was like a shock, such pure pleasure, she cried out.

“Ah! Daddy, yes!”

He did it again. Then again. Her body was wild with need, every muscle tense, every inch of her filled with wanting. But just as much, she wanted to do as he asked of her. She tried desperately to hold still. But when he lowered his mouth and licked the seam of her pussy lips in one long, lovely stroke, she squeezed her thighs around his body.

He did it again, this time licking up her slit to her clit, where he paused to suck for one incredible, heady moment.

“Ohhh...”

He licked the sensitive bud over and over, and lowering one hand, he spread her pussy lips apart with his fingers, then he moved lower to press his tongue into her hole.

“Oh, God!”

His only response was to make a low, growling sound in his throat before doing it again. He was fucking her with his tongue, and it felt amazing. She was grinding against him, pleasure shimmering through her. When he went back to her clit and sucked it into his mouth, she came up off the bed, and

he pressed her down harder into the mattress with his hand on her hip. And with the other hand, he teased her wet hole before slipping a thick finger inside her.

“Oh, oh!”

He began a steady rhythm, fucking her with his finger, then two, then three, filling her up as he continued to suck and lick her clit.

“Need to come!”

He paused. “Not yet. Not until I say so, princess.”

“Mmm...” was the only sound she could make.

He kept at it, and not coming was torture. Everything felt so, so good, and she knew she couldn't hold back much longer.

He fucked her harder with his fingers, sucked harder on her clit, making it hurt, and she knew instantly that was going to send her over the inevitable edge.

“*Now, princess,*” he ordered before clamping his hot mouth once more onto her swollen clit.

She came in a torrent, pleasure swarming her system, carrying her higher and higher while fireworks went off behind her closed eyelids.

“Ohhhh, yes, Daddy!” she cried.

But he didn't stop. As soon as her climax started to wane, he sucked harder, fucked her harder, and the tight, searing need built and spiraled in mere seconds before she was coming again, even harder this time.

“Ahhhhh!” She panted, her body shaking, her hips arching into his mouth.

He pulled back for a moment. “Not done yet, baby.”

He went right back to it, his fingers curving to hit her g-spot. And all he had to do was wiggle them there as he licked her clit with the flat of his tongue, and she was coming again.

“Ohhhh! Daddy, Daddy, Daddy...”

She was shaking all over, barely able to catch her breath. She didn't even know she could come so much, so hard. Even when the orgasm was over, she was left shaking, panting. Daddy Cas pulled her into his arms, cradling her head on his shoulder, and tears gathered at the corners of her eyes. She sniffed, trying to hold them back.

He pulled away to study her face.

“You okay, sweetheart?”

She nodded, sniffing again. “Yes.”

“You sure?” he asked, his brows furrowing as he wiped at her tears with his thumb.

She nodded once more. “It was just...so powerful. I didn't know...all of that was possible.”

He smiled down at her. “Baby, I want to make you come like that every day. What do you think about that?”

She let out a small giggle, even as another tear made its way down her cheek. “I think...I can't think yet, Daddy!”

They laughed together, and she snuggled into him. He kissed her cheek, her forehead, then laid her down on the bed and stretched out beside her with her head pillowed on his chest.

They stayed like that for a while, just being quiet together, and she'd never felt so relaxed in her life. But eventually her

brain started to function again, and the sensation of his bare chest against her cheek went to work, lighting her up inside. She ran tentative fingertips over his strong chest, unsure if she was allowed to touch him.

He covered her hand with his, pressing down against his body.

“You can touch me, baby. Only if you want to. That goes for now, and any time down the road. I’m here for whatever you need.”

“That’s good, Daddy, but... don’t you need me, too?”

“You have no idea how badly I need you.”

“Then show me, Daddy.”

With a small growl he moved her hand down over his stomach and to the big bulge in the front of his jeans. “*This* is how badly I need you, baby girl.”

At the feel of his hardened cock, her pussy went wet again. She lifted her head.

“May I, Daddy?”

“Tell Daddy what you want.”

“I want *you*. All of you.”

“Annie girl, Daddy is all yours. I’ll give you anything you desire.”

“Then please fuck me, Daddy?”

He paused while her heart hammered, desire winding up tight in her belly.

“Damn. That’s the one thing I can’t give you tonight.”

Chapter 7

“Princess, I’m sorry—you don’t even know how sorry—but I didn’t think we’d get there this quickly. I don’t have any condoms.”

“Oh!” she cried out, relieved. “Daddy, I thought you just didn’t want me that way.”

“Sweetheart, I want you every way possible. But I have to keep you safe.”

“But Daddy, I have some condoms.”

“You do?”

“Yes. Um...does that make you feel weird, or, like, different about me?”

“Heck, no. You’re a grown woman, even when you’re Little. It would be weirder for me if you’d never had sex before. But baby, why are we still chatting? Tell me where they are.”

She rolled over and opened the drawer of her night table. “They’ve been in here a while, but...yep, not expired.”

“Good girl. Hand it over, then get ready. Because to be perfectly honest, hanging onto any control with you is gonna be damn hard.”

“Ooh, I sure hope so!”

He chuckled as he wriggled his way out of his jeans, then his boxers. And when his beautiful, thick cock came into view, her mouth watered.

“Oh, Daddy. It’s so pretty.”

He got on his knees on the bed, and she reached out to touch it, so driven by her need she didn’t even stop to ask, and when she paused, he took her hand and wrapped her fingers around the shaft, closing his eyes. His cock pulsed under her palm.

“Daddy, I am gonna tease you a bit, like you did me,” she announced, fascinated with the lovely new toy in front of her.

“Seems fair. Do your worst, princess.”

She smiled as she swept her fingertips up the shaft, then down again. Then she sat up and knelt in front of him.

“What do you want to do?” he asked.

She licked her lips. “I want to taste you, Daddy. I wanna put it in my mouth.”

“And then what?” he asked, his tone a bit breathless.

“Then I wanna suck on the tip, and lick my way up and down.”

“Ah, yeah. Do it, baby.”

She leaned closer, inhaling his male scent, and saw the tip leaking with pre-come. She leaned in and flicked her tongue at that wet tip, making him moan, his hands going into her hair.

“Yeah, baby,” he said quietly.

She drew her tongue down the length of his heavy shaft, then back up to the tip, then did it again, over and over until

her Daddy was shaking, and she loved that she could have that effect on him. Finally, when heavy shivers ran through his muscular thighs, she took the tip into her mouth and sucked.

“Ah, baby!” he cried out, his hips thrusting.

She sucked harder, hollowing out her cheeks, then relaxed her mouth and throat to swallow as much of him as she could. He was so big, she had to use her hand to grip the base of his cock, stroking in time with her sucking, moving up and down on his hard flesh.

“Lordy, princess, I am gonna come too soon. And I really want to fuck you. I need to be inside your body. Lay back for me, baby, and spread those pretty thighs.”

She released his cock and did as he asked, her body pulsing with need.

He tore open the condom, sheathed himself, then lowered his body over hers, staring into her eyes as he reached down and spread her pussy wide. He nudged her hole with the tip of his cock.

“Annie baby. You are the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen.”

“Aw, Daddy.”

He kept his gaze on hers as he pushed inside her slowly, filling her up. Pleasure was a series of small shocks that rippled through her body. She wrapped her arms around his neck and urged him on.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he said, his tone low and gravelly.

“You won’t. But even if you did, I think I’d like it.”

“Ah, baby girl.”

He pressed deeper, and she clenched around him. She'd never felt anything so amazing in her life. He held himself above her, staring into her eyes, pausing to kiss her lips, her neck. The connection felt as deep as his cock inside her. As he began to pant, he laced one hand behind her neck and pulled her almost upright, his fingers digging into her scalp, hurting in such a commanding way, it made her heart clench.

It clenched even more tightly when he told her, "Annie, baby. You're *mine*. Tell me you belong to me."

"I do, Daddy. I belong to you."

He drove into her harder, faster, and pleasure spiraled again, like jolts throughout her system, making her pulse run fast and hot. He felt so good, everything about him: his strong arms, his scent, his cock inside her. And his gaze burrowed so deeply into her, into her very soul. She felt treasured. Seen. Adored.

"Mmm, Daddy," she moaned, on the edge of climax. "I need to come."

"So do I. Come with me, baby!"

"Yes. Yes!"

Their hips clashed together as he pumped into her, and the harder he fucked her, the tighter the tension became, like a tightly coiled spring of sensation, until finally it was too much to hold back.

She shattered, crying out, "Daddyyyyyyyyyyy!"

"Annie, baby! Yesssss!" he hissed, and she felt the heat of his come even through the condom.

He kept moving, and there were lovely little aftershocks that trembled through her. Finally he stopped, his breath

coming in sharp pants. He wrapped her up in his arms, their bodies pressed so close together she felt his heart beating against hers.

After a while he slowly pulled out.

“Be right back, princess,” he said before getting up to dispose of the condom.

A moment later he was next to her, his arms around her, and she snuggled against him as he drew her pink throw blanket over them both.

She was in a bit of a daze. She’d had sex before, but never, ever like this. Never with a man who accepted her so completely. Never with anyone who could play her body as though he’d known her forever.

Forever.

I wish...

But he lived so far away.

“Daddy?” she whispered.

“What is it, sweetheart?”

“That was... the most wonderful thing ever.”

“Yeah, it was.”

“And I’m... feeling kinda sad because...”

“Because you live here in Phoenix and I live in Dallas? Yeah, me, too. But I said we’d find a way to work it out, and you’ll find I’m a man of my word. I’ll miss you like crazy, so we’ll just have to find a way to see each other as often as possible.”

“Promise?” she asked, the ache in her chest easing a bit.

“I promise.”

He kissed her, his lips soft yet strong on hers. Strong enough to carry the weight of her fears.

For the first time in her life, she felt she actually could believe in someone, in something that was so much bigger than her worries or insecurities or doubts.

The next four weeks flew by, but they made the most of it. Daddy Cas worked as hard as he could during the day so they had as much time together as possible, and she even took a few days off work. They ate most of their meals together, went to the movies, cuddled on the couch with her collection of stuffies. Sometimes she was Big with him, and sometimes she was Little, and he seemed to like it no matter what space she was in. They had silly conversations when she was Little, and more serious conversations when she was Big. But no matter what, that intense connection was always there.

They had the most amazing, incredible, mind-blowing sex, sometimes mixed with spankings, and sometimes not. But she loved all of it.

It was their last day before he had to head home to Dallas. She was so deliriously happy with her Daddy, and trying hard not to be sad so she didn't ruin their time together. But the sadness kept poking through as they took a walk in one of the parks near her condo. The longer they walked, the faster her mind went, rolling through all of the worst-case-scenarios about her Daddy being so far away, until it was such a tangle in her brain, she couldn't find any way out of it. Even his big hand holding hers wasn't helping.

“Baby? What’s going on? You’re so quiet. You know you can talk to me about anything.”

Her Little side was coming through more and more the sadder she got, and her worst pouting voice burst from her. “I don’t wanna.”

He stopped in his tracks to look at her, lifting her chin with his fingers. “Annie, I know you’re upset about me leaving, but do you remember our conversations about this? I promised you we’d find a way, didn’t I?”

“Yeah, but... but what if you don’t wanna keep your promise? What if you get home and forget about me?”

His eyebrows shot up. “Now, why in the world would I do that?”

“Just ‘cause. ‘Cause maybe I’m not as great as you think I am. Maybe once you’re far away you’ll realize it and you’ll wanna forget all about me.”

“Do you really think I’m that callous, baby?”

“No. But I’m really *not* that great, ya know. Or... you will soon. I just know it.”

“What you know is that I don’t like it when you put yourself down, Annie.”

She crossed her arms over her chest, grinding her jaw tight. She knew she was acting out, but she felt so bad and so insecure, she couldn’t help herself. And knowing she was behaving badly on their last day together made her feel even worse, and that only made her more stubborn.

Daddy Cas stood for a moment watching her, then he grabbed her arm and told her, “Come on. We’re leaving.”

“I don’t wanna,” she said stubbornly, trying to pull away from his grasp.

He kept his tone low. “Annie, you cannot and will not make a scene in public. Someone will think I’m abusing you. So you come with me peacefully, or I’ll leave and call a Lyft to pick you up and take you home.”

“What?” she asked, shocked.

“You heard me. Don’t make me walk away.”

She harrumphed, but followed him when he turned and started to head down the path toward the car. He buckled her in as always, and they were both silent as he drove back to her place, then as they got out and went inside.

Once in her living room, he said, “Okay. Now that we’re out of the public view, you want to tell me what this is all about?”

“I did tell you,” she answered, the stubbornness and fear mingling in her chest, making it pull so tight it was hard to breathe.

He took her arm and pulled her over to the couch. “I’ve never seen this side of you, and I have to say, I don’t like it one bit. I don’t like you being bratty with me, and I like you talking in a disparaging manner about yourself even less. Do you remember the rules we went over right at the start?”

“Maybe,” she said, still pouting. Anger was boiling up inside her, and she didn’t even know why. And the longer he stared at her with that stern look on his face, the angrier she felt.

“I think you do. So it’ll come as no surprise that you’re about to get a spanking and a lecture.”

“What? No!”

“Oh, yes. Now get your little butt laid over my lap.”

She took a step back, her hands going to cover her bottom.
“No, Daddy.”

His brows were furrowed as he reached out, and before she knew it she was face-down on his lap, and he had her striped sundress pulled up and her panties pulled down. She tried to kick and squirm her way off his lap, but his big hands held her down. Then he looped one of his long legs between hers to hold her in place, leaving one hand free. He gave her bottom a sharp smack.

“Ow!”

“That’s right. This one is gonna hurt. It’s gonna hurt me, too, because I hate to have to do this. But it’s what you need. And do you know why?”

“Nooooo!”

“Oh, I think you do. We’re gonna get to the bottom of this if I have to spank you until tomorrow morning.”

“What? No, Daddy, no! You can’t do that!”

“I have excellent stamina, little girl. I assure you I can, if necessary. Of course, if my hands need a break I can always put you in a corner to think about what you’ve done.”

“Nooooo!” she shrieked, then yelped as his hand came down on her bottom, once, then twice, then a third time.

“That hurrtrts!”

“It’s supposed to. Now, Annie, you know I can’t stand to hear you put yourself down. We discussed this, and it’s absolutely not allowed. I won’t have it. And the fact that you

started this scene in public? Not okay. If you have a problem, you need to talk to me about it, not act out like some spoiled brat.”

Smack, smack!

“But... but...”

“No buts. There is no excuse.”

Smack!

“You told me you trusted me, but what do you do when something is bothering you? You decide not to talk to me, but to be rude to your loving Daddy. That’s not trust, Annie. And if we don’t have trust, we don’t have anything.”

Those words hit her right at the core where her deepest fears lived, and she burst into sobs.

“Noooo... Daddy, pleasse.”

She sobbed so hard she was hiccupping even though he’d stopped spanking her. She sobbed so hard her tummy hurt, and she only realized he’d loosened his hold on her when she curled up into a ball in his lap, holding her stomach. Her face was drenched with tears, and she felt as though her heart was breaking.

We don’t have anything.

“Sweetheart,” he said gently, pulling her upright and using his hands to try to wipe her tears. “What is going on? I had no idea it was this bad. Talk to me. Please, Annie. Sweetheart. Tell Daddy all about it.”

“Oh, Daddy,” she sobbed, burying her face in his neck and holding on to him tight. “I—I can’t... I can’t stand it.”

“Can’t stand what, baby?” he asked, rubbing her back.

“Tha—that we... don’t have... *anything*.”

“Oh, my little sweetheart. I didn’t say we didn’t have anything. I said if we can’t trust each other...well, I guess I sorta did imply that, didn’t I? But that’s not what I meant. Because we *do* have something. Heck, we have *everything*. We have trust, don’t we, baby?”

“I just...everything seemed so sad and...” she paused, trying to get her hitching breath under control, soothed by his gentle tone and the way he was holding her. “Daddy, I do trust you. I just got so scared. And I think I needed the spanking to...let it go, and let it out. So I baited you. I’m sorry, Daddy.”

He gave her a squeeze. “I know, baby. I get it. But the truth is, we really do have everything. We have each other. We have something so beautiful and unique, I bet every angel in heaven is jealous of us.” He pushed her hair from her cheek and held her chin, looking into her eyes. “Baby girl, my princess, we do have everything. Because we have love.”

“Oh, Daddy! We do?”

She felt as if her heart was going to explode. It was warm and scary all at the same time.

“We do, sweetheart. I love you, Annie Marie Davis.”

“Daddy! You’re telling me you love me for the very first time when my face is all swollen and snotty?” she asked, a little in shock.

He laughed, tore his t-shirt over his head and wiped her face with it. “There, is that better?” he asked, still chuckling. “And yes, I’m telling you I love you, snot and all.”

She couldn’t help but smile, then giggle, then laugh aloud, and he laughed with her. Her Daddy. *Hers*.

“So what do you have to say about that?” he demanded.

“Oh! I love you, too, Daddy. So much. That’s why I got so sad. I was afraid you were going to leave and just...leave me.”

“Baby, I would never leave you. I couldn’t. In fact, I can’t. Will you come to Dallas with me? I know you have your job and everything...”

“I hate my job, Daddy.”

“How about this? I’ll fly you out to visit me so you can see how you like it there, and see how you like *me* there. And if you do, you can come back here and give them notice, then come back to me in Dallas. What do you say?”

“I say yes! But...can I just go with you tomorrow?”

“Heck, yeah! That’s my good girl.”

He kissed her, and she felt how much he loved her in the press of his lips, in the way he held her so tightly. In the fear she’d seen in his eyes when she was sobbing. No one had ever looked at her like that.

He picked her up and carried her to the bedroom, carefully undressed her as he ran the bathtub, then popped her in along with her favorite peachy bubbles and her rubber duckie. Then he stripped his clothes off and got in with her. He leaned back against the edge of the tub and helped shift her until her back was leaning against his chest. He kept dipping the washcloth, then squeezing the water onto her shoulders, and it felt so good. He felt so good. And after a while she felt calm again, maybe calmer than ever.

He loved her, her Daddy did. And she loved him. Maybe everything was going to be all right.

Chapter 8

It had been a short flight, and she'd been so excited on the plane, she chattered the entire time. They caught a Lyft to his house on the outskirts of Dallas, and she loved the scenery along the way, feeling a bit of a sense of being home, being back in Texas. There were miles of open grass, ranches with horses and even one with a herd of alpacas. She loved how wide and blue the sky was. But most of all she loved that she was there with her Daddy.

His house was a low brick ranch style, with white shutters and a big tree out front. He grabbed their luggage and she followed him up the walkway and into his house.

And oh, it even smelled like him inside, like that fresh air scent with a little hint of dark musk. There were a pair of dark blue suede sofas flanking a brick fireplace, a vaulted, beamed ceiling, and big, paned windows looking out to the back patio. There was even a pool.

“Daddy, your house is so nice!”

“I’m glad you like it, sweetheart. I built the place myself.”

“You did?”

“I told you I was a contractor, sweetheart. This is what I do.”

“Wow. It’s beautiful.”

“Come on, let me show you around.”

He took her on a tour that included a sleek kitchen all done in white with dark gray counters, and a den with bookcases that went all the way to the ceiling and had another fireplace. They peeked into his office, then a guest bedroom, and finally the main bedroom, where a big four-poster bed covered in a gray comforter dominated the room. It all looked so comfy and cozy, just like her Daddy.

He pulled her against his chest, his strong arms around her. “I’ve never had anyone here with me before.”

“You haven’t?”

“Nope. I’ve only lived here a few months. What do you say we break in this place?”

“Mmm, yes, please!”

“But let’s get the airplane smell off us first. Shower time, baby!”

She followed him into the main bathroom, done in the same gray and white as the kitchen, and he undressed her, then stripped his own clothes off before they stepped into the big shower.

“Stay still, Annie. I’m going to treat my baby like the princess she is.”

He soaped up a scrubbie, then carefully washed her from head to toe, massaging her head as he shampooed her hair, and she closed her eyes and let herself feel spoiled. He spent a little extra time massaging between her thighs, his soapy fingers sliding in between her pussy lips, which were pulsing and swelling as he touched her.

“You ever been spanked in the shower?”

“Mmm, nope. But I can’t say I won’t like it.”

He rinsed the soap from them both, then directed her to bend over and brace her hands against the white tile.

“Spread for me, sweetheart.”

She did as he asked, and he stood behind her with an arm looped around her body and stroked her mound, lighting her up inside with need. When he slipped his hand down to brush his fingers over her clit, she squeaked.

“Eek!”

“Is that a sound of protest?” he asked.

“Oh, no. Not even a little bit.”

He kept teasing her clit while he kissed and nibbled on her neck and shoulders. Then he pressed up against her, and his hard cock nudged between her butt cheeks.

“Mmm, Daddy.”

“Yeah, it feels so good, doesn’t it, sweetheart? But let’s make you feel even better.”

He slid his fingers over her clit, then moved lower and pressed two fingers inside her.

“Oh, yes...”

Pleasure shivered through her, making her ache. She wanted to come. She wanted his cock. She wanted it all.

He murmured in her ear, “Go ahead and grind into my hand, baby.”

She couldn’t have stopped herself if she’d tried. She arched her hips, rubbing herself against him as he fucked her

with his fingers. Need spiraled, sensation rippling through her system. When he stepped back just enough to smack her ass, the sting was powerful and delicious.

“More stingy on wet skin, huh?” he said, his tone low and full of desire. “And Lordy, but your sweet ass is the most perfect thing I’ve ever seen.”

“Mmm,” was all she was capable of answering.

He spanked her again, over and over as he pumped his fingers inside her. When he curved them to hit her g-spot, she shattered, crying out as waves of orgasm washed over her, made more intense by the pain of the spanking. But she loved every moment of it.

He took her to his bed, then, both of them still with damp skin after a very rushed rubdown with a thick towel. He laid her on her back and slid inside her, thrusting as he kissed her mouth, her breasts. As he sucked hard on her nipples, then reached between them to tease her clit until she came again, her body soaring, shaking, and he called her name as he came inside her.

“Annie, babyyyyy!”

He held her so tight it nearly hurt, but she needed it, just as much as he seemed to.

“I love you, my baby,” he whispered in her ear.

“You do, Daddy?”

“Yeah. So much.”

“I love you, too,” she told him, luxuriating in the feel of those words on her lips, in the scent of his skin, in the safety in his strong arms.

She'd never felt so satisfied and soothed all at the same time. So safe, so sleepy. Soon, she drifted off.

She woke to his hand rubbing her back and his soft voice in her ear.

“Annie, sweetheart? I’m gonna go order us some dinner. I didn’t want you to wake up all alone, but you can go back to sleep if you want.”

She yawned, stretched, and remembered the happiness of being spanked in the shower.

“I’ll get up, Daddy.”

He kissed her cheek, then the tip of her nose, making her giggle.

“Daddy? I think I kinda dreamed about what we talked about before...about me finding some kind of work to help the community.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah. What if I started a phone service? Like...Dial-A-Daddy? The Littles and Middles could call in, and I can match them with a Daddy, and they can get some of their needs met that way without having to confront social anxiety. Or for, like, people who have super busy lives. I could make sure all the Daddies who worked the phone lines were real, true Daddies, like you. Uh...I might need some help with that part.”

“Baby, that’s a really great idea! I love the name Dial-A-Daddy! I have a friend here in Dallas who runs a security service who could run background checks. Let me talk to him about this. He’s got some Daddy leanings himself, so I’m

pretty sure he'll want to be a part of this. And if you interview all of the prospective Daddies yourself, I'm sure you'll be able to get a pretty clear idea if they're good people or not. And if you like, I'd be happy to help with that part."

"Really? You would? And you like my idea?"

"I think it's brilliant! I think you're brilliant. It could be the perfect solution for a lot of people. Baby, this could really work! And I'll be there to help as much as you want me to. Or if you want to do this on your own, you just tell me. I'm here for you. I'm here for this business idea. I love it."

"I love you, Daddy! Ohmygosh! I'm so excited! I need to go back to Phoenix and give notice at work, and pack my stuff and move here, and apply for a business license and...and..."

"And maybe start by getting some food in you?"

She laughed, giddy with the possibilities, but her stomach was growling. "Yes, Daddy. I'm starving!"

"Meet me in the kitchen?" he asked.

"Yep! Be right there."

Once she sat up she realized he'd unpacked all her stuffies and lined them up on the bed, leaning against the pillows. She grabbed her white bunny, Alfie, and Annabelle, her new kitty, and held them out in front of her.

"Kids, I think we may have found a new home. And a whole new business adventure, too! It's like all my dreams are coming true at once!" She pulled them in one at a time to kiss their little fuzzy noses.

With a pat on the head for her turtle, her clown fish, her teddy, and her pterodactyl, she jumped up, ran to the bathroom to brush her teeth and her hair, and not knowing where her

suitcase was, she pulled on a soft gray robe that was hanging on the bathroom door. It was huge on her, but so warm and cozy, and it smelled like him.

She padded happily to the kitchen, where Daddy Cas was sitting on a stool at the island, a laptop open in front of him.

“Hi, sweetheart,” he said, bent over the screen, scrolling through a food delivery menu. “Anything special you want?”

“Um...I don’t know. What about pancakes?”

“Pancakes? I can make ‘em myself once we buy some groceries. But all we’ve had today was airport food, so we need something healthy. There’s a good Mediterranean place that delivers. I can order us some hummus and falafel, and a Greek salad.”

“Salad? Ick!”

He whipped his head around. “Okay, first, you look adorable in my robe. But Annie, I am gonna get some salad into you if it’s the last thing I do.”

“Nope. Not happening,” she said, being challenged bringing out her Little side.

“Oh, yeah it is.”

She crossed her arms over her chest and stuck her tongue out at him.

His eyebrows shot up. “Excuse me, missy. Is that any way to treat your Daddy?”

“Yep, sometimes it is, so I ‘spose you’ll just hafta get used to it.”

“I don’t think so,” he said, his arm whipping out to grab her, but she danced away, and he was left holding the belt to

the robe.

“Ha!” she exclaimed, turning to race into the living room.

“Annie.” His voice was stern. “Get your sweet little ass back here. Now.”

She squealed, giggled, and ran behind one of the sofas.

He stalked across the room, and she searched madly for an escape route, but she’d trapped herself.

“Can’t get out, can you?” he asked, his eyes twinkling with amusement.

“Sure I can. I just...don’t wanna.”

“Oh, so you actually *want* a spanking? Is that it?”

“I do not!” she cried, trying to dash past him, but he caught her and flipped her over his lap as he sat on the sofa.

She squealed and squirmed. “Daddy, noooooooooo!”

“Daddy, yes.”

He flipped up the back of the robe and gave her bottom a sharp smack. It stung like mad, but it also caused a small wave of pleasure to wash through her.

“I’m kinda surprised you gave in so easily,” he commented.

“What? I did not!”

She started to squirm again, then tried kicking her legs when she was unable to escape his grasp. He spanked her butt until it really began to sting, but it also somehow felt like... love.

Everything her Daddy did felt like love. And that’s how she knew. Knew for certain.

“Daddy? I sure do love you lots.”

“Is someone trying to get out of this spanking?”

“Nope. I like it when you spank me.”

He smacked her butt again, and she wiggled it, making him chuckle. “I sure do love you, my baby girl. But you’re still getting a spanking.”

“Okay,” she said, sticking her bottom up in the air.

He laughed, a deep throaty sound that made her heart squeeze.

He smacked her one more time, then pulled her upright to kiss her, even as they laughed together.

“Are you a little giddy from endorphins, Annie?”

“Nope. Just a little giddy ‘cause I love you so much, Daddy. And ‘cause while you were spankin’ me, I realized I wanna stay here with you. Forever. Is that okay?”

His brows shot up. “Are you sure? You’ve only been here half a day.”

“Yep. I’m sure. Because *you’re* here, Daddy, and that’s what counts.”

He took a long breath. “You know I want that, too. But let’s take a little time. Let’s talk again when you’re back in Big mode, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy. But I’m not gonna change my mind.”

He hugged her tight, and she snuggled in. She loved every single moment with him, every kiss and cuddle, every conversation. Every spanking. And she knew whatever trouble they might have down the road, their love would get them through it.

“Okay, Daddy,” she repeated. “But it’ll always be the same answer, no matter what day it is.”

“It’ll always be the same for me, too, love. Just watching out for you, baby. You know that, don’t you?”

“I do, Daddy. I do.”

Epilogue

“I do.”

A shiver ran through her as she said the words, tears gathering at the corners of her eyes.

Snow fell outside the windows of the country club as she stood in her white lace dress, the man she loved more than anyone on the earth in front of her. Daddy Cas gazed down at her, his dark eyes shining as the wedding officiant spoke.

“Casimir, do you take Anne Marie to be your beloved wife? To love her, honor her, cherish her, in good times and bad, ‘til death do you part?”

Her heart beat as she waited to hear the words. But she knew what he would say. She felt it radiating from him. She’d felt it every day they’d been together: that utter confidence in their relationship. In their love.

“I do,” he said, and she swore she saw a tear pool in his eyes before he leaned in to kiss her.

The small gathering of their friends and families laughed as the officiant said, chuckling himself, “Wait a minute! I didn’t say it was time for the kiss!”

Her new husband—*her husband!*—pulled back for a moment to say, “It’s always time for kisses.” Then he bent to press his lips to hers once more.

He wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her harder, then lifted her off her feet.

“Okay, okay,” the officiant said. “I now pronounce you husband and wife!”

Everyone laughed again, and Annie laughed even as Daddy Cas kept kissing her. They pulled back to gaze at each other.

“My wife,” he said quietly, for her ears only.

“My Daddy husband,” she replied in a whisper, and they both grinned.

This was who they were, and it was only for each other. This was going to be their life.

He picked her up and carried her down the aisle in his arms while everyone cheered and music played, and her heart swelled, so full of joy, she was certain it would burst from her chest in a shower of confetti. But she knew her Daddy would be there to take care of her. To catch her when she fell. To love her. Always.

“Now we truly belong to each other,” Daddy Cas murmured as he set her on her feet and kissed her once more. “Always, baby.”

“Always,” she agreed.

And for the first time in her life, she knew it deep in her bones, and in her heart.

Always.

The End

About Lizzie Day

Dial-A-Daddy Series Coming Soon!

Lizzie Day is the alter ego of a two-time USA Today bestselling erotic romance author who has been a part of the incredible Dirty Daddies anthologies. As someone who's always written kinky love stories, she's excited to explore a new corner of erotic romance. Her stories will always be full of delicious, adoring Daddies and their darling sweet and sassy Littles, with a guaranteed HEA!

In addition to reading and writing, Lizzie loves kittens, a cozy reading nook on a rainy day and tea parties.

Find Lizzie Online:

Lizzie's Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/lizziedayauthor>

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Daddy's Little Gazelle
by Cooper McKenzie

A MM story by Cooper McKenzie

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Chapter 1

Jaxon Niven rolled over and threw Wellington across the room with a frustrated scream. The Build-A-Bear teddy bear arched into the air before falling to the floor a few feet short of its target. The high-pitched rhythmic alarm that was currently screaming at him to wake up felt like fingers on a chalkboard to his poor, tired ears.

With a groan, he climbed out of bed and carefully stepped over Wellington on his way to the alarm clock sitting on the dresser across the room. He slapped the button on the top of the black box, which automatically reset the alarm to beep again in twenty-four hours.

Turning around, Jaxon picked up his bestest friend on Earth. He brushed a piece of lint off Wellington's t-shirt before hugging him tight.

“Sorry, Wellie, old boy. I hope I didn't hurt you. I just wanted the alarm to stop so I wouldn't have to face today. David's coming and I'm not sure I can face him without begging him to stay and let me claim him as my mate.”

Another graduation day for another group of trainees. Another day of seeing his mate, of being around the important

man without claiming him, or telling him they were meant to be together for the rest of their lives.

“I wonder if anyone would notice if I just hid here for the day?” he asked Wellington as he made his bed in the precise way he did. Once the covers were straight and the six pillows placed just so, he laid the brown bear to rest in the middle of the pillows.

Jaxon could feel the bear’s disapproval, even though Wellington didn’t say a word. Ignoring his position as Lonergan’s administrative assistant was out of the question even though it would make his life a lot easier. He sighed as he remembered the conversation he and Lonergan had had after the last graduation.

“Jaxon? How much longer are you going to keep denying that he’s your mate?” Lonergan Mireles asked as the members of the Council climbed onto the helicopter for their return trip to the capital.

Jaxon Niven whirled to glare at his boss. “The rest of my life, I suppose. Why would he want me? I’m a nobody. Just a glorified secretary who can barely put a sentence together when he’s around. I don’t even know if he’s gay, or a Daddy.”

Jaxon blinked away tears that pushed for release.

“You won’t ever know if you don’t go to him and ask,” Lonergan said gently.

“Well then I guess I’ll never know,” Jaxon replied before hurrying away.

“Yeah, I know. I have to be there because without me this place would go to hell without the handbasket. Which is yet

another reason why I can't claim David. I can't leave here to live in the city, and he wouldn't be happy living here."

Jaxon swore the bear nodded in agreement. Jaxon decided to spend the day hiding in his office. While it would still be hiding, at least he would be available if someone needed something. He would just have to avoid his mate-to-be.

It would be different if he knew if David was gay and a Daddy. If he felt anything for him. He would even settle for the man just being gay. He would figure out how to suppress his Little side. After all, he'd kept that side of himself hidden since figuring out he was a Little; it should not be too hard to continue.

As the head of the Council, David had an important position among the humans, while Jaxon was just the administrative assistant to the director of Bratburg. That was the second biggest block to them getting together.

"Stop dawdling and get your ass in gear," he scolded himself as he stared at the bed, wishing he could crawl back in and hide from the day.

Since he had taken a shower before going to bed the night before, Jaxon pulled on the uniform of black cargo pants and gray Henley t-shirt he had ironed and hung up the night before. Instead of the boring black socks that were issued with the uniform, he grabbed his favorite pair of comfort socks from the top drawer of the dresser. Bright pink knee-hi socks with purple and teal dots he'd ordered from a Little website on the internet.

He smiled as he pulled on the socks before slipping on the black sneakers he preferred over the boots the rest of the staff wore. The right shoe had a purple shoelace while the left shoelace was teal. Just a small way to indulge his Little side.

He tucked his sleep pants with cartoon cats all over them into the second drawer of the nightstand, and glanced around the room one more time to make sure everything was in its place. He brushed his teeth, combed his hair, and made certain that he looked perfect.

David was coming to Bratburg. While Jaxon would do everything he could to avoid the man, he still wanted to look good, just in case.

Too bad the game of hide and deny himself was slowly killing him. He was not sure how much longer he would be able to hold out against the mating pull that clawed at his chest, demanding he claim David Hendricks as his one and only mate for life.

David took his time disembarking from the helicopter. The days he spent visiting Bratburg were becoming the hardest days of the year to get through. Not only because he wasn't a fan of flying in the dark, enclosed section of the helicopter, but also because he would spend the day trying to catch sight of Jaxon, the only man who caught his attention.

It seemed like, during his past few visits, Jaxon had been playing a game of hide and seek. A game that David planned to end today. Just as soon as he found the uber-efficient gazelle shifter who kept the Institute running.

David was one of the few non-shifters who knew all the secrets of Bratburg Institute. Not even the rest of the Council knew everything there was to know about the Institute that was tasked with turning the young, out-of-control women who were sent here back into acceptable members of polite society.

One of the big secrets of late was that the shifters who lived and worked in Bratburg had begun claiming some of the trainees as their mates. David had found himself jealous every time he talked with Lonergan and found that another young woman would be staying in Bratburg because they had mated to one of the staff.

As he followed the rest of the Council across the lawn to the dining hall for brunch with the staff before the graduation ceremony, he looked around, hoping to catch a glimpse of Jaxon.

The man was nowhere in sight. Probably busy in his office on the second floor of the administration building where David knew he spent his days.

“Good morning, David. Welcome back to Bratburg,” Lonergan greeted him as he climbed the steps of the dining hall.

Over the past six years of running Bratburg, and the retraining program, he and Lonergan had become friends.

Though he knew better than to ask, David heard the words come out of his mouth before he could stop them. “Where’s Jaxon this morning?”

Lonergan blinked before smiling. “I believe he’s in the office, no doubt double-triple checking the programs and certificates and end of session reports to make sure everything is absolutely perfect.”

David nodded as he tried to come up with a plausible excuse to slip away and visit Jaxon in his office. He needed to talk to the gazelle shifter. Alone.

But would talking be enough to satisfy the itch in his chest and the erection he developed every time he thought about the

slight man?

For more than a year, he had wanted much closer contact with the man who kept Bratburg running like a well-oiled machine.

David had never before felt the urge to be with a man. And while he had Daddied a few women in the past, he'd never had a Little boy. And then Jaxon had tripped on the steps to the dining hall and fallen into his arms. Since that day, all he could think about was getting closer to the man. Hugging him, rocking him, giving him a bath and a bottle before tucking him into bed like the sweet Little boy he was. At forty, David had not been a monk, but for the past few months he could not even look at a woman, much less ask one out or take one to bed.

His thoughts had become more and more consumed by the elusive Jaxon Nivens. Today he would talk to the man, and more, once he ran him to ground.

“Think I’ll go over to your office and have a word with him,” David said as he fixed two cups of coffee, one with lots of creamer and three spoonfuls of sugar, the same way he had seen Jaxon fix it about six months ago.

Lonergan smiled before saying, “Sounds like an excellent idea. I’ll send someone to fetch you in time for the graduation ceremony. Just make sure you lock his office door.”

David blinked in surprise. The director was encouraging him to find and make time with his assistant?

Lonergan knew something about his assistant that he didn’t, but David did not stop to ask. Instead, he set two cups of coffee and several of the pastries on a tray before picking it up and hurrying from the dining hall.

He had a man to track down and feed.

Chapter 2

“You’ve been avoiding me. That’s a naughty thing to do, Little boy.”

The deep voice that broke the heavy silence in his office jolted Jaxon. “Argh!” he squealed as he spun his chair to see who dared invade his office today.

No one should be in the administration building. Everyone should be over at the dining hall, enjoying the welcoming coffee and pastries he and Chef Marshall had organized for the Council and staff while the girls finish packing and preparing for their graduation from Bratburg.

The ceremony would take place at noon on the patio and grassy area in front of the administration building. He already confirmed that the chairs were set up on the lawn and the podium and table in place. Once graduation was finished, the girls, staff and Council members would mingle on the lawn before moving to the dining hall for a late lunch.

Afterward, the girls and their belongings would be loaded into the Institute’s two vans to be driven to their new hometowns where they would begin the rest of their lives. After a short meeting with Lonergan, the Council would fly back to the capital.

Then staff would then have a week to prepare for the next group of young women.

Jaxon planned to hide in his office until the helicopter was halfway to the capital. As a gazelle shifter, he was not a hunter, but knowing his mate would be on the grounds today made him want to stalk David, even if he could not do anything about claiming the man as his own.

Seeing David standing on the other side of his desk, Jaxon swallowed hard. Taking a deep breath in the hopes of slowing his racing heartbeat, he tried to shift into his efficient administrative assistant mindset.

“Good morning, David. Is there something I can help you with?”

David ignored his question. Picking up a small plate, he held it over the desk toward him. “Why are you hiding up here? You’re missing some great pastries.”

Without thinking about what he was doing, Jaxon accepted the plate. The smell of warm cherry Danish and hot coffee that wafted across the desk was not enough to cover up David’s spicy, masculine scent. Jaxon licked his lips.

He fought the intensifying urge to jump over the desk, tackle the head of the Council to the ground, and claim him as his mate. Instead, he wrapped his hands around the arms of his rolling chair and held on tight.

Though it felt like they were chasing one another around a tree, he answered the man’s question with another one of his own. “Do you need something, David?”

“Yes, I need to know why you’ve been avoiding me,” the tall man in a beautifully tailored black suit demanded.

“I’m not,” he replied weakly.

“Don’t lie to me, Little boy. We both know you’ve been avoiding me for months. Is it because I’m your mate and you don’t want me? Or that you don’t want me to be your Daddy?”

Jaxon blinked in surprise. Licking his lips again, he tried to come up with an answer that would not be a lie, but also would not be the whole truth. The last thing he wanted was for David to crush his heart by rejecting his mating claim.

Dropping his head, he reached for the cup of coffee that David had set on the desk next to the plate. Taking a sip, he sighed at the sweet creaminess. He had fixed it perfectly.

“Jaxon? Talk to me, laddie.”

“You’re not gay.” The statement was out before Jaxon realized he had opened his mouth. “And I doubt you’re a Daddy either. Which means it would be pretty impossible for you to be my mate, no matter what my body may be telling me.”

He turned his chair so David would not see the tears that threatened. “Go away, David. Please, just leave. I’ll stay up here so you won’t have to worry about me bothering you while you’re here today.”

Expecting to hear David leave, he squealed in surprise when his chair spun around, and he was pulled to his feet. Before he knew what was happening, he was pressed against David’s body and the man was hugging him.

Hugging him.

David Hendricks, multi-millionaire financial whiz kid and head of the Council, was hugging him.

His cock had been standing at attention since he had seen David standing in his office. Now that he was in the man’s arms, his cock was throbbing and his gazelle was prancing

around inside him, demanding he lick the man's neck and then take a bite to claim him.

Instead of responding to his inner beast's demand for an instant mating, Jaxon slid his arms around David's middle as he rubbed his cheek against the man's chest. Maybe his gazelle would be satisfied, at least for the moment, if he just rubbed his scent on David so the other shifters would understand that David belonged to him.

With Jaxon's arms squeezing his middle, and his cheek rubbing against his chest, David felt like he had found a home he had not realized was missing. He closed his eyes as his body responded to the feel of having his man in his arms. Not for the first time his cock stiffened at being near the man who made him question everything about his life.

Until six months before, David had believed himself to be a staunch heterosexual male. But on that visit to the Institute, watching Jaxon walk in front of him into the dining hall caused his body to respond just like it was now, growing hard as a rock. That day he backed away while trying to figure out what was happening. Every visit since had been the same, causing him to shift his perspective about life, love, and his attraction to Jaxon Nivens.

"I'm not going anywhere, laddie. For the past six months seeing you, and talking to you, even if only on the phone, has made me realize that I'm attracted to you. Very attracted."

"But you're not gay," Jaxon repeated.

"When it comes to you, I will happily claim to be bisexual. But only for you, Little boy."

“Bisexual?” Jaxon sounded confused.

“Yep. The only man I have ever been attracted to is you. I don’t understand why, but frankly, I don’t care. I want to see if we can build something between us.”

He rubbed a hand up and down Jaxon’s back, not sure if the action was to soothe himself, or the man who stood as still as a statue in his arms.

Then Jaxon turned his face into his chest and muttered something too low for him to understand.

“Excuse me?”

When Jaxon did not immediately answer, he reached up and slid his hand under the man’s beautiful glossy cinnamon-colored hair. Cupping the back of his skull, David tilted the man’s head back so he could see his face.

“What did you say, laddie?”

“I said, six months ago I turned thirty.” Jaxon whispered.

David frowned as he tried to connect the dots between Jaxon’s birthday and his suddenly being attracted to the man. “And I’ll be turning fifty in a couple of months. Is our age difference a problem for you?”

Jaxon shook his head with a small smile. “When a gazelle shifter turns thirty, their mating hormones shift into overdrive, demanding they find their mate. I’ve been attracted to you since the first time we met five years ago, but since my birthday, I finally recognized that you are definitely my mate.”

That bit of news did not surprise David as much as it probably should have. But then, as the head of the Council, he knew more about shifters than most humans. Even more than the other members of the Council. When his interest in Jaxon

suddenly grew exponentially, he did a little more research into shifter mating attraction, and gazelle shifters in particular.

Of course, there was no widely published information regarding specific shifter species, but he did learn that, as a whole, shifters mated once for life, and mating was not a bond that could be broken, even by death.

“So why haven’t you claimed me?” David was having a hard time staying focused on the conversation. He wanted to take Jaxon somewhere private and do a hell of a lot more than just talk.

Jaxon blinked and gave him a sassy grin that tempted David to turn him over his knee and spank him. “I didn’t think you would appreciate me humping your leg and biting your neck in front of the rest of the Council. And until five minutes ago, I thought you were straight.”

“Well, now we both know better,” David said. “Question now is, what are we going to do about it?”

Chapter 3

Though there were many other things they needed to talk about, Jaxon could not help himself. Instead of answering David's question, he slid a hand around the man's neck and pulled his head down within kissing range.

His mate-to-be stood a half foot taller, and weighed fifty pounds of muscle more than he did. The size difference made his cock twitch as his Little side begged to be cuddled. Or bent over his desk and spanked until his ass was bright red and then fucked.

Fighting to control his animal side, Jaxon brushed his lips over David's. His entire body shivered at the electric thrill that shivered through him at that simple touch.

He was not surprised when David allowed him a few seconds of control before taking command. The gentle brushing of lips became a hard press and then a mating of open mouths. In the next second, their tongues entwined, dueled, danced together. When Jaxon whined his need for more, David broke the kiss and straightened so Jaxon could not easily follow.

Jaxon dropped his head forward, his forehead resting against David's chest as he caught his breath. He smiled when

he realized David's breathing was just as harsh as his own. The man was not only able to stand, but also hold Jaxon's weight leaning into his body.

"Wow," he breathed, wondering how he could talk David into skipping today's ceremonies and staying with him for the day.

Then he thought about his room and nixed that idea as it was barely big enough for him. There was no way he could subject David to his small space. While neat and clean, it was not nearly good enough for the head of the Council to live in. His obsessive need for neatness and his attention to detail made him a great assistant but had never been an asset when it came to the dating world.

But where else could he take David so they could be alone without the rest of Bratburg knowing what they were doing?

There was nowhere.

Maybe it was time to talk to Lonergan about building a house for him and his mate. At the rate the shifters were finding their mates, it was probably time they looked into building houses for the rest of the staff to live in. Then they could turn the staff dormitory into trainee housing, which would allow them to expand the program to include more girls every cycle.

Once his breathing returned to normal, Jaxon knew it was time to get David out of his office before he stripped them both and taught the man what mating sex was all about. The pull to mate had Jaxon's blood burning as it pulsed through his body.

Instead of giving in to the need, he grabbed David's hand and pulled him out of his office. "Come on."

“Where are we going?”

“Dining hall. If we stay here, I’ll be begging you to fuck me so I can claim you as my mate, and that can’t happen. Not yet.”

He was surprised that David did not fight him as he hurried them down the stairs to the lobby and then out the front door. He did not stop until they reached the porch of the dining hall.

Looking through the doorway at the crowd inside, Jaxon froze. He could not do this. Though he worked with these men every day, he could not mingle with them right now.

Instead of opening the door and joining the rest of the staff and Council members, he looked up at David. “I’m sorry.”

Before David could respond, he ran. His gazelle side allowed him to sprint away faster than a normal human would. He did not stop until he reached the tree line along the eastern edge of the clearing. Just inside the woods he stopped and stripped off his uniform. He took the time to fold them neatly and set his clothes on top of his sneakers before shifting.

Though his heart and soul urged him to return to the dining hall, and his mate, Jaxon fought the need. Instead, he shifted and headed deeper into the woods. It had been several weeks since his last run through the woods in his animal form and it felt good to stretch his legs and race through the forest on barely-there trails only he knew recognized.

Jaxon did not stop until reached the clearing at the top of the ridge. Turning, he looked down on Bratburg and wished he had been brave enough to not run away. Sometimes being a gazelle shifter made him want to kick his own ass for his flight response to any danger.

Especially at this moment.

How the hell was he supposed to claim his mate if he ran away instead of stepping up?

He needed to trust that David knew his own mind, and that he would not run after Jaxon mated him. It was time to suck it up and be the man who went after what he wanted. And he wanted David as his mate.

Starting back down the trail, he only hoped David would understand why he ran away. He also hoped the man would punish him for not staying and talking things out with him. It had been way too long since his last spanking and the emotional release that came with it.

When he neared the spot where he left his clothes, Jaxon found David leaning against a tree a few feet away, doing something on his phone. No doubt checking emails or conducting important business of some kind.

As he edged closer, David looked up from his phone, his deep blue eyes looking straight into Jaxon's.

“You cannot keep running away from us, laddie,” he said as he slipped his phone into his jacket pocket. “Please shift so we can talk. Then I’m going to spank you and cuddle you before you get dressed. Once we get our business dealt with, we’ll head back for the graduation.”

Though he wanted to pet the beautiful gazelle standing a dozen feet away, David remained where he was. The human Jaxon was skittish in his presence, as a gazelle he was probably even more so. As a Daddy, David knew how to be patient while a Little made up their mind about obeying an order. Especially when their actions would end in a

punishment spanking. While he waited, he admired the beauty of Jaxon in his animal form.

The gazelle was as beautiful as the man. The cinnamon fur along his back and halfway down his sides matched the shade of human Jaxon's hair. The wide black strip on his side and the creamy white underbelly fur made David's hand itch to stroke it to see if it was as soft as it appeared. The animal's legs were long and delicate, and his head regal as the animal studied him.

A moment later, the air around the gazelle shimmered and when it cleared, Jaxon the man, stood where the animal had been, just as beautiful and appearing just as timid. His hands went to cover his erect cock, as he panted, still recovering from his run.

"Hands at your sides, laddie," David said, adding just a touch of steel to his voice.

Jaxon immediately moved his hands, allowing David to admire the man's entire body and long, hard cock that nearly reached his bellybutton. His shoulders were broad, his chest slightly furred with reddish-brown hair that narrowed as it led down his belly with its sculpted six-pack. His legs were long and muscular, the legs of a runner.

Jaxon cleared his throat, drawing David's gaze to his face. "My eyes are up here, Daddy," he said with a smirk.

"And my lap is over here, waiting for you," David said, sitting at the base of the tree he had been leaning against. "As your Daddy, it is my job to punish you when you are naughty, and running away like you did was very naughty."

Jaxon's expression smoothed as he nodded. "I'm sorry."

“Enough apologizing. Come lay yourself across my lap and we’ll get your punishment out of the way. We’ll discuss your rules on our walk back. What’s your safeword?”

“My safeword?”

“Yes. It will be a word that you’ll use when things get overwhelming, whether physical or emotional. You call out this word, and everything stops until we talk things out.”

Jaxon took two steps closer. “I don’t know what to choose.”

“Then how about we use red?”

“Sounds good,” Jaxon said with a nod.

“Good boy. Now come lay across my lap before I start adding strokes to your spanking.” David pointed to the ground beside his right leg.

David forced himself to stay still as Jaxon edged closer and then knelt beside him before stretching out on the ground with his ass centered over David’s lap. He shifted him slightly before rubbing his right hand over the pale skin of his beautiful, round bubble butt. The skin was pale and soft under his fingertips. “It’s a count of twelve, laddie.”

“Yes, Sir,” Jaxon whispered as he stacked his arms in front of him and laid his forehead on them. He sniffed as if already on the verge of tears.

David lifted his hand and brought it down sharply in the center of Jaxon’s right cheek before repeating the action on his left. Moving back and forth from one cheek to the next, he focused on smacking the same spot each time, causing the handprints to darken until they were deep red by the final strokes. It was a beautiful contrast to the pale skin of the rest of his ass.

Jaxon whimpered and kicked his legs, but never tried to move off his lap. Once he delivered the last slap, he rearranged Jaxon to sit on his lap, cuddled against his chest as the man sobbed.

David murmured praises to the man, telling him how proud he was, and how well Jaxon had taken his punishment and promising to be the best Daddy he could be to the man. When Jaxon's violent crying eased until he was simply sniffing and hiccupping, David pulled the white handkerchief he always carried from his pocket and cleaned his mate's face.

He could tell Jaxon felt better as he melted into his embrace. Brushing a kiss on the top of his head, David gave him a few more minutes to just be. Their responsibilities could wait.

When Jaxon took a deep breath and gave a sigh that sounded like it started at his toes, David knew it was time.

“Ready to get dressed and head back?”

Chapter 4

The two spots on his ass where David had concentrated his spanking burned like fire, but the rest of him felt light and floaty. He had not felt this good in ages, and his Little side was pushing forward, wanting to spend the rest of the afternoon sitting right here, cuddling with his Daddy. But that was not possible. Their positions required them to return to the Institute and act proper and official and genteel. All the things that Diego and the other teachers had spent the last thirty days teaching the young women who were graduating today.

Taking a deep breath, he raised his head and looked at David. “I don’t wanna, but I know we hafta.”

His wording and whining tone was pure Little. Looking into his Daddy’s deep blue eyes, he could tell David knew he had slipped into his Little headspace.

“That’s right, laddie, we do. Up you get,” David said, helping him to his feet. “Get dressed and we’ll head back. But you’ll be sticking by my side instead of running away again.”

It only took him a minute to dress, though his neat and tidy Big side wished he could take a shower first. His Little side shoved it aside and enjoyed David watching him. He thought David looked sad as he pulled his shirt over his head and

tucked it into his pants. After he slipped on his socks and shoes, David surprised him by kneeling in front of him and tying his left shoe.

“I could have done that,” he said.

“Let Daddy help you,” David countered. “Eventually I’ll want to help dress you completely, not just tie your shoes, but we’ll work up to that.”

Jaxon shrugged as he shuffled his feet, offering the man his right shoe. “Okay, Daddy.”

Once both shoes were tied, David stood and brushed the leaves from his knees. When he turned to check that he had not dropped anything, Jaxon smirked and started smacking his ass.

“What do you think you’re doing, Little boy?”

“Getting leaves and stuff off your butt,” Jaxon answered with a giggle as he smacked at him again. “For a man who is always so put together and pretty, you’re a mess.”

“I am not pretty,” David responded with a frown.

Jaxon stepped close enough to press his cock into David’s hip as he slipped his arms around his middle. “Well, I’d say you are steal-my-breath-away beautiful, but I didn’t want to overwhelm you.”

By the growing bulge behind David’s zipper, Jaxon knew his words had gotten to the human. If they stayed here any longer, he would talk them both out of their pants and into the position necessary to make David his mate. And that was the last thing they needed to do at that moment. They needed to get back and attend the graduation ceremony.

With a sigh, Jaxon released his mate and stepped back. Holding out his hand, he worked to shift back into his Big headspace instead of throwing a temper tantrum about not claiming his mate.

“Come on, let’s get back around people before I rip off your clothes, lick you all over, and mate then claim you.”

Instead of taking his hand, David turned his man toward the Institute grounds and popped his ass, smiling as Jaxon yelped. “While I’d love to hold your hand, if I did, we wouldn’t make it back in time for graduation.”

He smiled when Jaxon giggled and began to walk. Once they were out of the woods, they walked side by side, close, but still not touching.

“I’ve been a Daddy most of my adult life, and had relationships with a number of Little girls, but I’ve never had a Little boy before,” he said, to open the conversation.

“I’ve never had a Daddy before,” Jaxon said. “I’ve always known I was gay, but also knew that I wasn’t Alpha like Lonergan and the others. I wasn’t sure about being a Little until Lonergan taught me about them. Since then, I’ve done a lot of research and reading about Littles.”

David smiled at the change in Jaxon’s tone as he slid into his younger headspace. He seemed to be able to move from one headspace to another fluidly. “And how young is your Little?”

“I think I’m about four or five. I don’t do diapers or binkies, but I like to play with trucks and color and make

things out of clay. I also love Little foods.”

“Little foods?”

“Mac and cheese, chicken nuggets, gummy bears, and ice cream.”

“I hope you also eat some vegetables as well,” David said as he glanced at him.

He chuckled at the face Jaxon made before he said, “Yuck.”

“And that will be your third rule, you have to eat healthy and not try to live on junk and candy.”

That earned him a frown. “If that’s number three, what are one and two?”

“You will not put yourself in danger, and you will not run away without telling Daddy where you’re going. Four and five are no lying, and no talking bad about yourself or others.”

Jaxon remained silent for a few minutes before nodding. “I can live with those, I guess. The vegetable rule might be more difficult.”

“But you’re a gazelle. Aren’t you supposed to love eating green foods?”

That question received another wrinkled nose as if Jaxon had smelled something bad. “I don’t mind some vegetables, but not too many or too often.”

David chuckled as Jaxon sounded just like his five-year-old nephew. “We’ll work on it, laddie.”

By this point, they had returned to the center of Bratburg, and found the visitors, staff, and trainees were just settling into their chairs on the lawn facing the administration building.

David grabbed Jaxon's hand and pulled him along behind him as he made his way to his seat in the front row with the other Council members. The chair next to his normal seat was empty as well. Lonergan had shifted so Jaxon could sit with him instead of at the end of the row where he normally sat.

He nodded his thanks to the director as they settled in their seats. Lonergan returned his nod with a smile.

With a deep breath that filled his lungs with his man's sexy scent, David turned his attention to the ceremony about to begin.

He had attended every graduation since the beginning of Bratburg and knew the program they followed by heart. Reaching over, he laced his fingers with Jaxon's and rested them on his thigh. He smiled when he felt Jaxon shiver before squeezing his hand in response.

By the time the short ceremony was finished, David wanted only to be alone with Jaxon who was sitting so close, yet so far away. But first there was the luncheon to get through. In the meantime, he needed to come up with a reason for why he would not be returning to the city with the rest of the Council. He also needed to contact his personal assistant and have him clear his schedule for the next few days.

Once those chores were accomplished, he would be able to focus his full attention on Jaxon and what was to come between them.

Chapter 5

By the time the vans with the newest Bratburg graduates left the valley, Jaxon felt like he was going crazy. His need to claim his mate was a burning in his blood, an itch inside his body he could not scratch.

David had stayed close since their return from the forest, but now he and the other Council members were scheduled for a meeting with Lonergan, Diego, and Kodiak. While Jaxon never attended the meetings, as the head of the Council, David was required to be there.

Instead of pacing the hall outside the conference room, or standing with his ear pressed to the door, Jaxon forced himself to walk away. He headed to his office since he was in no shape to be sociable with the rest of the Bratburg staff or their mates.

He did not have any work to do, but he needed to figure out how he was going to get through each day after David returned to the city. While he wanted to drag David back to his room and claim him there, the walls were paper-thin, and he did not want the rest of Bratburg to hear what went on between them.

In an hour, David would climb onto the helicopter and return to the capital. He couldn't stay in Bratburg indefinitely

because his business, his life, was in the city.

Settling in his office chair, he ran through the possibilities, but only came up with one that seemed feasible. Despite David saying he wanted to be his Daddy, Jaxon had to let him go.

As he packed the bag of toys he'd brought from his room that morning, Jaxon could not fight down hot tears. Laying his head on his pristinely clean desk, he cried out the sorrow of losing his mate.

Pulling out a piece of paper, he wrote a quick note. Slipping it into an envelope, he wrote David's name on the front. Taking a piece of tape from the dispenser, he slipped his bag over his shoulder and headed downstairs to the conference room. It would be better to stop things between them before anything happened than to have his heart shredded when David left him later.

David's thoughts were not focused on the meeting, which should have his full attention. These end-of-session gatherings helped them make necessary changes to procedures and guidelines so that each session ran a little smoother than the last. The problem was, today David did not care about how things ran, or whether they were sending too few or too many girls to each session.

His thoughts were consumed with his cinnamon-haired man who was somewhere in the building, no doubt overthinking everything they had talked about before the graduation ceremony. That was one of the things he wanted to help Jaxon to stop — overthinking and stressing about

everything and anything, whether it was covered by his job description or not.

“David? What do you think about that?” Lonergan asked, jolting him back to the here and now.

“I’m sorry. I need to leave,” David answered abruptly, pushing from his chair, and walking out without bothering to answer the questions the other Council members bombarded him with.

He had a Little to find, and a future to figure out.

Running up the stairs, he frowned when he found the door to Jaxon’s office closed. The knob did not turn when he tried it. Knocking, he hoped Jaxon had just locked himself in so others wouldn’t bother him.

“Jaxon? Laddie, open up and let me in.”

He waited nearly a minute before turning away. Jaxon wasn’t in his office. Descending the stairs at a jog, he power-walked across the lobby and out the front door.

A visit to the dining hall that the building was empty. Taking a moment to orient himself, he headed around the dining hall building to the two-story building behind it. Stepping into the dormitory that housed the single staff members, he wondered how he would find the man who would be his for the rest of their lives.

Pausing in the foyer, he listened but could not hear anything. No television sounds, no radios, no one talking. Taking a deep breath, he yelled, “Jaxon!” at the top of his lungs.

“What the hell?” Jaxon popped out of a room down the hall to his left. “David? What are you doing here? Why aren’t you heading back to the capital with the rest of the Council.”

David charged down the hall to where his man stood, looking confused. “Why would I leave when you’re still here?”

“Uh, well...” Jaxon said with a frown.

Reaching Jaxon, he wrapped his arms around him and lifted him off the floor. As he squeaked, David carried him through the open door behind him. Setting Jaxon down, he closed the door and flipped the lock. Then he turned and looked at the man who had become the focus of all of his thoughts.

“So, what do we have to do for you to claim me as your mate?”

Chapter 6

Jaxon was stunned by David's question and his mind derailed for a moment. But then his cock, and heart stepped into the void, and he acted on instinct. Closing the distance between them, he pushed David's suitcoat off his shoulders and down his arms.

“First, we get naked and have sex. At the proper moment, I'll say the words requesting you to accept me as your mate, you'll accept, and I'll bite you right here,” he said, tapping at the spot where neck joined to shoulder. “I'm just not sure if it will if you fuck me instead of me fucking you.”

David smiled down at him before he said, “Then I guess you'll have to top me this time. Next time I'll top you and we'll see which way we prefer it.”

Jaxon blinked at his suggestion. “But... I've never...”

David brushed a kiss on his lips as he began to pull Jaxon's shirt from his pants. “I've never either. We'll just take things slow and easy and figure it out together.”

Jaxon cocked his head to one side and studied him for a long moment before he asked the one question that mattered most. “Are you sure you want to be my mate?”

He held his breath when David did not immediately answer. Instead, the larger human reached up, pulled his tie loose, and began unbuttoning his shirt. “Yes, my sweet baby boy, I am sure. The more I’ve thought about it today, the more certain I am. I want to be your mate, your Daddy, the man who stands by your side from now until we take our last breaths.”

Jaxon wasn’t sure how to respond. “Well, okay then.”

Though he wanted to sit on the bed and watch David strip off his clothes, Jaxon decided the faster they were both naked, the sooner they could mate. Toeing off his shoes, he fumbled with his belt and the opening of his pants. Shoving them down his legs, he stepped out of them and pulled off his socks. Then he straightened and watched David strip at a slightly less frenzied pace.

David had just shrugged out of his shirt, and Jaxon froze as he took in the man’s chest and eight-pack belly. Who knew that under his well-tailored suit lay the body of a god? Certainly not him.

“Breathe, laddie,” David urged as he unbuttoned and slowly slid down the zipper of his pants.

Jaxon sucked in one breath and then another as David slowly dropped his slacks and then his form-fitting boxers.

“Oh my,” he breathed as David straightened.

The man was truly a well-built, powerhouse. His body was well muscled from his neck all the way to his ankles. A light coating of black hair covered his chest in a triangle, which then narrowed to a treasure trail that led to the most beautiful cock he had ever seen. Not that he’d seen many, but shifters weren’t quite as prudish about nudity as humans, so he had

seen most of the staff without their clothes on at one time or another.

David stood still, allowing him time to look his fill, while at the same time, looking him over with what was probably the same hungry expression on his face that Jaxon knew he wore.

“Like what you see?” Jaxon asked as he held his arms out to his sides and slowly turned a circle.

“Oh, yeah, laddie. I really, really do. How about you?” David asked as he followed suit and turned so that Jaxon could see his entire body.

His back side was just as beautiful as his front. “Yum,” Jaxon couldn’t help but say with a giggle.

“What now?” David asked when they were facing each other once again.

“I, um, I guess we should lie down,” Jaxon answered, his nerves once again taking over. He had never topped anyone before. In fact, he had never had sex before, well, except for with his own hand, and he knew that wasn’t anywhere near the same thing.

“Shhhh, laddie. It’s all right,” David reassured as he stepped in and hugged him tight. “Just breathe, sweet boy.”

Jaxon wrapped his arms around David’s middle and held on tight as a full-body shiver took hold of him. “I’m sorry,” he whispered.

“What for?” David’s voice was so gentle it brought tears to his eyes.

“That I’m not as suave and... whatever as I should be.”

David’s chuckled and gave him a squeeze. “I like you just the way you are. And don’t put yourself down or you’ll find

yourself back over my lap for a reminder on what happens when you break the rules.”

“Yes, Sir,” Jaxon said with a smile.

While neither of them had experienced man-on-man sex before, just knowing David was willing to walk into this adventure with him gave Jaxon the hope that they would, somehow, figure everything out.

Together.

David had seen his naked body in the forest, but now he took a moment to touch, to run his hands up and down Jaxon’s back and down over his rounded ass to muscular thighs. His Little boy was perfect, and he couldn’t wait to do more than simply touch. He wanted to lick and bite every inch but was willing to hold off until after they had performed whatever mating ritual was required to bind them together.

“Do you have lube?” he asked, as he released Jaxon and stepped closer to the double bed.

Jaxon nodded and pointed to the nightstand on the other side of the bed.

“Can you get it, or would you like me to?”

“Oh. Um. I’d better get it,” he said as David turned his attention to the bed. It was made to perfection with a half-dozen pillows and a beige-colored teddy bear leaning against the headboard.

David tossed the pillows on the floor and pulled the covers back before stopping to study the bear instead of throwing it aside. “Does he have a name?”

“That’s Wellington,” Jaxon replied.

“Hello, Wellington. I hope you are a generous bear and willing to share Jaxon with me,” David said to the bear, keeping his tone serious but conversational.

“He is,” Jaxon assured him, before gently pulling the bear from his hold.

David watched in curiosity as Jaxon set the bear on the dresser, so he faced the wall and not the bed. When he turned back and saw David watching him, he shrugged. “He doesn’t need to see what we’re about to do.”

“Good idea. We don’t need to corrupt the bear, or he’ll be demanding a mate of his own,” David agreed solemnly, provoking a giggle out of Jaxon.

The sound had David’s cock twitching with need. It was such a beautiful, happy sound, just like the man himself.

“We may need to get him some friends in any case,” David said. “My Little boy needs more than just a single teddy bear to play with.”

Jaxon looked around the room before meeting his gaze. “I don’t have a lot of room for too many friends,” he said softly.

Instead of starting an argument, David opened his arms and braced himself when Jaxon threw himself across the space that separated them. “Don’t worry, laddie. Soon you’ll have more room that you’ll know what to do with.”

Sliding one hand around behind the shifter’s head, he tilted it back and kissed him.

Instead of keeping the kiss sweet, he allowed it to heat up and spiral out of control until they were pressing their pelvises together in an attempt to hump one another. David

maneuvered them closer to the bed before breaking the kiss and pushing Jaxon back onto the mattress.

He followed him down and resumed the kissing and caressing until he felt his control shredding. “Get me ready, boy.”

Chapter 7

Jaxon froze at David's words. "I don't know how," he admitted softly, his face burning with embarrassment.

He chanced a glance at David and found the man staring at him with an expression of disbelief. "You're a virgin? At your age?"

Jaxon took a breath and swallowed hard before nodding once as he whispered, "Yes, I'm a thirty-year-old virgin."

He was unprepared when David leaned in and kissed him long, hard, and deep. When he finally pulled away, he smiled at him, his entire being lit up. "That is so damn hot, laddie."

Jaxon shrugged and dropped his gaze to David's chin. "It might be hot, but it doesn't help us figure out how to do this mating thing."

"Then we'll just have to learn together."

David rolled away and climbed off the bed, making him wonder if the man was leaving even though he'd just said that Jaxon being a virgin was a good thing. He watched as the man looked around the floor, then grabbed up his jacket. After fishing in one pocket, he dropped the jacket again and returned to the bed with his phone in hand.

Brushing a kiss on Jaxon's lips, David woke up his phone and went to work. It took less than a minute for him to pull up a website, which he enlarged to fill the screen. Settling back against the headboard, he pulled Jaxon to lean against him so they could watch the instructional video together.

Though he wanted to hide, Jaxon watched the screen closely, making note of all the tips and tricks offered. The fact that the presenter was a woman did not faze him, or did it seem to matter to David as he allowed the video to play to the end. Once it finished playing, he turned his phone off and set it on the nightstand. He slid down in the bed, pulling Jaxon with him until they were lying flat on the mattress, face to face.

Jaxon wanted to say something but had no idea what. His thoughts were all jumbled up and he couldn't untangle them. David seemed to be just as lost in thought as he was.

Before he could decide whether they should talk more or move on to the physical, a loud fist banged on his door. He squeaked and jumped from the bed, looking around wildly, not sure if he should grab his clothes or hide in the closet.

"Jaxon? You home?" Kodiak's voice drifted through the door.

Jaxon looked at David who smiled and reached out a hand to him. Jaxon wasn't sure what to do, so he returned to bed and took David's hand.

"Please tell Lonergan I'm not going back to the city this afternoon," David called back as Jaxon snuggled close to his side and hid his face against his chest.

"David? That you?"

"Yes."

“Okay. I’ll tell Lonergan. And congratulations to you both,” Kodiak said. A moment later Jaxon heard the bear shifter’s footsteps retreat down the hall.

The other shifter’s easy acceptance of David being in his room, and not returning to the city with the rest of the Council, suddenly seemed hilarious. Jaxon began to giggle. The giggles turned to full-blown belly laughs when David’s chest began to shimmy under him as the man began to laugh with him.

When their laughter finally died away several minutes later, Jaxon looked at David. “It will be all over the Institute within the hour that you’re in here with me.”

David shrugged and asked, “As your mate, I’m allowed to be in here, aren’t I?”

“Yeah, but…” Jaxon started, but stopped and thought for a moment. “Are you really sure? I mean really *really* sure?”

David raised his upper body and rolled while pushing Jaxon over onto his back. “Yes, sweet laddie of mine. I am really, *really* sure that I want to be your mate. Now what are you going to do about it?”

While his gazelle began jumping around demanding he get things moving toward the mating, Jaxon hesitated. “I mean, we haven’t talked about where we’re going to live, and you’ve missed your ride back to the city.”

David took a deep breath and nodded. “I texted my assistant to clear my calendar for the next few days. By that time, I’m sure we’ll figure something out. And if the Council has a problem with our being a couple, then I’ll quit. I only took the job because I owed the lieutenant governor a favor.”

Jaxon felt his eyes go wide. “Really? You know the lieutenant governor?”

“Yes, sweet boy. But you know what, he puts his pants on one leg at a time just like you do. Now, are you going to fuck me and claim me as your mate or not?”

The thread of dominance that David threaded into his voice had Jaxon’s cock jumping to attention once again. “Oh, yes, Daddy, I am.”

“Good. Let’s get to it.”

“Yes, Sir,” Jaxon said as he reached for the bottle of lube he’d set on the nightstand.

With David resting on his hands and knees on the bed, Jaxon moved in behind him. It took a few minutes of playing to stretch David’s hole enough to take his cock. After he was able to fingerfuck him with three fingers, Jaxon added more lube before pulled his hand free.

He then liberally greased up his cock. “On your back, Daddy,” he said while gently patting David’s ass.

Once David was in position, he moved to crouch over the man and started by kissing him. Jaxon then kissed his way down his body until he was eye-to-eye with his cock. He licked the long, thick erection from root to tip before dragging his tongue over the opening at the top.

David’s moans as he slowly took the top half of his cock into his mouth sent his arousal spiraling higher. “Jaxon, please. I need you in me.”

Jaxon pulled off his mate’s cock with a pop and giggle before he knelt between David’s widespread and bent legs.

Fitting the head of his own cock to David’s back passage, he took a deep breath and slowly released it as he pushed forward. He stopped with only the head inside when David’s muscles tightened around him. Once the stranglehold on his

cock loosened, he eased forward slowly until his entire length was buried in his mate.

He stopped when he was fully seated, hoping his own body would not betray him by peaking too soon. His canines dropped into position, and he began to pant as the need to move became almost unbearable.

“Daddy?”

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“I need to move. Is that all right?”

“Oh, God, yes. Fuck me, babyboy. Make me your mate.”

Jaxon pulled out slowly until only the head of his cock remained within his mate. He then reversed course and filled David’s body again. As he moved in and out, David’s muscles relaxed, allowing him to move faster and faster.

When his balls pulled up and an unfamiliar tingling began at the base of his spine, Jaxon knew instinctively the time had come.

Leaning over so he was eye to eye with David, Jaxon said, “David Hendricks, do you take me as your mate, to be bonded body, soul, heart, and mind to me from now until the end of our lives on this plane of existence?”

Jaxon felt himself holding his breath as he waited for David to answer the question that was part of the ritual that would bind them together for the rest of their lives.

David looked up into Jaxon’s brown eyes with the gold flecks that were practically glowing and said the only thing he could.

“Yes, Jaxon, I do.”

As he said the words, he tilted his head to the left. When Jaxon nuzzled and kissed the spot, he sucked in a breath as fire shot through his bloodstream. Two more strokes of Jaxon’s cock in his ass and his teeth entered the skin where he had kissed just a moment before. David gasped and then screamed as the most powerful orgasm of his life washed through him. It felt like it started at his fingers and toes and gathered speed as it collected in his balls and then forcefully pulsed out the end of his cock to coat both of their bellies with his seed.

At the same time, he felt heat fill his ass as Jaxon came, filling him with his life force even as he sucked blood from mating bite on his shoulder. It felt like an eternity and a fleeting heartbeat all at the same time. All he could do was work to force air in and out of his lungs as they recovered.

It took several minutes before he felt his muscles regain strength enough to move. Then he wrapped his arms around Jaxon’s back and rolled them until they both rested on their sides on the bed. Jaxon’s cock slipped from his body, and the little man made a whining sigh, but that just endeared him in further in David’s heart.

A moment later, David smiled at the soft snores Jaxon made in his arms. He snuggled with the shifter until he felt like he could make it to the bathroom without falling on his ass. It took several tries before he was able to roll out of the bed and stand. Jaxon did not want to let him go and seemed to grow more arms to hold him close.

He finally got free and stumbled to the bathroom. After cleaning himself up, he brought a warm cloth back to the bed and used it to wipe Jaxon down.

“No,” Jaxon muttered as he rolled away from the warm cloth.

“Hold still, laddie. I want to clean you up, so you don’t stick to the sheets come morning,” David said.

He held the smaller man down and wiped up the nearly dried semen from his belly. After cleaning his cock and balls, David tossed the cloth into the laundry basket.

He took a moment to straighten the covers, then flipped them onto the mattress before crawling under them and snuggling up against Jaxon.

“Sleepy, Daddy,” Jaxon murmured as he shifted even closer.

“I know, sweet boy. It’s all right. We’ll take a nap and then go get some dinner.”

“Kay,” Jaxon breathed before settling and was soon softly snoring once more.

David brushed his hair back from his face before taking a deep breath and following him into sleep.

Chapter 8

Jaxon woke from his nap feeling completely relaxed and at ease in his body. This was a first for him, because for the past six months he had been jumpy and itchy, knowing he had a mate out in the world, but unable to claim him. Now David was his and his gazelle was finally content.

Turning his head, he smiled at the sleeping man curled up behind him.

“My mate,” he whispered. “My Daddy.”

He wanted to jump out of bed and do an extended, ecstatic happy dance, but that would wake David up. Even in sleep, his mate looked tired. And that would not do.

Did he need Jaxon to take care of him like he needed a Daddy to keep him?

Jaxon reached up and gently brushed a lock of hair back from David’s forehead. As he lowered his hand, David’s eyes opened, and the man looked startled. Then he must have remembered where he was and what had happened. After a few seconds, he relaxed and smiled as he stretched.

“How did you sleep, laddie?”

“Really well. How about you? You look tired.”

David blinked in surprise before he leaned in for a kiss. “I’m fine.”

Before Jaxon could argue, his stomach gave a loud, rolling growl. He looked down at his belly and giggled. “I’m hungry.”

“Sounds like it. Shall we get dressed and go to the dining hall for dinner?”

“I guess. I only have a few snacks here,” Jaxon answered as he slowly pulled away and sat up. “If you want, I could go get us food and bring it back. Yeah, that’s what I’ll do.”

He could feel David staring hard at his back as he shifted to sit at the side of the bed, debating whether to put the uniform he’d worn earlier back on, though it had been on the floor for hours. Nah, he would just pull on a t-shirt and pair of sweats.

Jaxon felt his mate shifting on the bed behind before he said, “Jaxon, look at me.”

David’s hand felt warm where it landed on his shoulder. Jaxon then realized his room was cold. He would have to turn up the heat before he left to get the food. The last thing he wanted was for his mate to get sick. It was now his responsibility to keep David safe, healthy, and loved.

“Look at me, Little boy,” David said with a touch more steel in his tone than before.

Turning his head, Jaxon looked over his shoulder at his mate. “Are you ashamed of me?”

David’s question shocked him. “Of course not. Why would you think that?”

“Because you just offered to go and get food instead of going with me to the dining hall for dinner.”

He felt his face heat up, and knew he was blushing. He tried to find an explanation that would not offend the man he was coming to care about more than he even thought possible.

Dropping his gaze to David's lap, he whispered, "I didn't think you'd want to be seen with me."

He squeaked when David pulled him back, toppling him to the bed and leaned over to stare deep into his eyes.

"Why would I not want to be seen with my man? The man who just a short time ago claimed me as his mate. Or are you ashamed of me?"

"What? No. It's just..." Jaxon took a breath and swallowed before he admitted his deepest fear. "You're so important and I'm just me. And the others are all strong Alpha types and I'm... not."

David maneuvered their bodies around on the bed until they were once again aligned. Then he pulled Jaxon in and cuddled him close. "You are perfect just the way you are," he said. "I'm a strong Alpha type, even if I am human, and if you were as well, we would never had matched up. But you are soft and gentle and beautiful; my perfect partner. And if you say such things about yourself again, I'm going to bend you over and spank your ass until you can't walk for a week. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Yes, Daddy," David corrected him.

Jaxon swallowed and repeated, "Yes, Daddy." He then pressed his face into David's chest, kissing the flesh as he inhaled deeply.

Though he really only wore his suit to Council functions, David did not have any other clothes, so he had no choice but to put it on again after their lovemaking session. As a concession to the much more casual affair, he kept his tie tucked away in his jacket pocket and left the jacket behind as they walked hand-in-hand to the dining hall for dinner.

When they met Lonergan, Diego, Kodiak, and their Little girls in front of the building, David tensed, not sure what to expect. They had not told anyone, though after Kodiak's visit to Jaxon's room, he was certain the entire Institute knew they were mates. The girls looking from Jaxon to him and back again before squealing in delight as they circled his Little boy was nowhere on his list of reactions.

When the girls pulled Jaxon away for a group hug and bouncing dance, David released his mate, reluctantly. He then turned his attention to the upper echelon staff members.

"Congratulations," Lonergan said, grabbing him and giving him a hug. "Welcome to the family."

"Yeah, congratulations," Diego said next, also giving him a hug.

David accepted their well wishes with quietly spoken words of thanks before turning to Kodiak. The polar bear shifter gave him a look that had David freezing in his tracks.

"You hurt him, and you'll answer to me."

David took a breath and straightened his shoulders. "I would never hurt Jaxon, unless I'm spanking him, and no one will interfere with punishment."

Kodiak's eyes narrowed a bit more before the bigger man nodded and held out a hand. "Congratulations."

"Thank you," David said as he shook the man's hand.

As one, the four men then turned to where the girls were chattering while Jaxon looked a bit overwhelmed at their attention.

"Littles, let's get inside for dinner before Chef throws it all out," Lonergan ordered with a smirk.

"No! He can't do that!" the girls cried in unison.

As the girls rush past him to their own Daddies, he held out his hand for a blushing Jaxon to take. Lifting their hands to his lips, he brushed a kiss on his Little boy's knuckles.

"Lonergan, have you thought about building a playhouse on the grounds? A space for the Littles to play and hang out and spend time together?" David asked as they queued up to walk through the buffet. "Also, I'd like to talk to you about a house."

"We can talk tomorrow morning, if you'll still be around."

"Sounds good. Your office?"

Lonergan nodded then turned back just in time to stop Talia from setting a third dessert on her tray instead of a salad.

"Daddy?" Jaxon whispered into the back of his shoulder.

"Yes, laddie?"

"A playhouse for the girls is a good idea."

"It won't just be for the girls and their Daddies. We'll be playing there as well," David assured his mate.

At that announcement, Jaxon just blinked and gave him his wide-eyed startled look that meant he wasn't sure if he should

freeze or run.

Wrapping an arm around Jaxon's back, David hugged him to his side so he could not run.

“Now, laddie, what do you want for dinner tonight?”

Chapter 9

By the time dinner was over, all Jaxon could think about was getting David back to his room and naked. He was stunned when Lonergan looked at him with an indulgent smile. He had only seen the dragon shifter direct that expression to Talia, his mate.

“Jaxon, you’re taking the next three days off,” his boss said in a firm voice.

“I am? But we have to prepare for the next session,” Jaxon argued, though inside, his gazelle was doing a little jig of happiness.

“And we will. But you and your mate are going into seclusion in the house by the hangar for the next three days. We’ll have meals delivered so you don’t have to worry about anything except building the bond with your mate. After that, if you like the house, we’ll see about moving your things.”

Jaxon opened his mouth to argue, but David’s hand covered it to keep him from saying anything. His mate then spoke for him.

“Thank you, Lonergan. We appreciate the time, and the house.” With that, David stood and pulled him to his feet. “If you’ll excuse us, we’ll get our seclusion started.”

David linked their hands and headed for the door. The men around the table laughed and offered naughty suggestions that had Jaxon's face burning with mortification. Then it struck him that each of those men had gone through with their mates what he was going with David. Instead of heading to the house Lonergan had assigned them, David guided him around the dining hall toward the dormitory.

“Where are we going?”

“We're going to pack up a few essentials from your room. Clothes, toiletries, Wellington, your fuzzy blanket, and whatever toys you want to take with you. If we spend all our time in bed our dicks might fall off,” David pointed out, sounding so much like a Daddy that Jaxon's cock stiffened even further in response. “Then we'll stop at the storehouse, so I don't have to wear this suit for the next week.”

“Oh. Okay. Yeah, that's a good idea.”

David looked down at him and chuckled. “I do have them on occasion.”

“Yes, Daddy, you do. We'll also need to stop by the storehouse and pick up another bottle of lube,” Jaxon said with a giggle.

“I have a feeling your friends already took care of stocking the house with lube.”

Jaxon's face burned a little brighter at that thought, even though his Daddy was probably right.

It did not take long for Jaxon to pile the few days' worth of Little clothing he owned onto the bed. He then started a second pile with his coloring books and crayons, Wellington, and his fuzzy blanket. He added the shoebox that held his

collection of small Lego sets, all taken apart and carefully stored in their boxes.

David added Jaxon's shampoo and liquid body soap.

Jaxon looked at the piles and then his mate. "I don't have a suitcase. How are we going to get all this stuff to the house?"

David studied the bed for a moment before smiling. "Pick up the two corners of the blanket like this."

David reached out and grabbed the two corners on his side and lifted them. He then put the two corners in one hand and grabbed the blanket where it folded in the middle and lifted it in his other hand. Jaxon followed his example and snickered as everything shifted into the middle of the blanket.

"All right, let's go," David said, heading for the door.

Jaxon followed eagerly. Once they were outside walking across the grounds, he took the lead since he knew which house they would be using for the next few days. As they approached, he smiled. It was one of the smaller houses in Bratburg with a great room that took up half the house and two bedrooms and a bath that made up the rest.

The lights were on, both inside and out, welcoming them home. When he tested the front door, he was not surprised to find it unlocked. Pushing the door open, he entered and looked around.

The last time he had visited had been a couple months earlier, after a storm had come through. At that time, the house had been empty of furniture while it waited for someone to occupy it. Now was not empty, but was not homey, either. A couch with a small side table faced a large television sitting on what looked like a dresser in the living room. The stone fireplace held a dozen votive candles that were flickering as

the air swirled around the room. There was nothing in the dining area, but two tall chairs sat before the island that separated the kitchen from the rest of the room.

“Kind of sparse, but nice,” David commented as he closed and locked the front door. “Let’s go unpack our stuff in the bedroom. Then we can start our honeymoon.”

Jaxon nodded his agreement before turning to the short hallway. One bedroom was dark and the other had flickering light, drawing him in. He stepped through and sucked a breath. Dozens of candles covered every surface in the room and provided a golden glow that showed there was a king-size bed, two dressers, and an armoire filled the good size room.

He moved to the side of the bed and leaned over the large mattress while David circled to the other side. They laid out their bundle and laughed when they saw everything jumbled up in the middle of the blanket.

They worked together to refold the clothes and put them in one of the dressers before moving the toiletries to the bathroom. That left Wellington and Jaxon’s other toys to deal with.

“Why don’t you take the toys to the living room and put them in one of the drawers of the dresser out there,” David suggested.

“Okay, Daddy,” Jaxon agreed easily as he piled everything together.

Setting Wellington on top of the pile, he was able to carry everything in one trip. After claiming the bottom drawer of the dresser for his toys, he gave his soft bear a hug and kiss before setting him down on the couch. “Hang out here, Wellington. I’ll be back to get you in a while.”

While Jaxon put his toys away, David moved into the bathroom and turned on the water to fill the clawfoot tub. Though they had shared a shower that morning, he hoped that a bath would help bring out Jaxon's Little persona. Checking the shelves behind the door, he had to smile at the basket of bath toys he found there. It was obvious from the mermaids, pink fish, and glittery toys, that the girls had generously donated them for Jaxon's use.

"Daddy?" Jaxon called from the bedroom.

"In here, laddie. Strip off for your bath," David said as he set a bath towel on the counter.

He stripped his shirt off over his head as Jaxon walked into the room.

"Yum," Jaxon said with a giggle.

David was pleased to see the little gazelle shifter was naked. His hands were by his sides, exposing his erection, but they were fisted, as if he were nervous about being naked in his presence.

The tub was full enough, so David turned off the water flow before dipping his hand into the water. It was just right for his Little boy's bath.

"Climb in," he said as he held out a hand.

It pleased him no end when Jaxon took hold of his hand and climbed into the tub without argument. While he settled in the water, David grabbed the basket of bath toys.

"We'll have to do some shopping for toys just for you, but for now you can play with these," he said, turning the basket

over and dumping the toys into the tub. Water splashed into Jaxon's face, and out onto the floor.

"Daddy, you made a mess," his little boy said as he wiped water off his face.

He looked and sounded so horrified that David knew it would be up to him to help loosen up his tightly wound neat freak. "It's okay, laddie. You play while Daddy cleans it up."

Jaxon studied him for a moment then turned his attention to the toys floating in front of him. "Okay, Daddy. You clean. I play."

The giggles that followed had David smiling as he wiped the floor clean of the water. He then settled beside the tub and grabbed the washcloth and bottle of body wash.

Chapter 10

Jaxon loved baths. Playing in the bath was something different, but he really enjoyed playing with the toys, even if they were mostly girly and pink. He wished there were boats to race, but maybe Daddy would buy him some. He even cooperated when David washed his body, though he didn't really pay attention, until David touched his cock and balls.

“Daddy?”

“It's all right, laddie. I'll be done in a minute,” David said as he stroked the cloth around his ball sac and then up the length of his rapidly inflating cock.

All at once all Jaxon wanted was to feel his mate's cock fill him. “Daddy, can you hurry up?”

“Why, baby boy? Are you getting cold?”

Jaxon giggled at the question. “No, Daddy. I'm getting hot. I need you to take me to bed and fuck me.”

“No cursing,” David said automatically even as he reached further down between Jaxon's legs and cleaned between his ass cheeks.

“Then what can I say instead? I need a word that imparts the idea of you sticking your tallywacker in my bottom and

moving it in and out until you drive us both out of our minds and we fly to paradise.”

Jaxon couldn't help but giggle at the expression on David's face as he thought about his request.

“Tallywacker?” David finally said, obviously bamboozled by his request.

“Is Johnson better? Or should I go clinical and say penis? Because if the f-word is a curse, then surely the c-word is, right?”

David started laughing and Jaxon joined in, continuing until they were both wiping tears from their faces.

David was delighted at the man's silliness, though his own cock was hard and demanding they moved things along as well. “Yes, my sweet mate, we can go to the bedroom and make love.”

David helped Jaxon stand and step out of the bathtub. When he reached to take the towel from him, David smacked his hand away. “Daddy will dry you, laddie.”

“Okie dokie, Daddy,” Jaxon said, still in a giggly mood. He extended his arms out and slowly turned around as David wiped him dry.

Once he finished drying his boy, David slapped his ass. “On the bed, hands and knees.”

With a squeal at the smack, Jaxon hurried into the bedroom and got into position. David took a moment to clean up the tub while he worked to get his cock back under control. Once he felt like he could handle sliding into his mate without

immediately firing off, he stripped off his own clothes and then entered the bedroom.

Jaxon was in position at the end of the bed with his head and shoulders resting on the mattress and his beautiful ass up in the air. A different bottle of lube than the one they had been using lay near the edge of the mattress beside his calf. Just the sight of his eager mate had his arousal spiraling upward once again.

He grabbed his cock as he approached the bed, his eyes glued to the pale, rounded cheeks that were just waiting for him to part them and sink home. And Jaxon was his home. The realization hit him like a train, and he hesitated only a moment to catch his breath.

“So beautiful,” he said softly as he grabbed the bottle of lube and dribbled some on his fingers. He then dripped some down the channel of his man’s ass. Though he knew they were both in a hurry to connect, he took his time sliding first one then two and finally three fingers in Jaxon’s back hole.

Once he felt certain his mate was ready, he pulled his fingers out and smeared lube all over his cock before he stepped up and filled Jaxon with his cock. He pushed slowly but steadily into his body until he was buried to the root.

Pulling out until only the head remained inside, he slid in again. And again. And again. Each stroke was slightly faster than the one before. Each time his pelvis pressed against Jaxon’s ass he had to clench his teeth to keep himself from slamming home again and again until he came.

“Daddy, fuck me. Hard. Please,” Jaxon begged, his voice tight.

“Are you sure, laddie?”

“Oh, yes. Please, Daddy.”

With that, David let his hips off the chain and drove into his mate’s body faster and harder. It only took a half dozen strokes before Jaxon cried out his release, his body tightening around David’s cock and pulling him along into the nirvana of release.

His own body locked up as his scream followed a moment later, filling the room with the sound of their passion. When he was finally able to move, he wrapped his arm around Jaxon’s middle and rolled them to lay spooned together on their sides, still connected.

They remained silent for several minutes as their breathing slowed and they recovered. When he could feel his feet again, David pulled free from Jaxon’s body and rose. A visit to the bathroom allowed him to clean himself up and bring back a cloth to clean Jaxon up as well.

His baby was nearly asleep yet cooperated just enough to move up the mattress to the pillows and wriggle his way under the covers. David brushed a kiss on his temple then left him to walk through the house. As he did, he extinguished the candles and made sure the windows and doors were locked. He also picked Wellington up from the couch and carried him to the bedroom.

He crawled into bed and snuggled up behind Jaxon. When he tucked the bear into his arms, Jaxon hugged him tight with a sighed, “Wellie.”

“Sleep, laddie. Tomorrow we’ll play and color and cuddle on the couch while we watch movies and just relax and be together. Good night, sweetheart.”

“Night, Daddy,” Jaxon whispered. “I luvs you.”

“I love you, too, laddie,” David whispered as he smiled into the darkness, realizing that despite his brand-new bisexual status, he really did love the man in his arms with his whole heart and soul.

Chapter 11

Though it had only been three days, Jaxon lost all track of time, until he opened the front door and instead of a tray of food, he found one of his neatly pressed uniforms hanging from the doorframe. Their seclusion was over. It was time to return to the real world.

The only problem was he had no idea how things would work now. David had to return to the city and his life there. Jaxon's life was in Bratburg, and he could not visualize himself living in the city, sitting at home, waiting for David to return from his job. He didn't even know what David's job was, other than his one day every five weeks commitment to the Council.

Carrying his uniform into the bedroom, he found David looking oh-so-sexy as he shrugged into his suitcoat.

"Can't we hide one more day?" he asked, even as he began to change from the pajamas covered with trains into his uniform.

"Afraid not, laddie. You have to get back to work and straighten out whatever mess Lonergan and the others made, and I'm sure my assistant is going crazy since I turned off my phone for the seclusion."

“How is this going to work? Will you come visit me during the sessions, or will I see you only when you’re here for graduation?” Jaxon heard himself asking the question even though he dreaded the answer.

His mate would be leaving him today. He wasn’t sure he could handle the separation, but at least he’d have the memory of these days to get him through until the next time he saw David. That was more than he’d had before mating the man, but it was still driving daggers into his heart, and bringing up tears.

When David didn’t answer immediately, he turned away, not wanting him to see his misery. He jolted when David wrapped his arms around him and pulled him to rest against the man’s broad chest.

“No, Little boy, you are not going to live without me. I will have to leave occasionally to deal with business, and attend Council meetings, but my business is such that I can handle most of it via phone and computer. And on the days I do have to go to the city, maybe you could take a day off and go with me. I need to meet with Lonergan this morning to discuss a few things, but if he and the others agree, I’ll shift my base of operations to Bratburg.”

“Really? You’d do that for me?” Jaxon asked, stunned that he had been thinking of a way to keep them from being separated.

His attention the last few days focused on playing with his toys as Little Jaxon and making love to David every chance he got.

David hugged him tighter and brushed a kiss on the top of his head. “Of course. You are my mate. My lover. My

everything. I would burn down the world for you, my sweet boy. Now hurry up or we're going to miss breakfast."

Jaxon finished dressing before stepping into the bathroom to comb his hair and wash his face. As he left their bedroom, he looked into the empty second bedroom before joining David at the front door.

"You know, you could use the second bedroom for your office," he suggested as he took David's hand.

The physical connection as they crossed to the dining hall had him beginning to slide back into Little headspace. But he needed to push down his Little because he would not be able to do his job.

"I could. Or we could turn it into a playroom for you. Or, if you don't like this house, we could build one of our own. Or add on a couple of rooms to this one."

Jaxon blinked, overwhelmed at the choices David had just presented. "We could?"

"Yes, laddie, we could. After breakfast we'll meet with Lonergan and discuss the options. For the house. For my office. For our future. But whatever we decide, you will be right there helping to make the choices. Okay?"

Jaxon nodded, then after David squeezed his hand to remind him to use his words, he said, "I'd like that, Daddy. I love you."

David stopped them in the middle of Bratburg and pulled him in for a hug and a kiss that had his entire body tingling in response. "I love you, too, Jaxon. I didn't realize all these years of dealing with Bratburg that you were just what I needed in my life. I cannot wait to see what happens in our future."

Jaxon hugged him back and giggled with a light happiness he had never felt before. When his stomach grumbled loudly, he looked up at David with wide eyes. “I think we’d better go before my stomach implodes.”

David chuckled as he nodded his agreement. “I think you’re right.”

As they entered the dining hall, Jaxon felt all his worries flow off his back like water off a duck. His Daddy had things all figured out so they could stay together and live at Bratburg where Jaxon could shift and run the woods every day if he wanted, though he preferred to spend all his time with his mate and would only shift when the moon was full, and the call of his gazelle could no longer be ignored.

Life was good.

The End

About Cooper McKenzie

Cooper McKenzie always thought she had been born a hundred years too late, but appreciates air conditioning, computers and other conveniences of modern day living. She recently returned to New Bern, North Carolina, after a six-year sojourn to Georgetown, Texas. In addition to dreaming up her next story, Cooper enjoys reading everything except scary books and making amigurumi animals. She loves to hear from readers, and can be reached at coopermckenzie@ymail.com

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Nuala's Neighbor
Daddy by Honey
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A MF story by Honey Meyer

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Chapter 1

“God fucking dammit, Nuala,” Remy Watson muttered from his kitchen window.

His knuckles whitened as he gripped the countertop, and then he couldn't stand it anymore. He put down the turkey Reuben he'd been devouring and wiped his hands on his pants while he shoved his feet into his shoes and headed out the front door.

Why was that woman carrying boxes that were almost as big as she was out from her gigantic and bougie-ass SUV? Why was there no one helping her? He knew why her husband wasn't— Well, ex-husband now.

It was because Cabot Foster-Webb, who Remy had never liked, was in prison where he belonged. And while he'd totally understand a person who stuck by their spouse while they were behind bars, he'd perhaps pumped his fist in the air when he'd read that the dark-haired beauty next door had dumped her jackass of a spouse. Even if it had taken him being convicted of attempted murder—of his brother's girlfriend no less, Jesus Christ, what a family—for her to do it.

Nuala and Cabot had already owned their massive “cabin” out at Mountain Lakes when Remy had bought his place next

door. He'd left the modest cabin he purchased in the community of mostly second homes essentially as it was, except for the addition of a closet-sized recording studio in the basement—no bringing up the property values in the neighborhood from his lot, that was for sure.

It had taken a few months before he'd met his neighbors though. They didn't come up to the quaint, mostly vacation town of Thistledon from Clover City often. Or hadn't. Which was a mixed bag.

He'd gotten a bad feeling about Cabot from the start and it really ground his gears that a seemingly sweet woman like Nuala was married to an asshole like that. Not just because he had a thing for the petite raven-haired, blue-eyed doll either. That was a lost cause. A woman like her wouldn't think twice about a guy like him. Younger, kinda scruffy, and with only enough money to keep himself fed and clothed and housed comfortably but not much more.

At least he'd gotten to be friendly with Nuala when she was up here alone, though. Helped her carry stuff when he could, otherwise waved and said hello whenever he saw her. She was shy, though, always darting in and out of the house like a hummingbird at a flower, so he hadn't talked to her all that much. Enough to tell her to call him instead of carrying heavy shit into the house though.

If he didn't think he would startle Nuala, he would've yelled at her out the window to put the goddamn box down and wait for him to help. But she'd always been skittish, and he didn't want her dropping the thing and crushing her foot.

It would be one thing to take her over his knee and redden her bottom for being reckless. Of course that would hurt; it

was supposed to because it was discipline. It would be another matter for her to be in pain from an actual injury.

Not that he'd mind at all coming to her aid, scooping her up in his arms, and tending to her. Wiping tears away from her rosy cheeks and cuddling her close until she'd stopped crying. But he'd probably die of guilt for harming her. He kind of wished Cabot had done the honorable thing and dropped dead, but Cabot Foster-Webb had always seemed like honor wasn't in his vocabulary. That guy was a real prick.

Remy jogged down the steps from his front porch, down the unpaved road, and back up Nuala's driveway. It would've been faster to go through the woods, but something crashing through the underbrush would probably scare the shit out of the petite woman too.

At last he'd made it, and with perfect timing. Nuala had just set the enormous box down at the foot of the steps up to her cabin—if a person would call the massive wood and glass house such a thing—and was pausing with her hands on her hips.

Goddamn she was pretty. Even when she was flushed, had sweat beading along her hairline, her usually glossy and impeccable hair was piled on top of her head in a frizzy bun, and she was a bit out of breath. She wiped her wrist across her forehead and bent to pick the box back up, but there was no way in hell that was happening on his watch.

“Don't you dare, Nuala,” he said, voice coming out louder and firmer than he'd meant it to.

He'd obviously surprised his neighbor more than he'd surprised himself because her eyes went wide and her lashes fluttered as she stood upright with a start.

“I-I’m sorry?”

Was it his imagination or maybe just wishful thinking that her blush deepened?

“You don’t need to be sorry, you just need to stop hauling boxes. Why didn’t you text me, tell me you needed help?” Remy asked, squatting down to lift the big, awkward box with his legs instead of his back.

It was heavier than he’d even thought it would be and he was begrudgingly impressed. He wouldn’t have thought she’d be able to lift this much at all. But he was also even more hot under the collar because she really shouldn’t be picking up something so heavy.

Remy carried the box up to the porch and Nuala skittered in front of him to hold the front door open.

“I didn’t want to bother you,” she told him as he crossed the threshold.

He’d been in the Foster-Webbs’ “cabin” before—once when a bat had flown into the house and Nuala was shrieking like a banshee—but it never failed to surprise him. Massive double-story foyer and living area with a kitchen, den, office, bathroom, and a couple other rooms tucked in the back, and a second floor of mostly bedrooms and bathrooms that lined a catwalk and a smaller living area with the whole thing open to the glassed-in front room.

Apparently that much money didn’t buy good sense and he gave Nuala a chastising look.

“Texting me doesn’t bother me. What bothers me is seeing you carrying something as big as you are after I told you to call me whenever you need something.”

“Sorry,” she muttered again as she trailed him inside.

“Where do you want this anyway?” he asked, trying to get a hold on his emotions and his imagination.

She might not be married anymore but he didn't want to be a creep. And if he made her uncomfortable, she definitely wouldn't call him when she needed a hand. He needed to have a soft touch with her because while she could seem icy when Cabot had been around, he got the sense that she was actually delicate underneath. As if to reinforce his impression, he could barely hear her whisper of “In the bedroom, please.”

“Which one? You've got like six of 'em.”

“Th-the master, please.”

“All set?” Remy asked once he'd set the box down next to the other four she'd already carried up.

It was far more enjoyable to have Remy's help than hauling all this baggage herself, and not just because that box really was heavy. Her neighbor was a dream to look at.

She couldn't tell exactly how old he was because while his face looked young, his sandy blond hair and beard had some grey and white creeping in which frankly made him all the better looking. And she could tell that under the jeans or work pants and long-sleeved flannels he favored that he was in good shape. Partly by the way he carried that huge box like it was a bag of groceries. And partly because his butt and thighs filled out those pants just so, and his broad shoulders and flexing biceps did the same with those button-up shirts.

Nuala had gotten so distracted by thinking of what he'd look like man-handling the rest of her stuff she'd be bringing

up from Clover City that she'd forgotten to answer him. Was she all set?

For carrying things, yes, and she wasn't about to ask her hot neighbor for anything else. There were enough wild animals in the woods around Mountain Lakes, she didn't need to add a cougar. Not like those women at the country club who made a hobby of ogling and aggressively hitting on the much younger caddies and lifeguards. Ew.

"Yes, thank you."

"You don't have lead bricks hiding under your seats that you're gonna carry up to the house once I'm gone, do you?"

"No."

"Promise?"

His inquisition should've felt like badgering—from Cabot it would've, because it would've been—but the way Remy's salty blond brows went up as he looked down at her... Yes, her neighbor meant it but not in a mean way. It just felt as though he legitimately cared whether she hurt herself, and wasn't that a change?

Sure, Cabot had been concerned when she was unwell or injured, but that was because of the *optics* of the situation, or what she wouldn't be able to do for him. He'd never actually cared about her beyond dressing her up like a paper doll and making sure she said all the right things and spied on all the right people at all the right parties.

"Yes."

"What're you moving all this stuff in here for anyway?" he asked.

“Oh. I’ll be living here now,” she told him, knitting her fingers together to help keep herself steady. “After... everything, I wanted to get away from the city.”

Remy nodded, and she was relieved he didn’t give her one of those fake sympathetic looks or ask her how she was holding up. How was she supposed to be holding up after her ex-husband had tried to have a woman killed and very nearly succeeded? It was never clear how people wanted her to answer.

She hoped he wouldn’t be one of those “friends” who didn’t speak to her anymore now that she couldn’t be of use to them, what with her disgraced ex-husband and all, but Remy had always seemed to prefer her to Cabot. Also, he’d come bounding over here to help her when he could have just as easily pretended not to see her struggling with the giant box.

“Then I assume you’ll be moving more stuff in and getting some deliveries. Are you going to call me the next time you need help?”

She opened her mouth but nothing came out. Would she, actually? Even if she wanted to?

Remy took a step closer and all the breath left her body when he curled an index finger under her chin and tipped her head up ever so slightly.

“Nuala. I’m not asking this time. I’m telling. You are going to call me the next time you need help.”

Oh, it was embarrassing the way she swallowed audibly and how the rest of her body responded to his touch. She’d be fantasizing about this for weeks, if not months, maybe years. No way would she be doing more than that though, for a million reasons.

“Yes.”

Chapter 2

Remy climbed the stairs from his basement, tilting his head side to side to crack his neck as he went. He really did love his job, but sitting in front of a mic for hours a day could really take a toll on a guy's body. Maybe he'd expand his recording closet into an actual studio and be able to move around a bit. Good thing he lived in the woods where there were plenty of ways to get exercise.

Which reminded him, his firewood was looking a little low. Depending on how the light was he finished dinner, he could grab his chainsaw and—

Remy stopped in his tracks at the same time his blood cascaded through his veins like ice water. What was that *sound*? He was used to some weird noises out here in the woods and in his old cabin, but that wasn't like anything he'd ever heard before.

The agonized cry rang out again, and... Jesus Christ, was that coming from Nuala's place? Probably. It was the middle of the week which meant there weren't many people out at Mountain View, but Nuala had been living here full-time for a month now.

Even if it were a summer weekend when there were more people in the mostly vacation community, he wasn't sure he'd be able to hear the sound from anyone else's house so clearly. Unless their windows were open. But the scream sounded muffled enough that he didn't think it was coming from outside.

After his initial reaction that had frozen his feet to the floor, Remy felt his heart start with a vengeance, his pulse pounding in his ears because that was Nuala, and she was in danger.

They hadn't talked much since she'd moved in. She rarely left the house as far as he could tell. But she had texted him a few times for help carrying boxes and once to move some furniture, and there had been that single touch a month ago that had felt so wrong and so right at the same damn time. A touch that had been the starting point to all the fantasies that had fueled his jerk off sessions since. Even if she didn't feature heavily in his spank bank, he'd still go running, because she was a person who needed help. But he maybe had an extra burst of urgency knowing it was her.

Remy shoved his feet into his shoes and took off at a sprint, crashing through underbrush and sprinting through a gauntlet of branches. He tried to shield his face so he didn't put an eye out, but otherwise he threw caution to the wind.

It still felt far too long until he reached Nuala's front door. He rang the bell, but now that he was so close, he could hear pulsing music underneath the screams. Did this psycho killer have a soundtrack or something?

Again and again, he rang the bell and yelled Nuala's name, pounded on the door for good measure, but no one answered. He wasn't entirely surprised but it sure as fuck didn't make

him feel any better. All he could think of was that someone was hurting Nuala, and his blood boiled.

He tried the door handle, but of course it was locked. He had to get in, and get in now, so he stripped off his shirt, wound it around his hand, and punched through the glass.

The shards tinkled as they fell to the ground, and they crunched underfoot as he reached through the frame and unlocked the door then barged through.

“Nuala! *Nuala!*” he called as he sprinted up the steps.

The music got louder and louder as he charged toward the master suite, and there was no response, just more wailing, and the sound of flesh meeting flesh. The fucker was *beating* her.

He swore as he shouldered through the door, the heavy wood smashing into the wall with the force of his entry, and his vision was glazed in red as he barged into the room, expecting to see Nuala battered and curled up in a ball on the floor with some monster looming over her, but no. Oh no.

Anticipating a spank and not receiving one was as bad as a failed sneeze. And in this case, far, far worse. It had been jarring for the next thwack of the paddle not to come, and more so for Anthony to let go of her hands that he'd had pinned at the small of her back. The worst part was hearing a third and familiar person mutter, “Shit.”

Nuala felt as though she was trying to drag her brain out from the depths of the sweet molasses of subspace and back into the real world, and dear god was that unpleasant. She felt lucky that she only swayed when she clambered off Anthony's

thighs, until she remembered she was naked. Then the mortification doused her like a bucket of cold water, and she snatched her robe from the foot of the bed, fumbling to put the damn thing on.

If her brain could work properly for a minute that would be so welcome. Although perhaps if she was in full possession of her faculties, she might die of humiliation, so maybe this vaguely concussed feeling was better.

“Remy,” she breathed.

Really? Was that all she could come up with? His name?

“Nuala,” he responded, his dark gaze darting between her and Anthony, who was sitting on the bench at the foot of her bed, frozen, like one of the many deer she’d caught in headlights on her way up to Thistledon over the years.

Her neighbor looked incensed and he didn’t need to be. She could explain, but she should probably get her play partner out of here first.

“Just go,” she told Anthony, fearing what Remy might do if her top stayed. Her neighbor looked deranged with his shoulders heaving and his hands clenched into fists, his face red and his gaze dark like he was spoiling for a fight. “Out the back.”

When Anthony still didn’t move, she tried to reassure him. She didn’t fear for her own safety with Remy at all, just Anthony’s. “Please, Anthony. He’s my neighbor, I’m fine. I’ll text you.”

Luckily, Anthony didn’t argue but just nodded before he grabbed his shirt and his bag which he shoved a couple stray toys in, and gave Remy a wide berth as he headed for the door.

Now that one man was dealt with, she still had one to go. The worst of the two, by far.

“Could you give me a moment to collect myself? I’ll meet you downstairs in a couple minutes,” she told Remy, welcoming the ability to gather herself enough to ask. Thanks, all the media training and lectures she’d received from her mother-in-law, Cabot’s PR people, and even Cabot himself, although those had done more to shame her than anything else.

Remy didn’t look like he wanted to agree, but he’d always been respectful of her.

“Please,” she said, and he relented, shoving a hand through his hair before he left the room and she heard his footfalls on the stairs.

Chapter 3

Nuala tugged her robe around herself, shaking too hard to tie it properly. There wasn't anything bad or wrong with what she and Anthony had been doing, but she knew not everyone would feel that way. Besides, she was pretty sure that unless someone was an exhibitionist, they'd be embarrassed by their neighbor—their handsome, younger neighbor—hearing and then seeing them do something so intimate.

Because that's what it had been. Even if she didn't love Anthony, even if she wasn't attracted to him in a romantic or sexual way, domination and submission was an intimate thing, there was no way around it.

She supposed it was time to go downstairs and face Remy. Well, she'd faced dozens of journalists snapping her photograph and badgering her about her husband hiring a fucking contract killer to murder her now ex sister-in-law, so she could do this. Right?

Except that she wasn't in political wife mode right now. She didn't have the armor of her skirt suits and matching heels and perfect hair and makeup, she didn't have a handler or even her former mother-in-law whispering in her ear how to deal with this. It had been almost impossible to ask Remy to wait

downstairs, and that small act had depleted her. She was just Nuala Feury and she was out of her depth and out of sorts.

But since Remy would probably just storm upstairs and hunt her down if she didn't go talk to him soon—and to be honest, there was some comfort in that—she would do the best she could.

Nuala felt foolish walking down the dramatic staircase and wished she could escape down the back staircase to the garage and away from here with Anthony. Unfortunately, she couldn't avoid Remy forever, because she fucking lived here now.

Her neighbor was pacing the living room and his head snapped up when he heard her coming down the stairs. He took a step toward her but then stopped himself and shoved his hands in his pockets.

She drew the robe around her tighter, hating that she was still shaking like a leaf. Hadn't she learned better than this after being married to Cabot for all those years, how to tame her feelings and put them in a casket to be buried? Apparently not. Or not for long.

Bare feet finally on the broad wooden planks of the floor, Nuala did her best to draw herself up to her insubstantial height and clear the knot in her throat. She couldn't look Remy in the eye, so she focused on where his hair shaded into his beard.

“I am so, so sorry to have disturbed you and to have alarmed you. I know your work demands quiet and I assure you that you won't be disrupted again. I also apologize for the embarrassment and awkwardness this has created, and I hope that despite this unpleasant incident that we can maintain a cordial relationship. I—”

Despite feeling as though she was going to burst into tears or be choked by the lump in her throat, she thought she'd been doing pretty well, but apparently Remy didn't agree. He erased the gap between them with a few long strides and his big hands closed around her biceps.

“Nuala Erin Feury, you look me in the eyes right now.”

More of the mortar from the wall she'd tried to build crumbled. Her chin trembled and a few tears slipped down her cheeks. But Remy's voice brooked no argument and she wouldn't refuse him, so she lifted her gaze to meet his hazel eyes.

“Was Anthony hitting you consensual?”

She blinked, startled. “Yes.”

“Did he do anything you didn't agree to?”

“No.”

“Good. I wouldn't want to be the second man connected to you on trial for murder.”

“It was attempted murder,” she murmured, not knowing what else to say.

Remy didn't think Nuala was making a joke, but he had to swallow a laugh anyway. Maybe it was the frothy, buoyant sense of relief he felt from her confirmation that what he'd heard and seen was kink and not an assault. Which... *Shut it down, Watson, there are many miles to go before you even think about that.*

Nuala's dark brows gathered. “Why—”

“Because if Anthony had been attacking you instead of playing, I would kill him,” he said simply.

“Oh.”

Poor girl looked stunned and not a little bewildered. She was also shaking like there was an earthquake underfoot, and he noticed goosebumps rise on her forearms. She hadn't even tied the belt on her robe, she was just holding it around herself. Fuck.

He'd interrupted a scene which would throw anyone off, and then he'd chased off the person who would've given her aftercare. What a dick.

He dropped his grip on her arms and reached for the trailing ends of the sash, tying it firmly at her waist. Then he picked her up and carried her over to the massive leather sectional and set her on her feet.

There were about a hundred blankets draped over the back of the couch, so he grabbed what looked like the warmest one and wrapped it around Nuala before he picked her up again and settled her into the corner of the deep-seated sofa. She looked so small and confused.

“You stay right there,” he told her, putting some force into his voice because he knew she would obey if he ordered her to. She'd managed to hold herself together for a minute, but it seemed like her self-possession had fled the house almost as fast as Anthony.

He'd thought there was a good chance Nuala was submissive when she'd responded the way she did to his command to ask for help weeks ago, and now he'd all but confirmed it. Not that it mattered beyond being useful to take

care of her in this moment, he told himself. Just because she was subby didn't make her *his* sub.

Remy jogged back to the kitchen, a bit overwhelmed by all the glass and chrome and lacquered black. Not to mention not being able to find the goddamn refrigerator at first because apparently having a fridge that looked like a fridge was gauche. Eventually he found it and a couple cabinets filled with glasses, and he got some water from the spout in the fridge. Plus some trail mix, crackers, and an apple from the pantry that was probably twice the size of his kitchen.

Thoroughly supplied, he made his way back to the vaulted living room, gratified to see that Nuala had followed his instructions and was bundled up in the corner. He set his spoils on the coffee table and scooped the still-burritoed Nuala off the couch and took her into his lap.

If she would've told him to put her down or get away from her, he would have, even if he hated it, but she just eyed him curiously. Before he could insist she have some water and something to eat though, he owed her an apology and an explanation.

"I fucked up your scene and I'm sorry. That must've been really jarring and totally messed you up, and then I chased Anthony away before he could give you any aftercare, which is so shitty. If you're okay with it, I'll take care of you myself."

Another blink of those big blue eyes that felt like a pinch to his heart. Whenever he'd seen Nuala with Cabot she'd always looked so stiff and pristine. Indifferent and unflappable. This Nuala was a different creature altogether. One he'd caught glimpses of, but now it seemed like she'd lost

control of the mask she put on, and she must feel as raw as an exposed nerve. Poor thing.

“Okay.”

She was sitting on Remy’s lap. Not really sitting though, more like she was cuddled into the nest of his body, and he was holding her. Not tightly, but firmly, like he wasn’t going to let her go.

When Remy picked up the glass of water from the table, she tried to reach for it, only to realize her hands and arms were trapped in the blanket he’d wound around her. Embarrassed, she started to struggle but stopped when Remy squeezed her tight.

“I’ll do it, Nono,” he told her, putting the glass to her mouth. “You relax and drink up like a good girl.”

Good girl. Pleasure fell on her like fairy dust at his words, and she parted her lips so he could tip the cup and let her sip the cool water.

She couldn’t quite believe this was happening, but even if she’d actually fallen and hit her head when Remy interrupted her and Anthony, and this was some delusion or dream, she wasn’t going to turn it down.

After she’d drunk to Remy’s satisfaction, he replaced the half empty glass on the table.

“Are you warm enough?” he asked, chafing her shoulder through the faux fur blanket. It was her favorite.

“Yes, thank you.”

“Do you want more water?”

“Not right now.”

“Are you hungry?”

“No,” she told him, because she didn’t even feel like she had a stomach.

His mouth tightened but he didn’t look mad. “Okay. You’re going to eat something before you get up, but you can have a few more minutes.”

When she’d first met Cabot, she’d liked how high-handed he was. But it didn’t take long to realize his assumption of authority had nothing to do with taking care of her, and everything to do with making sure things looked a certain way, and that everything was under his control. It was all about optics and perception and being invulnerable because he wanted more power. Was hungry for it. Starving. And starvation would make people desperate. It certainly had Cabot.

Remy, though, was different. If he was a megalomaniacal power-hungry monster, he was exceptionally good at hiding it, here in his cabin in the woods. Or really bad at it. She preferred the first option, but time would tell.

“Do you need anything else? Bathroom? Ice? Arnica? Painkillers?”

“Why do you know all this stuff?” she blurted.

The corner of Remy’s mouth turned up. “Answer me first, and then I’ll tell you.”

“I’m fine,” she told him, which was true.

Yeah, her butt was sore and stinging but not in a bad way. If she was being completely honest with herself, she liked the

way her heated and tender backside felt snuggled into his... his... Well, best not to think about what part of Remy's anatomy her bottom was nestled against.

"You'll tell me if that changes."

"Yes," she agreed, slipping under his easy, confident control.

"Then I suppose it's my turn."

She could feel his lungs expand with his inhale, wondered if the furrow of his brow was annoyance or simply contemplation, and felt the weight of his attention when he locked his gaze on her.

"Do you think I fell off the turnip truck yesterday?"

"You don't look like a turnip," she told him.

Something like a glitter bomb went off in her chest when he laughed. Nuala joined him, although her chuckle felt dainty next to his bark of amusement.

"Glad to hear it," he told her with a grin.

Her cheeks got hot because not only did he not look like a turnip, but Remy was one of the most attractive men she'd ever met, and she was pretty sure he knew she thought so. Oh well. He knew a lot more about her than that now.

"I'm a grown ass man, Nuala, and I'm not a monk. I know what BDSM is."

"Yeah, okay, but there's a difference between knowing about the existence of kink and, like, *knowing* about kink."

"So true," he agreed, and why was his smile just so...

"Well, I do know a lot about it, but I'm not the most experienced person in the world."

“Samesies,” she confessed, and why did it seem like his eyes twinkled when she said that?

“Noted, and we’ll come back to that. But...”

His brows crunched again as he looked down at her. Definitely not mad, just trying to figure out what to say. He hadn’t run away screaming or looked disgusted but apparently this was awkward for him too. She’d argue not quite as awkward as it was for her since she hadn’t seen him naked. Yet. *Oh my goodness, Nuala, no. Just, no.*

“You know I’m a voice actor. Commercials, corporate training videos, stuff like that.”

“Yes.”

Nuala had seen his website after she’d maybe googled him. He had a long list of credits for all kinds of things, and she’d been impressed. He wasn’t just her hot, brawny, handy neighbor. Apparently Jeremy Watson was also a sought-after vocal artist.

“I also narrate audiobooks. Mostly romance.”

Nuala’s breath caught in her throat. *Oh no.*

“And not just romance. Mostly erotic romance, and predominantly kink. If you want to get really specific, I’m pretty popular in—”

“Daddy kink,” she choked out. “Ddlg romance. Age play.”

Her head spun, and if she’d been standing instead of cuddled up against him, she might’ve passed out. She’d thought he sounded familiar, but she never could’ve dreamed...

“I know you. You’re Kingston Rockwood.”

Chapter 4

So Nuala had heard of him. And even *heard* him. That was... interesting. He'd always gotten a subby vibe from her, but it hadn't been Little-flavored. Not that kink-dar was failsafe by any means, but he thought his was decent.

Of course, just because she listened to DDlg and age play audiobooks didn't mean she was a Little. He had a lot of fans who swore they were vanilla, and they just found it titillating. Or maybe they'd never been brave enough to try it, or found the right fit.

Hell, there was a reason why, even though he was sure deep in his soul that he could be a great Daddy, that he didn't have a Little girl of his own. Even though sometimes it felt like thousands of audiobook listeners lusted after him. He'd played with some people, had given up on dating vanilla women a long time ago, and had had a few short relationships with kinky women, but he'd never found someone who fit him just right.

“So you've heard my work?”

“You're my favorite,” she blurted, and another wave of crimson stained her cheeks. “I mean...”

“Thank you,” he told her, warmth spilling out his heart and coursing all the way down to his pelvis. “That means a lot.”

And it did. More than any of the fan mail he’d ever gotten, even though some of those hit him in ways he didn’t expect. People who were seriously ill and found respite in his voice, people who had discovered and explored desires because of the stories he brought to life. Yeah, it could be fucking heady.

Remy was well aware he wasn’t in medicine or the military or a first responder. He wasn’t curing cancer and he wasn’t fighting for human rights or solving climate change. But goddamn, it felt good to know he was making people’s lives better all the same. Didn’t hurt that he could bring some of them pleasure while he was at it. Although some of the fan mail Kingston got about that was a little too explicit for his tastes. Yikes.

“So that’s why you know all this stuff,” Nuala murmured, looking dazed as hell, like he’d made a major revelation.

He gave her a few minutes to process, and just when he was about to check in with her, those bright blue eyes focused in on him like laser beams.

“So you know about it, but do you... You said kink but you... I...”

Such a sweet, ruffled girl, and he wanted nothing more than to smooth her feathers.

“Am I into Daddy kink and DDLg and age play in real life? Yeah. Like I said, I’m not the most experienced person, mostly because I haven’t found the right partner, but I just feel it.” He put a hand over his heart. “In here, you know? And man, do I get jealous of all those heroes in the books I read. Not just of the sexy stuff either, although a lot of that’s pretty hot. But I

get envious of fictional characters, because I want a Little girl to look after and take care of and who looks at me like I'm the best thing that ever happened to her. Lucky bastards."

Nuala giggled, and she was just so cute when she wasn't wearing her skirt suits and heels or her clothes that looked like she was going hunting with the Queen. All that fucking tweed, Jesus.

"And what about you?" Remy asked.

Now that she knew Remy was Kingston Rockwood, it made every fantasy she'd ever had about either of them loom even larger. Not that Kingston and Remy were the same person—she could distinguish between fantasy and reality very well, thank you—but that *voice*. What she wouldn't do to have more of that voice.

They say not to meet your heroes, and she would've thought the same went for objects of auditory lust, but Kingston being Remy was better than she could've hoped for. Or worse.

"Hmm, Nono?" he prodded, giving her a little squeeze. "What about you?"

Part of her wanted to be as honest with Remy as he'd been with her—it would only be fair, after all—but part of her seized in panic.

"I-I can't talk about it," she told him, red hot fear ripping through her body.

The blanket she'd so enjoyed now felt stifling, and she flailed around to escape. The part of her that was relishing

being held told her to stop and enjoy what she had stumbled into, and what she probably needed after being ripped out of a scene like that. But the choked, burning terror was stronger. She was still disappointed when Remy let her go.

Nuala scrambled to her feet and crossed her arms over her chest. Maybe she could hold herself together. All the things Cabot had said to her about having to be perfect, needing to not have any skeletons in her closet, came crashing over her, and the searing heat was replaced by a flowing mountain stream fed by newly melted snow from the summit.

She'd risked enough by finding Anthony, and she couldn't risk any more. Even if she wasn't technically a Foster-Webb since the divorce, being one of them would stick with her for the rest of her life. Any wrong move she made, any scandalous thing she touched, would be fodder for the tabloids at best, and national mainstream media at worst. Her *parents* would see that.

“You should go. You need to go.”

Nuala swallowed hard and waited for Remy to get up and go back to his cabin. After a minute of studying her, he did stand but he didn't leave.

“I'm not going anywhere, Nuala. You're shaking, you're white as a sheet, and you need someone to take care of you. Call Anthony if you want and I'll wait with you until he comes back, but I'm not leaving you alone.”

“See?” the Little part of her whispered. “He's not going to hurt you. Cabot and the Foster-Webbs don't control you anymore. Let us have this one nice thing. Let us have a Daddy, if only for a little while.”

She wanted to, desperately. But grown-up Nuala needed assurances as much, and in some ways more, than Little Nuala. She'd made Anthony and Raven, the woman who'd introduced them, sign NDAs, for goodness' sake.

"I need you to promise me something," she said, her voice tight and wobbly at the same time.

"Anything," Remy responded without hesitation.

That soothed something inside her, made her heart shimmer. Cabot could barely order at a restaurant without going over his selection with his attorneys first.

"I need you to not tell anyone about this. It's very... personal and private, and I can't have gossip flying around about me. I've had enough of the press at my door, and I don't need any more attention. I've had more than enough to last a lifetime."

Remy nodded. "I get it. It's not the same because the stakes are lower, but I value my privacy too. That's why I have a pseudonym for my romance audiobooks. And even if I didn't have any concerns for myself, I would never violate your consent. Anything you tell me and anything I learn while I'm with you stays between us. You have my word."

She knew what calculating men looked like, even when part of their calculations included appearing earnest. She'd been married to one of the most Machiavellian men in the world for over a decade, after all. Every fiber of her being was telling her Remy was sincere.

So while it still made her stomach churn, she went to him.

Chapter 5

Folding a trembling Nuala into his arms felt like being handed a gift, precious and fragile. Remy knew he'd protect her with his life. He'd been willing to before, but that had been theory. Now it was a certainty.

"There now," he told her, holding her against him and rubbing her back. "That's my good, brave girl. I'm going to get you bundled up again, your teeth are chattering."

Nuala didn't fight him when he towed her back to the couch, wrapped her back up in the blanket, and picked her up to settle her back on his lap.

"Thank you," she said shyly, looking up at him. "I don't know why but sometimes after a scene, it seems like my body can't regulate its temperature and I go from hot to cold and back, over and over again."

"Good to know. You tell me how you're feeling, so I can keep you comfortable."

He filed that information away, hoping it would be useful in the future. Once he felt like Nuala had calmed some and was comfortable being snuggled up with him, he let his curiosity back out.

“With your privacy concerns, how did you meet Anthony? And am I correct in guessing he’s not your boyfriend?”

The very idea of someone who wasn’t him having Nuala made him feel itchier than a bad case of poison ivy, but he also wasn’t in the business of moving in on another guy’s girl or really trying to convince a woman who’d made up her mind that he was a better choice. He hadn’t gotten a boyfriend/in-love vibe from Anthony, but then again, he hadn’t given the guy much of a chance. Couldn’t say he’d think much of a man who abandoned his girlfriend after a scene, but Nuala had asked him to leave.

“Oh, um, no. He’s definitely not my boyfriend.”

Nuala’s pretty face pinched like she’d bitten into a lemon.

“When Cabot and I were getting divorced, I decided it was time for me to have things I’d always wanted but wasn’t allowed. I ate a lot of ice cream.”

Remy laughed, but what else hadn’t Nuala been allowed when she was married to Cabot? The thought made him nauseated.

“I also decided I wanted to try kink. I didn’t want to chance meeting anyone I knew in Clover City, and I didn’t want to go the stranger-from-the-internet route. So I reached out to a kink club around here and asked if they had any members who’d been vetted and might be willing to play in a private home, instead of at the club.”

“You talking about Savage?” he asked, and Nuala nodded. “I haven’t been there, but I know of it.”

“That’s how I met Raven, the owner,” Nuala continued, “and Anthony. He’s a good top, knows how to keep his mouth shut, and I’ve been able to experience a bunch of things I was

curious about because of him. But we're not... We don't... He's too..."

"So it's more of a play partner situation than a romantic one?"

"Yes, exactly. Partly because he's not..."

Nuala looked at him, as if asking for permission. The way his heart surged made him question if he was as bad as Cabot, because he loved the idea of having so much control over this woman.

"Go on, Little girl," he told her.

Yeah, her answering blush made his head swell like a balloon.

"He's not a Daddy."

"And that's what you want," Remy stated. "A Daddy."

"Yes. When I first met Cabot, I thought he might be able to give that to me. But really, he was just a bully. He didn't want a Little. If anything, he saw me being a Little as a liability and basically refused to acknowledge it."

She'd never told anyone this before, but here in her living room on Remy's lap and wrapped up snug in a blanket, it didn't seem so scary to share. She thought if anyone could appreciate what she was about to say, it would be her neighbor.

"I actually wrote a story a long time ago. It was a DDlg romance, and I really enjoyed writing it. But when I told Cabot, he said I had to destroy it and never write another one again. Because what if someone found it and either tried to

blackmail us or made it public to embarrass the family? So I stopped.”

Remy’s brows crunched as he looked down at her. “I’m so sorry, Nono. To have your creativity stifled like that, and your identity ignored and invalidated, must have been really hard. I hope you know that as far as I’m concerned, you being a Little makes you even more attractive than I thought you were before. Which was awfully damn attractive.”

What?

“You don’t have to say that,” she said, looking away, and feeling an unfriendly warmth crawling from her chest to her cheeks. “You’re being nice already. Don’t ruin it by saying things that aren’t true. I-I’m too old for you and I don’t do outdoorsy stuff like you and I scream when creatures get in my house and I’m divorced and...”

Then his fingers were gripping the tip of her chin again, just as they had a month ago, and Remy tipped her head up until she had to meet his gaze. She didn’t expect him to have a lopsided smile.

“You’re not too old for me. It’s a good thing that you’re divorced. You being a Little is fantastic. If you want to try outdoorsy stuff, I’m happy to teach you and go on adventures with you, but it’s honestly fine if curling up in front of a fire with a book is more your speed. I like feeling useful and like you need me when you ask me to help with a bat or a spider. And you’re one of the most beautiful women I’ve ever met. I was jealous that your asshole ex married you before we’d even met, so I didn’t have a chance with you. But now I do.”

Whoa.

“Are...are you saying you want to be...”

The words wouldn't come out. It felt like she was blowing candles out on a birthday cake and if she said her wish out loud, it wouldn't come true. If this fantasy had any chance of becoming reality, then she didn't want to ruin her chances by violating a superstition. Luckily there was no prohibition against someone else vocalizing a person's desire, and Remy did just that.

“Am I saying I want to be your Daddy? Yes, if you'll have me. To be honest, being here with you like this makes me feel like you're my Little girl already.”

So it wasn't just her. He liked this too, felt it too.

“Yes, please, Daddy.”

And then her Daddy kissed her. It was nothing short of magical, the way her body responded to him. The sensation of his mouth against hers made her melt at the same time she desperately wanted more. So nice of Remy to give it to her.

As per usual though, her busy, paranoid brain got in the way, and she pushed against his chest.

“But we're neighbors. What if...”

She couldn't bring herself to say it.

“What if it doesn't work out?” he supplied, one of his brows kicking up.

“Yes. That would be awful. I'd never be able to look at you again. I—”

“Would have to find someone else to haul your boxes and get rid of rodents?” he murmured, tucking some hair behind her ear before drawing his fingers through it. “No, you wouldn't. I'd still do those things for you, no matter what happens. But I've got a question for you.”

“What is it?” she asked softly, not trusting her voice to stay steady.

Because sure, he said that, and she knew he meant it. She wasn't questioning if he was a good, honorable person who would honor commitments they'd only imagined. It was more an issue of whether she'd be able to live next door, knowing what she'd had and lost, and still be able to get out of bed in the morning, never mind function.

“What if it does?”

A hundred images flitted through her mind of Remy being her Daddy. Sitting bundled up on his lap in front of a campfire, cooking together in her big kitchen, his handsome face hovering over her as they made love, holding hands as they walked through the woods, Remy giving her a private reading of one of her favorite books, being turned over his knee to have her bottom spanked... What if it did indeed?

“That would be really, really nice. But aren't you the Daddy? Aren't you supposed to be the cautious one?”

Remy shrugged his broad shoulders. “I promise I'll always be careful with you. But it's also my job as a Daddy to help my Little get everything they want out of life. And I've got a sneaking suspicion that you're far better at denying yourself than you are at taking risks that might pay off.”

That was true. She wrung her hands in her lap nevertheless and her fretting was interrupted by Remy gripping her chin again. Would she ever get tired of that? Would it ever fail to send a cascade of arousal through her? She didn't think so.

“No one knows the future, Little girl. And I can't make promises about how things might turn out. What I do know is

that I would regret it for the rest of my life if I failed to convince you to try.”

Nuala pinched her lips between her teeth.

“Isn’t it time for you to have what you’ve always wanted? I know you want this. You agreed off the bat, and now you’re letting yourself be plagued by doubts. Don’t keep this from yourself, Nuala. Don’t keep it from us.”

Remy had always thought of himself as a loyal, certain, straightforward kind of guy. He knew what he wanted and he went after it. He tried not to be stubborn—no sense in digging your heels into something that wasn’t working—or impulsive, but he’d never been more certain of anything in his life than that he could make Nuala Feury very, very happy.

He held his breath waiting what felt like forever but what must have only been a minute.

“Okay,” she agreed. “I want to try, but I’m scared. And I... I don’t know what I’m doing so you need to be patient with me, please.”

“Daddies are very patient,” he assured her. “And we’ll figure this out together as we go along. I promise that no matter what I ask of you, I’ll always have your best interests at heart, and I would give anything to keep you safe.”

“You did seem ready to tear poor Anthony limb from limb.”

“I absolutely was. Which reminds me, you should text him. And I owe you a door.”

Nuala’s dark brows creased in confusion. “A door?”

“Mmm, more like a window. In the door. That I broke. When I thought you were being assaulted.”

“Oh, well...”

The rosy spots against her pale skin made his embarrassment about his overreaction melt away. She was obviously flustered but not displeased. Which was a little funny given that he'd destroyed her property. He needed to at least get the glass cleaned up, so she didn't get any in the soles of her feet, and cover up the window. And try to convince her to stay with him until he could get that door fixed—or if not, let him stay here.

“What?” he asked, trying to figure out what was going on in her head.

“It's not at all politically correct.”

“Good thing I'm not in politics.”

“It's just...” Nuala looked over his shoulder as if she might find the answer or at least her nerve there. “Cabot would never fight for me. And even though I can take care of myself, it's nice to know you literally busted into my house ready to brawl, because you thought someone was hurting me. That's all.”

“Any day, Nono. I'll come to your rescue any day, for anything. Now why don't you get in touch with Anthony while I clean up that mess? And then I'll get you fed and cleaned up. What do you say?”

The smile that curled her lips made his heart light up like a neon sign.

“Yes, Daddy.”

Chapter 6

It had been two deliriously wonderful days since Nuala agreed to be his Little girl, and he'd seriously considered canceling the recording session he'd had today, because he didn't want to leave her. Not for a second, never mind a whole day.

After she'd talked to Anthony the other night and he'd cleaned up the broken glass and fastened a board from his woodpile over the window he'd busted, she'd allowed him to give her a bath and rub some cream into her bottom, which was red from the paddling Anthony had given her. He couldn't wait to have his palm tingly and hot from spanking Nuala himself, but that would come soon enough. Nuala had even acquiesced to him staying overnight with her—in her bed, no less—and it had been a dream come true to wake up with her cuddled against him, her plump bottom nestled against his morning wood. It had been a miracle that he'd kept himself from ravishing her as soon as he woke.

Instead, he'd made her breakfast and they'd talked about what they wanted out of this relationship, limits, and even ventured into some fantasies. She was damn near perfect, and honestly the places where they didn't totally mesh only served to convince him that this was real and not a dream. He'd maybe pinched himself a couple times just in case.

Now he was throwing his jeep into park in Nuala's driveway and jogging up the steps to where the window on her door had been repaired. She must've taken care of that, and he felt a twinge of guilt for not having gotten to it first. Mostly, though, he was excited to see her.

He'd checked on her a few times throughout the day by text, but there wasn't anything like seeing her in person, being able to take her in his arms.

The door was open, and he dropped his pack just on the other side of the threshold before collapsing on the couch. A split-second later, Nuala walked out of the kitchen looking like a treat. Jeans cuffed above her ankles, bare feet, a pink button-down shirt with the tails tied at her waist, and a headband with a bow holding back her dark hair.

"Come here, Nono," he said, patting his lap. "I want to give my Little girl some huggles and hear about your day."

The way her face lit up made his heart sing. It had been a long and tiring day, what with driving back and forth to Clover City and being in an unfamiliar recording studio and working with new people and having the pressure of knowing this could be a big, ongoing project if they liked him enough.

Having Nuala climb onto his lap and wrap her arms around his neck was better than any cocktail, and he couldn't help but hug her tightly and breathe in her scent. He hoped he could be a port in the storm for her, but she was a buoy for him too. Finally, he could bear to loosen his grip, which wasn't so bad, because then he could kiss her. And kiss her. Had to tear himself away from their lip lock actually, otherwise he'd throw her over his shoulder and take her upstairs and not do any of the things he'd planned to.

"So, what did you get up to?"

“Mostly reading, but also putting some stuff away. And I got the door fixed.”

“I wish you would’ve let me take care of that, hummingbird. I’m the one who broke it. Besides, that’s the kind of thing I want to take care of for you. Next time something’s busted, can I deal with it please?”

“Um, okay. If you really want to. But I had the time today. It wasn’t a big deal.”

“I do really want to,” he told her. “But I’m proud of you for taking care of it. Now I won’t worry so much about you being home alone.”

She smiled at him in that pink-cheeked flustered way she had. “You worry about me?”

“All the time.”

“Oh. I don’t want you to be worried, but...”

“But it’s nice to have someone who cares enough to worry about you?”

“Yes, exactly.”

Remy slid a hand over her jaw and cupped her cheek. “Well, I care about you that much. And I think about you all the time.”

I love you, he wanted to tell her, but he’d hold off. He’d come on strong enough already and he didn’t want his skittish little hummingbird to flit away.

After telling her about the recording job he’d done that day and kissing her more—goodness, she loved his kisses—Daddy

bounced her on his knee. “I’m going to make dinner now. I thought some spaghetti and meatballs for my pasta princess.”

“I can do that. You’ve been working all day, and I’ve been...not.”

The truth was, Nuala didn’t quite know what to do with herself now. Cabot’s career had taken over her life so thoroughly, she hardly knew who she was anymore—aside from Remy’s Little girl which, while wonderful, wasn’t a full-time occupation. And it had only been a couple of days. While she couldn’t help but dream about forever because it was making her so happy, she definitely couldn’t count on it. That would be the epitome of foolishness. She was a lot of things, but foolish was nowhere on the list.

“Nono,” her Daddy said with that warning tone that did funny things to her tummy.

“Yes yes?” she asked sweetly, and he laughed.

“Cooking isn’t my job, and I like cooking for you. It makes me feel good to provide you with nourishment, to care for you that way. And I love to feed you.”

Well, that she knew, after he’d fed her dinner last night, and she loved that too.

“Plus, I have something I want you to do for me while I make dinner.”

“What, Daddy?”

“Come on and I’ll show you.”

Remy took her hand and towed her over to where he’d dropped his bag by the door. From inside it, he pulled a paper bag from a stationery store, and from that, he took out a pretty

pink notebook with a red puffy glitter heart on it, and a pen that had a puff of pink feathers on the top.

“Those are for me?”

“Yes, Little girl,” he told her and handed them to her. “And they’re going to help you do your job.”

“What’s my job?”

She was good at a lot of things, and suspected she could be good at a lot of others, given the chance. Maybe Remy needed help running his business, or maybe he wanted her to make lists. Or maybe they were going to talk more about their dynamic and she was going to write everything down. That would be fun. Or maybe he wanted her to write lines? That seemed like a punishment though and she didn’t think she’d done anything bad.

“You, my hummingbird, are going to write a story.”

“What kind of story?” she asked, even though she was fairly certain she knew.

“I want you to write me a story about a Daddy and his Little girl. Just like you wanted to.”

“Why?”

He took her face in his hands and stroked his thumbs across her cheeks. “Because I want to encourage you to do anything and everything you’ve ever wanted to do. This doesn’t have to be a career or even a job if you don’t want it to be. It can just be for funsies. Or maybe because you like to turn your Daddy on. But who knows? Maybe you’ll like it and want to be an author. Or maybe you won’t, and then you’ll have a pretty notebook for whatever you want to put in it. All I’m asking is that you give it a go while I get us some food, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy,” she agreed, and felt like she had a sparkly red heart in her chest to match the one on her notebook when he leaned forward to kiss first her forehead, then the tip of her nose, and then her lips.

“Good girl,” he told her with a big smile that made her red sparkly heart so full she felt like it might burst.

Then he steered her over to the kitchen counter where she’d be able to see him while he made dinner and pulled out a stool from the counter. He patted the seat before patting her bottom. “Up you go, Little girl. I can’t wait to see what you come up with.”

Chapter 7

Watching Nuala hard at work, head bent over her new notebook and the feather-topped pen flying across the pages, was so gratifying. All it had taken was a ten-minute stop at a paper store and a few dollars and she looked as passionate as he'd ever seen her about anything—except for him, that was. The way her eyes got bright when she looked at him would swell any man's head.

It didn't take long to put together the simple dinner—he wasn't making anything from scratch this time, just trying to get them both fed after a long day and before he spent some time getting to know her better tonight. When he said Nuala's name to tell her dinner was ready, she had a startled expression on her face, like she'd been so wrapped up in her story that it was jarring to be yanked into the real world. He supposed he could've been offended, but he wasn't. Especially with the way she smiled at him.

“I'm having so much fun, Daddy. Thank you.”

“I'm glad, Little girl. I hope we're going to have more fun after dinner. Can you wipe down the table?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she chirped, and bounced off the stool she'd been perched on.

While she got the cleaning spray and cloths from under the sink, he retrieved the box that had arrived for him today. He brought it over to the counter to open, and then set to washing some of its contents.

When Nuala came back, she tried to peek around his shoulder. “What’s that, Daddy?”

“It’s a surprise for my Little girl, so no snooping. Go wait at the table for Daddy please.”

Her mouth tightened like she might argue. He wouldn’t mind if she got a little bratty with him—it might mean she felt comfortable enough to disobey, which he’d guess she’d never felt with Cabot—but he liked that she acquiesced easily with an adorable little “Yes, Daddy,” and went over to the huge wooden table as she’d been told.

When he was finished, he brought the serving dishes of food over. Then made another trip for a place mat, plate, and cutlery for himself, plus the things he’d had overnighted for Nuala.

He took a seat at the head of the table and patted his thigh. It was a gesture that seemed to mean a lot to both of them, set the scene somehow, started his Little girl down the road to the headspace he wanted her in.

“Come on, Little girl. Time to sit on Daddy’s lap so I can feed you dinner.”

Her sweet pink mouth rounded into an O. Yes, he’d fed her dinner last night, but that had been sitting next to him in her own chair. Well, that hadn’t been close enough to satisfy him, so tonight he’d have her as close as possible.

“Don’t make me ask again, hummingbird. Now, please.”

His gentle but firm request spurred her to action and she sat gingerly on his thigh.

“There’s Daddy’s good girl. Now let’s make sure you don’t get any tomato sauce on this pretty pink shirt of yours.”

He unfolded a bib covered in pastel pink, yellow, and blue flowers and snapped it around his Little girl’s neck. His sweet little bird licked her lips, kicked her feet, and squirmed, even though her hands were folded neatly in her lap.

“You like that, Nono?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said, licking her lips again like it was a compulsion.

“Good,” he told her, and then pressed a kiss to her cheek. “I do too. You look adorable. Now let’s get some food in this cute little tummy. Can’t have my Little girl be hungry.”

Having Daddy feed her while she sat on his lap had her plummeting into Little headspace. Which was fun but also a little scary. Being Little was being vulnerable. While she trusted Remy to be kind and keep her safe, it was still nerve-racking. Luckily, the spaghetti and meatballs were tasty and a decent distraction, even as he fed her off his plate with a special fork.

Once he’d determined she’d eaten enough, he dabbed at her mouth with the bib.

“While Daddy cleans up from dinner, why don’t you go put on one of the Little outfits you told me about yesterday?”

“Okay. What for?”

Remy's easy smile and the way he squeezed the outside of her thigh where his hand had been resting assured her he wasn't mad about being questioned. That was something she'd have to get used to, but she'd be happy to.

"I'd like to get to know you better," he told her, coasting his hand up to her neck and then drawing a finger down the open collar of her shirt.

"You, um, know me pretty well already," she said, her hips shifting on his thigh of their own accord. "Maybe better than anyone."

Her Daddy flicked open the next button on her shirt, and then the next and the next until her bra was showing.

"And I'd like to get to know you better still," he said, slipping a hand into her shirt and palming her breast.

He'd kissed her, a lot. Hugged and cuddled her so much. But this was the first time he'd pushed further, even though he'd already seen her naked—bathed her for goodness sake. It had been different then. Intimate and...loving, if she dared use the word, but this was blatantly, overtly sexual, and she was soaked between her thighs. She even had to let out a small moan when he lightly pinched her nipple through the lace of her bra.

"Especially get to know your body," he murmured against her neck before he kissed her there. "What you like, what turns you on, what gives you pleasure. And I'd like it if you were my Little girl while I do that."

"I— Oh," she said when he pinched harder and tugged at the firm bud. "Um, yes, please, Daddy."

"Okay then," he told her as he tipped her off his lap and lightly swatted her backside. "I'll meet you upstairs in fifteen

minutes.”

Remy barely remembered loading the dishwasher or washing the pots and pans or wiping down the table. He was sure he'd done all those things, but as he climbed the steps all he could think of was what Nuala might be wearing, and what he was going to do to her.

She responded so beautifully to even the smallest touch, and he couldn't wait to see what he could get her to feel. They were both going to have a very good time tonight, he'd make sure of it.

He went to the end of the hall and knocked on the door but didn't wait for a response before walking in. And there she was, standing in the middle of the big room, looking like a little doll.

Black hair in braided pigtails and wearing the sweetest little dress he'd ever seen. It was bright yellow, short and ruffly and had a frothy white petticoat underneath to give it some volume. Plus some white knee high socks, and black patent leather shoes with buckles. Yeah, she was just like a character out of one of the books he narrated, and his mouth watered.

He closed the distance between them in a few long strides and slipped an arm around her waist to pull her close.

“I love these,” he told her, tugging at one of her pigtails. “Actually, this whole thing is working for me. In case you couldn't tell.”

Maybe she couldn't through her layers of skirts, but his dick was already hard and the slacks he'd worn to the recording studio weren't doing anything to conceal his hard-on.

"Thank you, Daddy."

Remy scooped her up with an arm under her backside and enjoyed her squeal of surprise. And the next one when he tossed her on the bed.

"I feel bad about undressing you already, but—"

"Don't."

He chuckled at her eagerness. "I won't, then. But I'm also going to take more time than just shoving up your skirts and going at you."

Nuala shrugged as well as she could from her supine position, and he laughed again.

"Well if that's how it is..."

He pushed her skirt and petticoat up to her waist, his breath leaving his body when he saw she wasn't wearing any panties, and then drew her knees apart. Pink, wet, and welcoming, her pussy was irresistible. He positioned himself on his elbows between her thighs and bent forward to taste her. A single flick of his tongue over her clit had his little hummingbird bucking her hips, and he held her down while he continued to lavish attention on her sweet, swollen cunt.

She was already panting, and when he slipped a finger inside her, she moaned. Adding a second one because she was plenty wet to take it, Remy kept licking, then took her pearl of a clit into his mouth to suck while he thrust his fingers deep.

"Oh! Yes, Daddy, please. Please. I-I'm gonna— Oh!"

A gush of liquid met his tongue, and he felt her internal muscles pulse around his fingers. Either he was a goddamn erotic genius, Nuala had already been seriously turned on from their play earlier, or Cabot had been a cold son of a bitch and she'd been storing up that orgasm for years. Maybe a little of all three.

Chapter 8

Nuala's lashes fluttered as she looked up at the ceiling. That had been magnificent. And now Remy was sweetly kissing the insides of her thighs and talking to her.

“You were such a good girl, Nono, coming like that for Daddy. I love to hear your sounds and feel the way your body moves. Such a perfect Little girl.”

She couldn't help the giggle that bubbled up through her chest and out of her mouth. “I knew you had a talented mouth from your audiobooks, but I hadn't imagined...”

Remy laughed too, then crawled up the bed to cup her cheek and kiss her.

“Silly Little girl,” he said, and she ran her hands through his sandy hair. It was soft, and she thought he liked having his hair played with almost as much as she did.

“Just wait until you see what else I've got for you. I'm not anywhere near done with you yet.”

Without hardly a breath, her Daddy rolled her onto her back and kissed her until she was breathless. While he did, he also untied and loosened the bodice of her dress and slipped his hand in to cup and knead one of her tits. It felt even better without the thin fabric of her bra in between her delicate skin

and the callused pads of his fingers. She found herself arching under him in no time, and begging.

“More, Daddy? Please?”

“More what, Nono?”

“Mmm, you said there was more. That. I want that.”

“I want that too. You ready for Daddy’s cock or not yet?”

They’d talked about that yesterday and she’d given him the green light, but it was nice to be asked again. That he cared so much that he wanted to make sure. It made her feel that glowy, special kind of way Remy did.

“I’m ready, Daddy. Please.”

“Such a good girl with such nice manners,” he murmured right before he nipped her earlobe and then sucked the sting away. “Daddy’s going to play with you a little more and then you can have it.”

He pushed the loosened bodice down to expose her chest and then dipped his head to take her neglected nipple in his mouth. If he didn’t fuck her soon, he might not get the chance. At least not before she had another orgasm anyway.

She realized now that Cabot had reduced her to a cardboard cutout of herself; only useful for how she looked when propped up beside or, more likely, behind him. He hadn’t wanted or cared about her feelings, and she’d thought she’d been okay with that. Turned out having a lover, a Daddy, who wanted to provide for her, care for her, make her happy, and give her pleasure was extraordinary, and she was glad not to have gone her whole life without it.

After a few minutes of Remy’s wicked ministrations with that talented tongue of his, he stripped off his clothes and

grabbed a condom from the bedside table. She admired him as he rolled the latex down his length, and then he was between her thighs, rising between them with his beautifully muscled body on display. He leaned down and notched the head of his cock at her entrance, and then wound her braids into his fist, putting the most delicious tension on her scalp.

“Daddy’s gonna fuck his Little girl now, Nono. You ready for that?”

“Yes yes,” she said softly, and cried out when he pushed inside her, because it made her feel so full. Complete.

Fuck, his Little girl felt phenomenal. Hot, slick, and close around his dick. And the way she looked up at him with those wide eyes and pink, parted lips was better than he could have imagined. It took everything he had to start out slow, gliding in and out of her as she clutched at his biceps.

“Feel good, Little girl?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she answered, nodding and biting her lip.

“You still want more?”

“Please, Daddy.”

Remy put more force behind his thrusts, snapping his hips forward so hard the impact made Nuala’s small tits bounce. With her pretty little dress pushed down and rucked up to her waist, she was the perfect combination of sweet and sexy, demure and debauched. For him, she was everything. From the way she couldn’t tear her eyes away from him, maybe he was lucky enough that she felt the same way.

She felt something anyway, making the sounds she was, and he wanted to make her come again, feel her pussy clench around his dick.

“Come on, Little girl,” he told her, infusing his voice with some of the Big Daddy Energy he’d honed over dozens of audiobooks. “Come on Daddy’s cock. Show me how much you like having Daddy so deep inside you.”

Remy shifted the angle of his hips a few times to see if there was something in particular that would set Nuala off. He knew he’d found it when she cried out and her eyes rolled back in her head. Yeah, that was it.

A few more thrusts, a few more murmured encouragements, and then he felt it before he heard it: Nuala’s internal muscles tightening around him before the constant pressure shattered into a pulse, followed by Nono’s wordless cries of pleasure. The rhythmic squeezing plus her sounds had him spilling his own climax inside of her and shuddering with the power of it.

Finally drained after coming harder and longer than he ever had, he slid lazily in and out of Nuala, rubbing his nose alongside hers just to touch her more, pausing to kiss her pretty mouth. He didn’t want to break this connection, but he also didn’t want any panic over a condom sliding off to mar this perfect moment. So he kissed her once more, gripped the latex at his base, and pulled out.

His sweet Little girl looked like she was going to climb into his lap, which he wouldn’t mind, but first things first.

“Daddy’s going to get us cleaned up and then you can have all the huggles you want, hummingbird. I’ll be right back.”

Once a few warm, wet washcloths had done the trick, he pulled Nuala close and stroked her skin and hair, loved the way she rested her head on his chest. Sure, they had some details to work out and plenty of theories to put into practice, more negotiations, and stuff they didn't know they didn't know would come up for them to face. And he wasn't entirely naive. He knew only time would really tell if things would work out between them. But for his part, Remy felt like he would face down mountain lions to keep his Little girl this close, forever.

Chapter 9

Remy had been her Daddy for a week and it had been nothing short of amazing.

She mostly spent her days sorting out the house and getting all her ducks in a row. Now that she wasn't married to Cabot anymore, there were things she had to figure out for herself like bank and retirement accounts, what to do with some of the assets she'd wound up with in the divorce, taxes, credit cards, bills, and more. It was a veritable cornucopia of adulting, and it was terrible.

But after Remy was done with his recording and admin tasks for the day—being a voice actor sure involved a lot of paperwork, who knew?—they would spend time together. He would cook, she would write, sometimes they would shop online for Little things, and sometimes he would give her huggles while they watched a movie or talked.

It wasn't always easy talking about the dynamic they were building—it was far more fun to do those things—or even about their relationship. Cabot had always been so certain and oftentimes railroaded her into things she didn't really want or told her she wasn't allowed the things she did. Whereas Remy...

He cared so much what she thought and how she felt, but that meant she had to be more vulnerable with him. Which he made about as easy as he could with his firm but gentle manner, and his good-humored persuasiveness.

She still felt like a raw nerve sometimes and it was almost a relief to have to go back to all that grown-up nonsense, because she knew how to play that game, wear that mask. It's not that she liked dealing with accountants and lawyers and bankers and utilities and everything else, but at least it didn't poke at the most tender parts of herself she'd kept buried for years upon years.

Since Remy had gone back to his cabin after they'd had lunch together, she'd been sorting out more house things. Which included taking down a giant and very pricey painting she'd always hated. She'd have to call an art broker to see if someone wouldn't take it off her hands.

Taking the enormous and hideous canvas down had freed up a wall in the study, and suddenly it seemed imperative to redecorate. It would take a while to get new furnishings, but in the meantime, she could move stuff around so it looked and felt better. Then maybe she'd actually use this room. Or maybe Remy would like it...

Nuala blushed just thinking about it, and then shook her head. She could be a smitten, lovesick Little girl soon enough when Remy came over for the evening. But she probably had enough time to move this dark brown leather Chesterfield before he got here. She bent over, put her back into it, and started to shove the hulk of a couch across the room.

It startled the hell out of her when she heard Remy's voice. "Little girl. What did I tell you about moving heavy things by yourself?"

Standing up straight, Nuala's stomach dropped, and she felt like she melted, leaving a smaller version of herself standing in her pattering-about sneakers. Like she'd dressed up in her mom's clothes and had been caught doing something she wasn't supposed to. Of course, she had been.

"I..." Everything was jumbled up inside her, grown-up Nuala and Little Nono, mostly guilt mixed with a spot of defensiveness, and knots in her stomach for having disappointed and disobeyed her Daddy who she was so, so grateful for.

Which maybe explained why she burst into tears.

Fuck. He hadn't meant to make her cry. Had he been too stern? He hadn't raised his voice, but he had lowered the register and put some force behind it. And his sweet Little girl had started bawling.

He'd sort out what had happened, but first things first. He closed the gap between them and wrapped his arms around his sobbing Little girl. Stroked her hair and held her against him while she cried.

Finally, she sniffed and looked up at him, and Remy could see the difference right away. When he'd come in, Nuala must've been in grown-up head space. She'd been going about her business, getting chores done around the house, and he'd come in and yanked her hard and fast into Littlespace with his scolding. No wonder his sensitive little hummingbird was upset.

He swiped at her tears with his thumb and licked the resulting salt from his own skin. Even when she was sad, she

was so delicious.

“I’m sorry, Daddy,” she said, her voice faltering, chin still trembling. “I was big and I forgot.”

“I’m not mad at you, Nono. I’m just worried. Daddy makes rules to keep you safe. I know it can be hard to remember your rules when you’re feeling like a grown-up, and it’s going to take some practice to obey them all the time. Daddy will help you; that’s what Daddies are for.”

Blood surged to his dick when she blinked up at him and pinched her lips between her teeth before whispering, “Does that mean you’re going to spank my bottom?”

That had been something they had negotiated: consequences for breaking rules they’d agreed upon. It was also the first time Nuala had broken one of the rules, and the first time she’d be disciplined.

“Yes. Little girls get their bottoms spanked when they disobey rules. Let’s take care of it right now, and Daddy will deal with the furniture afterward.”

Another pinch of Nuala’s plump, pink lips between her perfect teeth but she didn’t start crying again. No, his brave Little girl sniffed and then agreed, “Yes, Daddy.”

It’s not that he wanted her to protest, but he would’ve understood if she did. This was so new for both of them. While he would have stuck to her being disciplined—she needed to trust that he would always follow through on consequences, whether positive or negative—he would’ve understood if she needed to process it in conversation first. And after the fact too, which he’d be expecting when this was over.

“Good girl,” he told her because she deserved praise for not arguing with him and accepting her discipline with grace. “Let’s go up to the bedroom and get you ready.”

Chapter 10

It was funny that Daddy was going to dress her, only to turn around and undress at least part of her. But having Remy tow her to the bedroom by the hand and stand her in the walk-in closet while he picked out her outfit from the Little side of the closet helped to ease some of the emotional whiplash she'd experienced. It was almost like she got a do-over and could slip into Little space, instead of being thrown ass over teakettle into it.

“There,” her Daddy pronounced after getting her dressed in a white t-shirt with puffy cap sleeves and light pink jumper with her favorite thigh high kitty cat socks. They were white and had kitty faces on the knees with little ears sticking up. “There’s my Little Nono.”

Yes, she felt Little now for sure, and even though she was nervous about her first punishment, she let Remy steer her over to an armless chair by the fireplace. He sat down and then tugged her over his thighs.

So embarrassing to be ass up over her Daddy’s knee, but also comforting somehow. Especially when he rubbed the backs of her thighs above where her stockings ended but her backside hadn’t begun. No undies as usual when she was Little.

“Daddy’s going to spank you for ten minutes, Nono. The next time you break a rule, it’s going to be fifteen. I’m going to give you a good warm-up because I’m not trying to mark you much, but by the end it’s going to hurt. If it gets to be too much, you say so, but keep in mind that this is discipline and not fun. Do you understand, Little girl?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. I’m going to start the timer and then begin your disciplinary spanking.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

Nuala wasn’t sure how she’d feel about being spanked for discipline instead of for fun. But no matter how this went, she appreciated how clear her Daddy was about what was going to happen, and how steady he was.

Her stomach was all anxious butterflies—or maybe hummingbirds, like her Daddy called her—but weirdly enough, that settled some once he started to spank her. That was familiar and expected, and she’d learned from her time with Anthony about how to feel everything, but to let it surround her, instead of drown her. Even when Daddy switched gears from warm-up to punishment, she could still manage.

“You’re being spanked for moving heavy things by yourself. Daddy is spanking your bottom to discipline you for breaking the rules, and also to help you remember them in the future. Little girls aren’t strong enough to move heavy things all alone. Little girls need their Daddies to help them.”

“Yes, Daddy,” Nuala agreed, even as Remy’s big hand came down across her backside.

It felt like he was talking about more than picking up boxes or moving furniture. Maybe he didn't mean it that way, but her heart thought her Daddy was trying to tell her it was okay to flat out need him. For anything.

“One of the ways Little girls learn is by having their Daddies spank them until their sweet little bottoms are bright red and stinging.”

Then Remy must be a really good Daddy, because her backside was feeling very well spanked. All hot and ouchie, and she didn't think he was done yet.

Remy had been keeping an eye on the timer and trying to pace himself with how hard and fast he was spanking Nuala. They were at the nine-minute mark and her precious little bottom was red and hot.

He'd had to trap her thighs between his own and pin her wrists to the small of her back, because she'd gotten squirmy and evasive. Which wasn't intentional misbehavior on her part, he knew, but pure self-preservation. Maybe they'd work on her staying still, or maybe not, because he loved holding her down.

For the last minute, he really lit into her, blows coming hard and fast but with no predictable rhythm. His little hummingbird tried to flail but was trapped, so she was left with making noise as her only outlet.

“Ow, Daddy! That hurts. I'm sorry, Daddy. I'm so sorry.”

Nuala was whimpering and on the verge of tears when the timer went off. He could've made her cry, but he was

confident he'd gotten his point across and Nuala had learned a lesson without turning into a sobbing mess.

"There now, Nono. All done. You're all done," he told her, rubbing her bottom that was such a beautiful shade of red and hot to the touch. "Let's sit you up for some huggles with Daddy."

Carefully, he got her disentangled and upright, and then settled her on his lap and took her in his arms to rock her a bit. He'd heard of some Littles who had a hard time seeking comfort from the person who'd disciplined them, but Nono didn't seem to have that issue at all.

No, she threw her arms around his neck and buried her face in his neck while he stroked her hair and her back and praised her.

"You were such a good girl," he crooned into Nono's shell of an ear. "Such a good girl taking your spanking. You're not going to move heavy things by yourself ever again, are you?"

"No, Daddy."

"And that's why Daddies spank their Little girls' bottoms. To help them remember the rules."

Also because it turned him on like a fire hydrant being opened, but that was mixed with a genuine desire to keep Nuala safe.

"Since you were such a good girl accepting your discipline, you get a reward. Are you ready for it now or do you need more huggles?"

Nono sat up, and he could see her face. She tilted her head like a curious puppy, and he had to swallow a laugh. "I get a reward? I thought I just got punished."

“That’s not how this works,” he told her with a shake of his head. “At least not between you and me. You might do naughty things but you’re never a bad girl. And you accepted your discipline without arguing or complaining. It’s all over now, and you can have a treat if you want it.”

“Oh, I want it.”

He chuckled at her earnest insistence.

“Then you’re going to have it.”

Chapter 11

When Remy had told her he was going to make her a banana split, she'd thought he meant he was going to make her an ice cream sundae and feed it to her while she snuggled on his lap. *Not* that she was going to be part of the frosty and fruity dessert.

But here she was, bent at the waist and bound over the edge of her dining room table—a table that had hosted some of Connecticut's most influential and powerful politicians and business tycoons—silky bamboo ropes around her wrists and ankles, with a banana nestled in the cleft between her butt cheeks and three scoops of ice cream melting just below her tailbone. Plus some whipped cream and chocolate sauce her Daddy had spooned over her hips. Good thing he'd put down a pad on the floor first, because she was a mess.

Not to mention that she was so turned on her arousal would be dripping down the inside of her thighs, if it wasn't already. Being spread out and bound like this was an enormous turn-on, as was the way he was licking and biting her all over. All her senses seemed heightened, or maybe that was just the contrast of the cold ice cream melting on her spank-warmed backside.

“Such a delicious Little girl,” Remy told her in between taking a bite of the banana and licking a trickle of ice cream from where it was dribbling down her bottom. “I could eat you all up. Devour you. I think I will.”

Then his mouth was on her again and she mewled. It felt so good, but it was such a tease. No penetration, and only sporadic licks over her clit or the entrance to her pussy. After a few more minutes, he paused his wicked ministrations and traded them in for a different sensation. His fingertips sunk into her hips and kneaded her flesh, reminding her of her spanking that felt at once fresh but also like it had happened ages ago.

“I’m actually getting a little full,” he mused in that voice that was as decadent and silky as the cream melting over her heated skin.

“Of ice cream,” he clarified. “Never of you.”

Oh. That wild sparkle glittered inside her again. It wasn’t a proposal, obviously, but it was so different from when Cabot had laid his cards on the table. That had involved a meeting with his parents, her parents, and lawyers.

“I think maybe I’ll share some of this sweet treat with my sweet Nono. You wait right here for a second, Daddy will be right back.”

And where, precisely, did he think she was going to go? Bound and helpless as she was, not to mention she didn’t want to trail the makings of this personification of a banana split all over the house.

A minute later, Remy was back, and she squealed when smooth, cold metal pressed against the entrance to her pussy. It warmed slowly as he stroked it over her slick, overheated skin,

and she realized what it was. A spoon. Which he then took and used to skim some melting ice cream from her skin.

She blinked at him when he held the spoon to her lips. She'd never...tasted herself.

“Open up, hummingbird,” he instructed, and without a thought, she obeyed.

The bottom of the spoon against her tongue was salty and slippery, and then the sweet cream poured over it, flooding her mouth.

“There you go, Little girl. You taste so good, see?”

“Mmm,” she agreed, which was as good as she could do.

“Now I think I'll give you a different sort of treat,” her Daddy mused, and her mouth watered.

He cleaned his Little girl up a bit because he didn't think she would appreciate being sticky or the squish of the remaining banana between their bodies. She could be fastidious, and he wasn't going to push that kind of mess on her tonight. This was supposed to be a reward after all.

Some warm washcloths did the trick, and he made sure to touch and tease her so all the arousal he'd built up in her wouldn't go to waste. Maybe turned down to a simmer from a boil, which was fine because he wasn't trying to torment the poor girl with edging. Today anyway.

Having her bent over and spread out like this was a treasure. A treasure he intended to plunder.

Remy shucked his own clothes, tossing them in a pile on the floor after retrieving a condom from his pocket and putting it on as quickly as humanly possible, and then strolled right up to where Nuala's bottom half was draped over the table. Let the fronts of his thighs brush the backs of hers and then nestled his throbbing cock where he'd placed the banana.

Nuala moaned, and he echoed her as she squeezed her bottom cheeks around his length.

"Fuck, Little girl, I can't wait to be inside you."

"Then don't, Daddy. Please!"

He reached up the table and slid a hand around her throat. "You sure you're ready for me, hummingbird? Maybe Daddy should check and see."

"Please, Daddy. Please, please," she chanted.

Remy slid his hand from her throat up to grasp her chin, and commanded, "Open."

Once Nuala had parted her lips, he pushed his middle finger into her mouth, and she started to suck.

"I think we need to get this Little girl a paci, since you like to suck on things so much," he told her, and his dick jumped at her answering mewl.

Yeah, a pacifier might embarrass his prissy little treasure, but she'd like it too and she'd look darling with one plugging her sweet mouth. For now, he fucked her mouth with his finger and added a second. Then he used his other hand to mirror the motion in her pussy.

His Nono had been right; she was soaking wet.

"Oh," he mused. "Look at that. My little hummingbird is soaked with nectar, so nice and wet and ready for Daddy's

cock. You're gonna take all of me, Little girl. And I'm going to watch your freshly spanked bottom bounce while I fuck you so hard you forget your name."

It was hard to make out what she said around the fingers he still had stuffed in her mouth, but to his ears it sounded a lot like, "Yes, Daddy. Please, Daddy!"

He switched hands so he could push his nectar-soaked fingers between her lips to suck and sunk his fingertips into her hip, so he could notch the head of his rock-hard dick at her entrance and slide in until he was balls deep.

Fuck, she felt good, all warm and slick and snug around his length. Remy plunged into her over and over and over, relishing the way she fit him like a glove. When he felt himself nearing the edge, he pulled his fingers from her mouth and let go of her hip, so he could reach underneath her to where her small breasts were jiggling with the force of his thrusts.

"You know, I forgot one thing when making my banana split," he told her. "The cherries. These will do just fine."

He grasped her nipples and pinched, tugging and rolling the buds between his fingers while he continued to fuck her. It was only a couple minutes until he felt Nuala's internal walls tightening around him, and he was going to finish her off, give her a dessert she'd never forget.

Fucking into her so hard he'd probably move a smaller table, he pinched and tweaked her nipples. "Come on, Nono. Come for Daddy. Enjoy your treat, Little girl. It's all for you."

If she'd ever had a climax quite like that, she didn't remember it. Not only was there a wave of orgasm that crashed over her, but Remy kept pounding into her until there was another crest and another, and only after the third did he let go of her sore nipples, grab her hips, and drive into her faster and faster until she felt the pulse of his own release inside her.

He collapsed over her back but didn't put his full weight on her. She loved the heat of his skin and the coarseness of the hair on his chest as he tried to catch his breath. Plus, the way that he kissed the nape of her neck and softly bit the slope between her neck and shoulder made her want to purr like a cat. This kind of genuine affection was new and heady, and she wanted to bask in it forever.

Eventually, though, Remy pushed back and unfastened the rope he'd used to bind her to the table and helped her to stand—but just for a moment because then he was hoisting her into his arms and urging her legs around his waist.

He took her over to the living room and settled them both into a corner of the massive couch. After a few minutes of being cuddled and caressed, the same thing kept sneaking into her mind.

She wanted to make the request as an adult, but she was finding it harder and harder to be in a grown-up headspace when she was with Daddy. Remy. Sheesh.

And since she was firmly in Nono-land after being spanked like a child, he needed to know that.

“Daddy?”

“Yeah, Little girl?”

“I wanted to ask you for something.”

“Go ahead, Nono. You can ask Daddy for anything.”

Whenever Remy said things like that, she felt like she sparkled inside. Cabot would never, and it had seemed sensible to settle for what he could offer because she could never have what she actually wanted. But she was maybe learning that she could.

“I don’t like it, but I need to be big sometimes,” she said, and then twisted her mouth to the side because she wasn’t sure quite how to explain this. “Like when I pay bills or have to talk to lawyers and stuff.”

Remy nodded. “I know. You have a lot of grown-up responsibilities.”

“I think I got so upset today because I was feeling big and then all of a sudden, I was Little. It was really hard.”

So hard Nuala felt like she might cry all over again just from the memory. She tried to swallow the tears, but they wouldn’t be stopped. Fat droplets rolled down her cheeks, and she started to hiccup.

“You need a minute, Nono?”

She shook her head, even though her handsome Daddy looked blurry through her crying. “No, I want to say it. I’m just upset.”

“That’s okay,” he told her, wiping away her tears and then sucking them off his thumb. Why did she like that he did that? Maybe because it made her feel like Remy wanted all of her. Not just the pretty and proper shell Cabot had valued, but every messy, imperfect, and Little inch of her.

“You’re being so brave. I know it’s hard to talk about your feelings,” her Daddy continued. “I don’t mind if you cry. You just tell me if you need a huggle break.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl.”

She took a deep breath, or tried to, because it turned into more of a sniff. “Can we try having a signal or something for when I have to go between being big and Little? Like a code word or, I don’t know, some kind of tradition or something? I think it might be easier if there’s some sort of transition and not just ‘Bam, you’re Little!’”

Daddy nodded again, and she loved how seriously he took her, especially when she was Little.

“That’s a very reasonable request, and a good idea on top of that. I think we can absolutely come up with something that helps you go between the times when you need to be a grown-up and when you’re Little. Maybe more of a process than a codeword too, since it seems like giving you some time to adjust would be helpful.”

Remy seemed to withdraw in that thoughtful way he had. It didn’t make her feel lonely though, not with the way he was still stroking her skin and knowing he was thinking about how to be the best Daddy for her.

“What if we tried having Daddy dress you in your Little clothes as soon as I get here? I can text you when I’m on my way and you can wait for me in the closet. If you need to stay grown-up to get some things taken care of, you can tell me that, and I can put you in Little clothes after you’re done.”

She’d had faith in him, but it was so nice to have her Daddy be so thoughtful and do the best he could for her. It made every part of her feel glowy and warm, and not just her well-spanked butt. “That’s a really good idea, Daddy. I like it. Thank you.”

“You’re very welcome, Nono,” he told her, tapping the tip of her nose. “Thank you for telling me what you need. We’ll give it a try and see how it goes.”

Chapter 12

One of the many reasons she liked Remy was that she felt like she could be open and be herself with him, but he also understood the value of discretion. Being an audiobook narrator meant he had fans, and some of them could be kinda creepy. Like they felt entitled to information about Kingston's life, and in some cases his attention. Which was why there might be photos of Jeremy Watson on his website, but there were no pictures to be found on Kingston Rockwood's.

So when, a few weeks into their relationship, he'd asked her to go to Hive, a kink club in Clover City, he'd easily accepted her request to wear a disguise of sorts. Not that most people would recognize her without Cabot standing in front of her, but she didn't really feel like taking the chance. Plus, it was fun to dress up even more than usual.

For tonight, Daddy had put her in her sexy kitten outfit—some black thigh-high stockings, no undies, a black velvet garter belt with a matching demi bra, an underbust corset, and a fluffy tutu skirt. She was about ready to burst from being turned on already, and he still had more things for her.

Her stomach was all butterflies at the same time as her heart felt steady and calm, and she was probably leaving a wet spot on the towel Daddy had put down on her vanity chair. She

felt so spoiled that he'd taken the time to give her a spa-worthy manicure and pedicure, painting her nails the softest shimmery pink, and now he was brushing out her hair. Even though she'd been far closer to American royalty as Cabot's wife, with the Foster-Webb name marking her as part of a great political dynasty, she'd never felt as much like a princess as she did at this moment.

"There's my gorgeous Duchess," he told her, using her kitten name. "No more tangles in this pretty hair of yours."

She felt like a kitty as he stroked her hair. When he put a big, warm hand to her cheek, she leaned into his palm. She'd never felt as much like she belonged.

"Now Daddy's going to put this up in braids, so it doesn't get in the way of all the wicked plans I have for you tonight," he told her, catching her gaze in the mirror and holding it as he grabbed a handful of her hair at the roots and twisted, pulling her scalp taut and making her moan.

How had so many of the things she'd hated as a kid, like her hair being pulled and nap time, turned into such favorites? Then again, playground bullies had never pulled her hair like this.

Indeed, Nuala barely recognized herself in the mirror from even a month ago. Her cheeks were rosy, her lips full and parted instead of pressed into a thin line, and her eyes were bright and wide open. It was so easy to let Remy inside of her in so many ways, and she was embarrassed to find herself wondering if he'd make her feel this good forever.

Sure, they'd known each other for years, but that was as neighbors, and ones who only lived next door part-time and didn't talk much at that. How could she think about forever with this man? He'd probably tire of her, especially when she

started showing her age more and he was still young, and then got to look distinguished in that way men did.

But maybe. Maybe. He sure made her feel like he intended this to be forever.

Remy's eyes were kind and dangerous at the same time as he wrapped his other hand around her throat. Not to choke, but to hold, and she could feel the contained power behind her, waiting to be flexed and unleashed on her. It made her shiver.

“Say ‘yes, Daddy.’”

“Yes, Daddy,” she whispered, and then swallowed.
“Please, Daddy.”

“Oh, there's my pretty kitty with her nice manners. You're going to be my sweet little kitten tonight, aren't you Nono?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she agreed.

“Good girl. Now let's get this hair done up, finish getting you dressed, and get on the road.”

Remy pulled his jeep into a spot in the crowded parking lot and then reached over to squeeze Nuala's thigh. She looked so goddamn fine that people had honked at him at a couple lights. He'd been so taken by her that he hadn't noticed when they changed from red to green. The black velvet cat ears with the pink rhinestones were stunning on his Little Duchess. Such a sweet kitty.

“You ready, Nono?” he asked, studying her face.

She did look nervous, but that was okay. A little tension, some anticipation, never hurt anyone. If anything, they could

make a person feel more, and he wanted to make Nuala feel so many things tonight. Mostly like she was his, and he was trustworthy. A few orgasms and maybe some pain to get her system flooded with endorphins would be good too. To be completely honest, he wanted to give this woman everything, but he'd settle for what she'd allow him for now and earn the rest.

“As ready as I'll ever be.”

“That's fair. Looks like it'll be busy tonight, so that's good. It'll offer more anonymity, let us get lost in the crowd.”

Nono nodded.

“Just a few things before we go inside.”

She blinked those round eyes of hers, looking every inch the curious kitten he'd dressed her up to be.

“Number one: You don't leave my side. If you need something, including if you want to leave, you ask. Number two: This is supposed to be fun. I know you're anxious, but you need to give it a shot. If you can't relax and enjoy yourself, we'll leave. Your feelings are more important than a night out, understand?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. A couple reminders: No real names, just Duchess and Daddy. Anyone makes you uncomfortable, you tell me right away. You follow all my instructions and show me what a good, obedient kitten you can be. Following instructions doesn't mean you're not allowed to ask questions. Ask away.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“And a few final things.”

He reached into the backseat of the jeep and pulled out a soft, silky bag. Nono looked at it but didn't reach for it or ask any questions. She was a patient Little girl so much of the time, which bothered him. He felt like it was a remnant of her marriage to Cabot when she was expected to act like a lady—whatever the fuck that meant—not ask questions, and not do anything so inconvenient as having feelings.

It was a funny thing to wish for, since so many caregivers spent a ton of time trying to get their Littles to be more patient. But that was one of his goals—to get Nuala to feel like she could really be Little, and he'd still love her even if she was naughty sometimes.

Remy opened the drawstring and pulled out the contents of the bag. He almost chuckled when out of the corner of his eye he could see Nuala's lips part. She was interested, all right. And she should be.

He separated out the pieces and laid them over the center console.

“Cuffs and a collar for my pretty kitty,” he told her, his heart beating faster as he waited for her reaction.

He didn't have to wait long. There was a blur of black, and then it felt like the life was being crushed out of him. In a nice way.

“Thank you, Daddy,” Nono said from where her face was buried in his neck. “Thank you, they're so pretty.”

He'd tried to walk a line between sparkly—because what Little girl didn't like sparkles—and not too gaudy, because Nuala was still kind of uptight. When he'd seen the super pale pink restraints with the sandy glitter, he'd thought they were just the thing and apparently Nono agreed.

“You’re welcome, Little girl,” he told her, returning her hug and rubbing her back.

It seemed to him that, for as rich as those Foster-Webbs were, Nuala had never actually had what she wanted. All the more ways for him to spoil her and show her how cherished she was.

“Let’s get these buckled on. Daddy can’t wait to see you wear them.”

Her smile when she pulled away was almost blinding in the dark parking lot, and he enjoyed the hell out of circling her slim wrists and fastening the buckles so they were snug. The collar would be even more fun, but he wanted to show her something first.

“Did you read the tag?”

Her pink-glossed mouth turned down at the corners, and she reached for the heart that was dangling from the D ring on the collar. She picked it up and smiled as she read, “Duchess.”

“Turn it over,” he instructed with a tip of his chin.

Her smile got bigger and her cheeks darkened as she read off, “Daddy’s Little Kitten.”

“Thank you, Daddy. You’re the best, I love them.”

“And I love you,” he told her with a tap to the tip of her nose.

It’s not that he’d expected her to say it back—Nuala was still far too buttoned up for that—but the silence between them was deafening. He put both of them out of their misery by taking the collar from her and buckling it around her neck.

Remy wasn’t an ownership kind of guy. Nuala was her own person, and the notion of a person being property made

him sick. Even in a kink context, it squicked him out. But damn if there wasn't something about his Little girl wearing a collar, belonging to him and with him, and the notion that she'd always find her way back if she got lost. That, he was in for.

Chapter 13

Nuala wasn't sure what she'd been expecting from the inside of a kink club, but it wasn't this. It was much...friendlier than she thought it would be. And cleaner.

They weren't members, obviously, so Remy had signed up for an open house of sorts. There were indeed a lot of people, and a mix of current and prospective members. They'd been greeted at the door by a mountain of a man and a pixie of a woman who had introduced themselves as Hudson and Cosima, two of the owners of the club.

It had stunned Nuala, but also made her feel more welcome, when they said Hudson was Cosima's Daddy—people just said those things? Out loud? In a world where she hadn't even been allowed to write fiction about that kind of dynamic without fear of being discovered and ruining her husband's political prospects? Nuala didn't think she was easily impressed, but all she could feel was wowed.

She and Remy had been walking around the space, admiring the set-up and even stopping to watch a few scenes play out, when she tugged on his hand that she'd barely let go of all night.

“Um, Daddy?”

“Yeah, Duchess?”

“I need to use the bathroom. It’s right over there.”

“You want me to walk you over, or are you okay going by yourself?”

The idea that he would walk her thirty feet made her feel all squishy and Little, but he really didn’t need to do that and leave the bondage demo they were watching. Partly because she thought she’d like for him to try some of the things they’d seen on her later.

“I can do it, Daddy. And you can save our spot and make sure we don’t miss anything.”

“Okay, Little girl. Can do. I’ll be right here when you’re done.”

A few minutes later, she was leaving the restroom, and with her gaze fixed on her Daddy as she walked across the room, she bumped into someone. How embarrassing.

But when she looked up to apologize, things went from unfortunate to hellish because she saw a very familiar face. A face that seemed to reflect her own shock.

“N—“

Lowell elbowed his older brother in the ribs, but honestly, Hux saying her name wouldn’t have made things much worse.

It felt like her stomach and her heart swapped places, and the internal switcheroo made her want to puke. Yes, she definitely might vomit.

What were they *doing* here? Well, it was kind of obvious the kinds of things they were doing here, especially with Tamsyn dressed the way she was—like a Little in a sweet

hunter green corduroy jumper and white knee socks—but...
Fuck. Holy fuck.

Nuala had felt as though her life went up in flames when Cabot was arrested. She'd also realized the life she'd built wasn't actually one she wanted. It may have looked nice from the outside, but it was actually hollow.

This time though... She liked her life now, she was fairly certain she loved Remy, and she didn't want everything to burn down and have to start all over yet again.

Hux had always been kind to her, and Lowell had always been...Lowell. Standoffish and looking like he was gathering intel and calculating how much every person in the room was worth in money and power. She hadn't talked to any of the Foster-Webbs since Cabot had been arrested on the advice of her attorney, and she had no idea what they thought of her.

She couldn't imagine Hux had been happy that his brother had tried to have his now-wife murdered, and there'd always been a vibe that said Lowell didn't think of Tamsyn as simply his brother's girlfriend. But the Foster-Webbs stuck together, and she'd divorced their brother. Testified against him and refused to provide an alibi. She was fairly certain she was on the matriarch's shit list—Victoria was the type to close ranks and protect the family legacy at any cost, and Nuala had broken those commandments. But the twins?

She didn't want to find out.

Even though the damage was probably done—she'd seen Lowell end people with far less than this—she turned and ran.

Remy had looked away from the bondage demo to check if Nuala was on her way back to him from the restroom, when he saw the flash of her pink rhinestone ears and pink shimmery collar as she bolted.

It was so fucking infuriating that he couldn't even call her name. Where was she going? What the hell had happened? It wasn't easy to make his way through the throng of bodies without stepping on toes or running into anyone, and he'd lost ground by the time he got to the exit, because Nuala was tiny and had been able to slip through the crowd more easily.

And goddamn these leather pants, because while his ass looked phenomenal, they were not meant for sprinting. Lucky for him, once they were out in the open and he didn't have to worry about slamming into anyone, his Little girl didn't have a chance at outrunning him. Within a couple blocks, he'd managed to pass her and plant himself in the middle of the sidewalk. If she wanted to get by him, she could try, but she wasn't going to succeed.

“Duchess. Slow down. Tell Daddy what's wrong.”

“No!” she screamed, her hands balling into fists while tears streamed down her cheeks. “I have to get out of here. You don't understand. I can't be with you anymore. Leave me alone. Everything is ruined. Get away from me, and don't talk to me. I need to leave.”

This was a meltdown on a scale he hadn't seen from her. Yeah, she'd burst into tears before, but this was outright panic and losing her shit.

“Whoa there. I hear that you need to leave, and I can help you with that. But there's no way in hell I'm leaving you alone.”

“You’re just making it worse!” she shrieked and covered her head with her arms, hiding her face. “Get away from me while you still can. Don’t tell anyone you know me. Burn my notebook. You don’t know what these people are capable of.”

“These people?” he muttered out loud, although mostly to himself. *What people?*

“The Foster-Webbs,” Nuala said, starting to pace and looking absolutely frenzied. “I should’ve never gotten involved. I should’ve—”

Okay, her ex-husband’s family. But why was she upset about them now? Had something happened at Hive? Had she gotten a message on her phone? “Nuala, baby, what do your ex-in-laws have to do with anything? I—”

“Perhaps I can clarify,” volunteered a smooth, deep voice that sounded like money.

Remy had been so occupied with Nuala, he’d completely failed to notice the people who’d approached them from the direction of Hive. But with a glance at their faces—

Fuck, that was Huxley Foster-Webb and his twin, who Nuala had mentioned—and damn if he could tell them apart—a blond woman, and a tall, lanky redheaded guy.

His first instinct was to put his body between Nuala and these people. He worried about her running, but he wasn’t going to leave her exposed. There was a mix of relief and heart-breaking empathy when she cowered behind him, grabbing onto the back of his shirt and whimpering.

“You hurt her and I’ll kill you,” he seethed and spread his arms to provide his Little girl with more protection.

“No one’s going to kill anyone,” said one of the twins.

For some reason, Remy thought the man holding up his hands like he was trying to placate everyone was Huxley, the former state rep, but he couldn't be sure.

“Then why are you here, and why is Nuala so fucking terrified of you?”

“Because anyone with a lick of sense would be,” drawled the other twin, who'd stuck a hand in the pocket of his dress slacks. Who the hell wore a tie to a kink club?

“Lolo, you are *not* helping,” the blond woman said, shooting him a dirty look and putting her hands on her hips. She, on the other hand, was dressed very appropriately in a dark green jumper with brown Mary Janes, and her hair in braids—whoever she was, she was probably a Little.

“Who said I was trying to?”

Yeah, that was definitely Lowell.

“Well, you should be!” scolded the blonde.

The woman then turned to the man he'd determined was Huxley, and with pleading eyes asked, “Can't you do something about this?”

Nuala pressed to his back, and he could feel her shuddering against him. He'd stand between her and trouble all day, any day, but he really preferred it when she was shuddering for different reasons.

“Nuala,” Huxley said and then tugged the blond woman into his side by her hand. “I swear on my Little girl's life that no harm will come to you because of us. Isn't that right, Lo?”

It took a beat, but the other Foster-Webb twin nodded. “Yes. I think this family's done quite enough harm to you

already. But could we discuss this further elsewhere? My skin is crawling.”

The redheaded guy who’d been standing off to the side piped up. “If you’re willing to come back to the club, we’ve got a back room that can give you some privacy. I’m Ian, one of the owners, by the way. I don’t think we’ve met. And I can stick around or not, depending on what everyone would be most comfortable with. I’m sure Hudson or Ryker would be willing to referee too.”

It felt like everyone looked past him to Nuala, which seemed reasonable enough. But he also wasn’t going to let them pressure her into something she wasn’t comfortable with.

Remy turned and pulled his Little girl in close, while still shielding her from the interlopers.

“What do you think? I’ve got a pretty good eye for liars, and I’m not getting that vibe from any of those people. Even the kinda slimy one.”

That made Nono huff a tiny laugh. “Lowell isn’t slimy, he’s just...cunning. Maybe a little morally flexible. But not a liar.”

“Good to know.” He’d keep an eye on that one nonetheless. Right now, he rested a hand on Nuala’s shoulder and studied her face. “So, what’ll it be?”

“Will you come with me?”

“Try and stop me.”

The back room Ian showed them into wasn’t nice. It was clearly meant for storage, but it would serve their purposes

well enough. If Lowell had stopped looking over his shoulder, then she could too. Especially with Remy at her side, holding her hand, his gaze shifting between the other people in the room and looking like he was ready to start a fight with any one of them. She was so grateful that after she'd screamed at him, he'd still stuck by her side.

"I think everyone's had quite a shock tonight," started Hux. "You obviously weren't expecting to see us here and I have to tell you, the feeling is mutual."

She'd been too panicked to think about this situation from Hux and Lowell and Tamsyn's perspectives, but that made sense. They were probably just as invested in their privacy as she was, if not more so.

"We're members here," Hux continued. "And it's one of the few places that we're open about our true relationship. I'm assuming you know Tamsyn and I got married."

She nodded. "I got the invitation, but my attorneys advised me to not even talk to any of you, so I definitely wasn't going to show up at the wedding."

"I can appreciate that," Hux said easily.

She'd always liked him the best of her in-laws. Their father, Gerald, had been kind to her too, before he passed away, and the youngest sibling, Keaton, was a good kid. Their sister Holland was a little scary but seemed fundamentally decent. The rest of the family, including her ex-husband though...

"I want to assure you that while my mother may not agree, no one in this room bears you any ill will. Not for testifying against Cabot, and not for divorcing him, either. He made his choices, and he can deal with the consequences. Cabot was

wrong about a lot of things, but he got one thing right. Lo and I are both Tamsyn's Daddies. We're a family."

As if to confirm, Lowell stepped closer to Tamsyn and put an arm around her waist. Nuala couldn't picture Lowell being a Daddy the same way she could Hux, but his claiming of his Little girl made her like him better.

"Now you've got some dirt on us. Which I hope you'll keep to yourself but that's not up to me anymore. It seemed only fair."

"Thanks," she murmured, her eyes watering from the gesture. "Your secret's safe with me. I feel terrible about what Cabot did, and I swear I had no idea. I'm so sorry. I wish I could've done something to stop him. I never had any issue with any of you, that's not why I ran. I just..."

"Lolo is fucking terrifying," Tamsyn volunteered, and Nuala had to laugh.

"Well, yes. Although less so when you call him 'Lolo,'" she amended. Her stomach only lurched a little when Lowell narrowed his eyes. "Seeing you here, not knowing how you felt about me, and being well aware of what Lowell is capable of..."

Remy squeezed her shoulder, and she was so grateful to have him beside her. She also owed him an apology, but hopefully witnessing this conversation would help him understand what had been stampeding through her head when she flipped her lid and told him they couldn't be together and, maybe worst of all, ran.

"That could make anyone panic," Hux agreed. "No one's offended, no feelings were hurt. We just wanted to make the

situation clear. And to be honest, I've always liked you, Nuala. You deserve a lot better than Cabot."

Hux looked meaningfully at Remy, and her face flamed. Her brother-in-law's implication was clear; Remy might be that man. She thought so too. He was a far better man than her ex-husband. But it was far too soon to say if he'd be her Daddy forever. Wasn't it?

Chapter 14

They had stayed at Hive for a little while, giving her a chance to catch up with Hux and Lowell and also spend some time with Tamsyn, who was lovely and also a Little. Nuala would be telling her lawyers that she understood their concerns and was happy to have no contact with Cabot and Victoria, but she would resume relations with the rest of the Foster-Webbs as she saw fit.

For as much as she was curious about what else Hive had to offer and had enjoyed their time there, by the time they'd said goodnight to Tamsyn and the twins, Nuala was ready to go home. Her nerves had been tossed into a blender and liquefied, and she was exhausted.

Of course her Daddy was only too happy to bundle her into the jeep and drive back to Thistledon. While they usually stayed at her house, she asked if they could stay in Remy's cozy cabin tonight which didn't have anything to do with the Foster-Webbs. Because yes, it had turned out to be a positive experience in the end and she would need to address her lingering anxiety and trauma, but none of that was happening tonight. Her Daddy agreed easily and insisted on carrying her inside which felt a little silly but also delighted her.

Remy sat on the couch and settled her in his lap, one of her favorite places on earth, but she didn't think she was solely in for huggles.

“How you doing, Nono?”

“Okay.”

Daddy nodded. “Seems reasonable. You know there are consequences for you running from me tonight, right?”

Her mouth twisted up, but she knew he was right. She had agreed to the rules, and she'd broken them. What could things have been like if she'd gone to Remy in the first place? They maybe could've avoided the scene in the street and gone straight to talking things out in the back room. That would've been preferable for everyone involved. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Are you too tired to be disciplined tonight or do you want to get it over with?”

Nuala took inventory of her body. Yes, she was tired, but not too tired. And besides, it would be nice to have it done with so she could wake up with a fresh start.

“Tonight is good. Then I'll get to sleep and tomorrow is a new day. Clean break from today.”

“I think that's a good idea. Do you need anything before we get started?”

“No, Daddy.”

“Then up you get, hummingbird. Stand in front of me.”

Remy tipped her off his lap and she stood in front of him, wringing her hands. She hadn't meant to misbehave, and she thought her Daddy knew that, but she also wanted to be so good for him. It really did feel icky to have disappointed him.

Daddy looked up at her from where he was sitting on the edge of his couch.

“You’re going to be spanked because you ran from Daddy after I told you not to leave my side. I know you were scared, but that’s when you run *to* me, not away from me. Daddy is here to help you, and I can’t do that if you run away. A red and sore bottom will remind you not to run away again.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she agreed.

“Over Daddy’s lap, then,” Remy told her with a pat to his knee.

Nuala pinned her lips between her teeth. She agreed that she’d broken a rule and that she deserved a spanking for being disobedient. It was still so hard to make her limbs move.

Remy wasn’t impatient though. He gave her a minute and when she was still frozen, he patted his knee again.

“Come on, Nono. Be a good girl for Daddy and submit to your discipline. You’ll feel better when it’s over, and if you’re well-behaved during your punishment you know Daddy will reward you.”

She did know that. And she knew that while she might end up with a hot, stinging, and possibly bruised backside, Remy wouldn’t really hurt her. And there was something so tempting and seductive about submission. Wasn’t that what she’d always wanted? Wasn’t that what she’d been looking for when she found Cabot instead? And hadn’t Remy showed her that he was worthy of that gift?

It still wasn’t easy, but Nuala offered her hand to her Daddy. Remy took it, and she swore strength flowed through their connection and allowed her to take the last step and bend over his lap. Weirdly enough, once she was draped across his

thick thighs, she felt better, more relaxed. Almost like the hard part was over now.

Having Nuala settle herself across his lap and offer up her pert little bottom for discipline had his brain on the verge of exploding. Heady was not a strong enough word for the feeling of having the most gorgeous, poised, sophisticated, and intelligent woman he'd ever met submit herself to his discipline. She truly believed he knew best, and he wasn't going to prove her wrong.

He turned up her skirt and exposed the creamy skin of her bottom, accentuated by the black garters that were clipped to her stockings. Those clasps had to go, though; he couldn't have them digging into her skin and possibly cutting her. So he unfastened them and then unhooked her garter belt, but left the stockings. The space between her flipped up skirt and the thigh-highs was a perfect space to apply her punishment.

"You're going to be spanked for twenty minutes, Nono. Hard enough to make you cry, because Daddy thinks that kind of release will help you feel better. But you let me know if it's too much."

"Yes, Daddy," his Little girl murmured.

She knew how this went, but he always liked to remind her. There was always an out, always an escape hatch, because he never wanted to harm her.

"Then let's get started."

His palm clapped down on her pale skin, and turned it pink right away. He'd warm her up well, but he was going to go

hard on her tonight. Sometimes tears were just the catharsis a Little girl needed to wipe the slate clean, and he wanted to help her do that. No, she wasn't ever going to be completely safe from being a person of interest because of her connection to the Foster-Webbs, but knowing the twins and Tamsyn wished her well was a huge relief. The trio had even invited them back as their guests on a night when it wouldn't be quite so crowded. Whether they took them up on the offer would be up to Nuala, but he suspected she wanted to say yes.

In the meantime, he peppered her backside with swats, progressively spanking her harder and harder until he had to restrain her with his body. And then harder still, because despite how soft she could be, sometimes Nono was a tough nut to crack.

Finally, though—his hand stinging and putting a good deal of force into the blows he was raining down on her reddened bottom—his Little girl broke and started to sob. None too soon, either, because there were only a couple minutes left on the timer and it would break his heart to listen to her cry for longer than that without offering comfort.

It still felt like forever before he was sitting her up on his lap and cuddling her close, rocking her and rubbing her back as she wept into his shoulder. After a few minutes, she calmed enough to speak into his shirt.

“I'm sorry, Daddy.”

“I know, Little girl. You're not going to run from Daddy ever again, are you?”

“No, Daddy.”

Her sweet, whimpered agreement filled his heart, made his soul overflow. Music to his ears, yes, but she meant it, which

made it a symphony.

“You’re going to let Daddy take care of you from now on, aren’t you?”

There was a sniffle and then Nuala was looking up at him, tears beading on her lashes and her chin trembling.

“I...I want to, Daddy.”

“You want to but what?”

“You said from now on and...”

More sniffles and an audible swallow. What a sweet, sensitive Little girl. One who listened to every word he said.

“You’re worried I don’t mean it?”

Such big, sad eyes. Nuala had made a deal with the devil in marrying Cabot, but she was far more an angel.

“Yes,” she whispered.

“Well, I do. Every word of it. Having you for my Little girl has made me the happiest I’ve ever been. I thought I knew what I wanted, but you’re better than any fantasy I’ve ever had and I’m never letting you go. You’re mine to look after, cherish, and spoil. And I expect you to run toward me from here on out. You might be running toward huggles or a spanking or an orgasm, but I promise to always give you what you need. Want to know why?”

“Why?”

“Because I love you, Nono. And I’m going to be your Daddy forever.”

There was a beat in which he wasn’t sure she’d say it back, but then his precious Little Nono smiled so bright it nearly blinded him. “I love you too, Daddy.”

“It makes my heart happy to hear you say that,
hummingbird. Now give Daddy a kiss.”

The End

There's more!

I hope you loved watching Nuala and Remy fall in love. If you want to snag the the next sexy story in the Clover City series, be sure to join my newsletter The Hive for all the Must-Know updates including the title and release date for the next Clover City Littles book! You'll also receive free bonus material when you subscribe: <https://readerlinks.com/l/3627706>

If you missed Tamsyn, Huxley, and Lowell's taboo, why choose romance, you can grab the trio's story in [Tamsyn's Twin Daddies](#).

If Nuala's Neighbor Daddy is the first story you've read in the Clover City Littles series, you've got the whole Clover City Littles series to glom and you can start from the beginning with [Twyla's Teacher Daddy](#) or find the entire series here.

You can also find out the whole story of Cosima and her Daddy, Papa, and Sir in [*Cosima's Club Owner Daddies*](#).

About Honey Meyer

Honey Meyer lives in New England, and loves to watch the seasons change outside her window as she writes Happily Ever Afters for littles and their mommies and daddies. She loves to read and write age play romances, and she can't wait to bring you more stories—always sweet with a little sting! Follow her on your favorite platform to keep up and keep in touch!

Newsletter: <https://readerlinks.com/l/3627706>

Website: <https://www.honeymeyerromance.com>

BookBub: <https://www.bookbub.com/profile/honey-meyer>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/honeymeyerromance/>

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Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/honeymeyerromance>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SweetHoneyMeyer>

Garden Daddy by Golden Angel

A MF story by Golden Angel

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Chapter 1

Marcus

This is a terrible idea.

It wasn't the first time he'd had the thought, which was why it had taken him so long to get around to doing this. But it was time to face his ex-wife. He and Eden couldn't continue on the way they had been. The constant sniping and arguing would have been kind of fun if he'd also been getting make-up sex at the end of it, the way they used to, but without that, it was just annoying. They couldn't avoid each other, not unless they wanted to lose friends. He wasn't willing to step away from his best friends, and he didn't think she would be, either.

They might be very different people than they were five years ago when they'd been married, but she still knew how to get under his skin. And he knew how to get under hers.

He wasn't sure how facing her head-on was going to go, though. During their marriage, she would have appreciated his directness. Now... he wasn't so sure that would be her reaction.

Taking a deep breath, he stopped staring at the door to her apartment and knocked before shoving his hands in his

pockets. Then he listened *really hard*. He could hear her approach, though her footsteps were soft. He held his breath.

Then nothing.

She was standing on the other side of the door. Probably looking through the eyehole and deciding whether or not to open it when he was on the other side. Should he knock again? Tell her that he knew she was there?

The door flew open with a suddenness that almost made him jump, and there she was. Pink hair down around her shoulders wearing a blue shirt that said “I Like Tacos and, like, Three People” with a taco on the chest and a pair of cute, cute-off shorts. The kind of thing she liked to wear when they were dating.

The kind of thing she’d stopped wearing once they were married to try to fit what Marcus thought his wife should look like when they were out in public. Just in case they ran into anyone from his office. He’d had appearances to maintain.

He’d been a fucking ass.

Eden’s chin jutted upwards, her eyes narrowing as she glared at him.

“What do you want?”

Well, that was his opening. Marcus squared his shoulders, lifting his own chin and looking down at her. She used to like how much taller he was than her, saying it made her feel protected.

“I think we need to talk. Can I come in?”

Immediately, she stepped forward, so she was standing in the doorway, completely blocking him from her apartment. Marcus’ lips twitched. Moving forward had also put her mere

inches away from him, and he wasn't backing up. Her head tilted back even more, frustrated anger flaring in her gaze as she realized he was now in her space, and it was her fault. It also meant he was looming over her.

"No. I'm busy."

"Really? Because it looks like you're just watching television." He could easily see over her head into the apartment where a show was paused.

"Yes, it's called relaxing downtime. Supposedly, something you know about now." She sniffed derisively. "I guess reports of your reformation have been greatly exaggerated."

Yup, this was their new reality. If he could haul her over his shoulder, take her to the bedroom and spank her before fucking her senseless, he would have been totally okay with the bratty banter. It was part of what he'd fallen in love with the first time around.

Right now, it was frustrating because he couldn't haul her over his shoulder or spank her. What he really needed was for her to listen to him.

"I only need a few minutes of your time."

She rolled her eyes. "If I wanted to hear from an asshole, I would have farted. Bye." She stepped back, and his hand came up to block the door from closing on him. Marcus stepped forward, and he did *not* laugh at her insult, no matter how much he wanted to on the inside. Eden glared at him.

"Get out."

"I'm not in," he replied, keeping his tone as reasonable as possible. He knew it ticked her off that she couldn't get the reactions she was used to out of him anymore. Back when they

were married, he would have given back as good as she gave. Now, he tended to let things roll off his back, and when she did get under his skin, he didn't give her the satisfaction of knowing. He pointed at the floor, where his feet were clearly not over the line of the doorframe. "The sooner you hear me out, the sooner this conversation can be over."

He was hoping it would lead to future conversations, but he figured she was probably going to need some time to adjust to his new agenda. So, he had a game plan.

Tell Eden his intentions.

Give her time to adjust.

Remind her of how good they could be together.

Show her how he'd changed.

Get his girl back.

Even though he'd dated other people since their divorce, having Eden back in his life was making it impossible for him to look at anyone else. She was here to stay unless he wanted to ditch his two best friends, which was not an option. His two best friends were now in committed relationships, heading toward marriage with her two best friends, and he was so filled with envy, it was debilitating.

Not only that, but the more time he was forced to spend around Eden, the more he got to know her again and the more he wanted her back. She was similar but different from the woman he'd married. More confident, more sure of herself, and somehow even more bratty than when they'd dated, which he wouldn't have thought was possible.

She was definitely brattier than when they'd been married, and that was his fault. He'd tried turning both of them into the people he thought they needed to be in order to be successful.

Out of the two of them, he'd changed the most in the past five years. He'd learned a lot about himself and about relationships. He could see where he'd gone wrong and where he'd been a colossal ass. And he wanted to do better.

He wanted to be her Daddy again.

Eden huffed.

“Fine. You have two minutes, then I'm getting back to my relaxing downtime.”

Thank God. He'd take two minutes.

Eden

Dammit, why did Marcus have to be so hot? She'd always liked him in a suit, until she'd started hating those suits, but the way he was filling out his Flower Power t-shirt also did things to her. Then she got mad because she didn't want to be attracted to him anymore, and that stupid t-shirt reminded her of all the shit he'd refused to do when they were married.

Now, he was super relaxed, hanging out, respecting downtime, and willing to wear something besides business casual clothes. Great.

She wasn't sure why he was showing up, wanting to talk. Maybe he just wanted to stop arguing with her all the time since they had to hang out, thanks to their friends. Yeah, fat chance. She'd been saving up insults for him. Eventually, she was going to find one that bothered him. She'd really thought the fart one would do the trick, but he'd seemed more amused than anything.

The big jerk.

Two minutes, then she would close the door, even if she had to shove him back to do it. No matter that she was pretty sure he'd gained about twenty pounds of muscle since their marriage, she had the power of petty rage fueling her.

Marcus nodded, accepting her edict. Good. Once he agreed to something, he would follow through. The 'almighty deal' was very important to him, and once he said he would do something, he would. Which wasn't always a good thing when he'd overloaded himself by promising things to people at work and neglecting everything else. *Everyone else*. Like his wife.

"I will be honest. I thought if I ever saw you again that I would feel like we made the right decision about our divorce. I never wanted to hurt you, and I wanted to see that you had moved on and were happy. I'm a different man now. A better man. And the more I see you, the more I miss what we had, but also the more I like the person you've become. I think we should try again."

Eden stared at him.

Blinked.

That was not what she'd expected to come out of his mouth.

"What could you possibly like about me?" she asked incredulously. Not because she wasn't likeable—she damn well was—but because after their divorce, she'd deliberately set herself up to be the opposite of who she'd become as his wife.

She'd dyed her hair bright, crazy colors that made her poor Japanese mother despair of her ever finding another husband. She'd started wearing the most offensive t-shirts she could

find, smirking at what she imagined Marcus' face would be if she'd ever tried to wear that while they went out and about. Eventually, she'd gotten over doing things because of how her ex would have reacted and realized she actually just liked all that stuff.

Then she'd stopped doing it for him and started doing it for her.

But he *liked* it?

"I like that you're the girl I fell in love with again. That you reclaimed that part of yourself after I... well, if I didn't kill it completely, I definitely caused you to bury it. I like your sass. I like how you look after your friends. I like your confidence. I like... you. I've always liked you, even when I felt like there were parts of you that went counter to the image I was trying to project. I was wrong about that, by the way. You were right. I should never have asked you to be anyone other than yourself."

She'd been willing. She hadn't said no. She'd tried to pack herself into a little box, into the form he'd wanted because she'd wanted his attention and approval. She'd lost herself for him, and it wasn't just because he'd asked her to. Although he hadn't asked it of her, there had been ways she'd tried to change because she'd seen the other corporate wives doing it.

That was part of the danger. She'd been willing to do that for him. For a scrap of his affection and attention.

This new Marcus? This self-aware, repentant, humble Marcus who took care of himself, took the time to relax, and made space for his friends? This Marcus was a million times more dangerous to her than the arrogant, 'I know best,' self-involved husband who'd started taking her for granted.

“Thank you for the apology,” she said, even though he hadn’t actually said sorry. Marcus had always had a thing about apologizing. Even when he was remorseful, he’d had trouble saying the words, so pretending he had apologized gave her a little petty spurt of happiness.

“I didn’t apologize, but I should have.” While she gaped at him, Marcus reached up to brush a strand of pink hair out of her face, his fingers gently skimming her skin and lighting up all her senses like a fireworks show. “I’m sorry, Eden. I loved you, but it wasn’t enough. I turned into a shitty husband, and I didn’t even see what was happening. I took you for granted instead of appreciating everything you did for me. I’ve learned a lot since our divorce. I want a second chance.”

For one sweet, horrifying moment, Eden almost leaned toward him. Almost tipped her head back for a kiss. Almost fell right back into the Marcus-trap she’d already escaped from.

“Fuck off!” She jumped back, slamming the door in his face, her heart pounding like she’d just run a marathon. Lifting her hand, she pressed her palm against her chest. Her whole body felt flushed, as though she was overheating.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

She was going to need to work on her Marcus-defense-system. She had not been prepared for him to say any of that, and she sure as hell hadn’t been prepared for her reaction. Not in her wildest dreams.

“I’m not giving up, Eden,” Marcus called from the other side of the door. “I did that once before. I’m not making the same mistake twice. Thank you for the two minutes. I’ll see you later.”

Mother fucker. Eden leaned her back against the door, closing her eyes as she heard him walking away.

The television was going to have to wait.

She needed backup.

Chapter 2

Eden

Sitting at the table in the House of Starrett, Eden jiggled her foot. The chances of Marcus showing up here were small but not nil. The restaurant was a popular hangout for the guys as much as it was for her and her friends. Plus, Marcus, Owen, and Andres were also friends with the owner, Chef Sean.

She happened to know that both Andres and Owen were preoccupied today with some kind of business webinar they were attending, though, and she doubted Marcus would come here without them. He also wouldn't expect her to come here since it was somewhere he regularly hung out. Which made it the perfect place to meet up with Rita and Bree, aka her ride-or-die besties, aka the women responsible for her current predicament.

When Rita and Bree had hooked up with Andres and Owen, that meant she and Marcus had been stuck playing fifth wheel... together. So, really, it was their fault he was back in her life, saying such tempting things and making her want things she knew better than to want.

So, now they were going to get to listen to her bitch and hopefully, offer up some sound advice and a metaphorical smack back to reality.

She and Marcus were a bad idea.

Period.

“Hey! What’s the emergency?” Rita asked, startling Eden as the pretty blonde pulled a chair out. Eden had been so lost in thought, she hadn’t noticed her friend walking in, which was not like her at all.

“Let’s wait for... oh hey, Bree.” Eden switched tactics mid-sentence because she hadn’t realized Bree had also arrived. She took the seat next to Rita on the opposite side of the table from Eden, her dark brown eyes sparkling with mischief. Her hair was done in a new style, in a myriad of cute little poufs atop her head.

“Hey, Eden. I thought you were busy all day having ‘you’ time,” Bree said as she scooted her chair in.

Eden sighed.

“Figure out what you want from the menu, because once I start, I want your full attention,” she said, waving her hand.

They both laughed as if she was kidding. Little did they know. Once everyone’s food and drink orders were in, both of them looked at her attentively.

“Marcus showed up at my door about,”—she checked the clock on her phone—“an hour and a half ago to tell me that he’s decided I should give him a second chance.”

As different as they were in looks, Rita and Bree now had utterly identical expressions of shock. At least she wasn’t the only one feeling that way.

“Seriously?” The incredulousness in Rita’s voice made her feel a little better. Eden hadn’t known Rita and Bree until after she and Marcus had divorced, but they had heard the whole story. They’d been her two first real friends post-marriage. “Just like that out of nowhere?”

“I’m sure he didn’t say it exactly like that,” Bree said, glancing at Rita, then giving Eden a look. Bree was usually the voice of reason, which was both necessary and annoying since both Eden and Rita liked to shoot off at the mouth.

“Close enough,” Eden grumbled. She shook her head. Even the glimpse of pink she caught at the edges of her vision, which usually made her smile, didn’t cheer her up.

“What did he *actually* say, Eden?”

She sighed, then got a very short reprieve when the server came by with their drinks. Stirring sugar into her iced tea, she avoided her friends’ gazes for as long as she could, but eventually, their silent glares were unavoidable.

“He might have apologized for the past—way too late, might I add—and said something about how he likes who I am now, which is such bullshit. Then he said he’s learned a lot since our divorce—way, way, *way* too late for that—and said he wants a second chance.” She glared at her glass. “Then when I slammed the door in his face, he said he’s not giving up and threatened that he’d see me later.”

“Uh huh.” Rita, who had been firmly on her side before, was now giving her one of ‘those’ looks. The problem with having besties was they could often read through the lines of what was being said to hear what wasn’t. “So, he apologized, maybe even groveled a little, and you’re still so mad that he didn’t change back when you were married and waited till after you left that you slammed the door in his face.”

Leaning back against her chair, Eden scowled at her friends as she crossed her arms over her chest.

“You’re supposed to be supporting me.”

“Absolutely,” Bree said immediately. “He’s an asshole and should have his dick cut off.”

“Well, that might be going a little far,” Rita murmured, though she grinned. Out of the three of them, Bree was the most patient and forgiving, which made the statement sound way more ludicrous than if Rita had said it. Rita, being the voice of reason, was also fairly ludicrous.

She was also right. That was going a little too far. It would be a waste of a very nice dick, and it wasn’t like he’d cheated or anything.

On the other hand, she didn’t love thinking about how other women had gotten to enjoy that very nice dick attached to the man who’d fucking *changed into husband material* after he was no longer married.

Ugh.

Men.

“I think the real question is what Eden is going to do,” Bree said, glancing at Rita, then focusing on Eden. She rested her chin on her hand, her eyes alight. Eden could practically see her thoughts.

Bree was a hopeless romantic, and she’d gotten even worse since hooking up with her Cheesy Daddy Dom. Owen was practically perfect, though. Both Bree and Rita had the good fortune of finding amazing Daddy Doms, who were ready to commit to a relationship and doted on them. Their only fault, as far as she could see, was being best friends with Marcus.

She couldn't even really be mad at them because the Marcus he'd become was a much better friend than the Marcus he'd been.

The big jerk.

“Obviously, I'm going to avoid him as much as possible until he gets the message.”

“Does that mean you're going to be avoiding us?” Bree asked hesitantly, as if she understood why the answer might be yes and she'd support Eden even if she didn't like it. Eden seriously had the best friends.

“No, it just means I won't be doing any more of that arguing with him or engaging with him while we're all together. If that's what he likes about me now, I'll change it up. Eventually, he'll get the message.”

“You think you can really do that?” Rita's question was asked with no hesitation. She wasn't one to mince words and tended to blurt out what she was thinking, so blunt questions were her style. Eden didn't mind since they were her style, too.

Even if sometimes she didn't like the question itself.

“Sure,” she said with a lot more confidence than she felt. She wasn't completely lacking in self-awareness. She knew Marcus was great at getting under her skin, but ignoring him was a challenge, and she was also good at challenges.

Besides, she was rather looking forward to him trying hard to get her attention.

That way lies danger.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Eden ignored the little warning voice in her head. Sometimes it was fun to live dangerously—as long

as she didn't fall into the actual trap.

“Well, good luck,” Rita said, shaking her head. Their food arrived just as she spoke, which gave Eden the excuse not to answer. It took a moment or two for everything to get settled once their plates were in front of them. When she looked up again, her friends were both on their phones, which was unusual. Normally, they all tried to stay off their phones when they were hanging out, unless they were looking something up.

“What are you doing?”

“Texting Andres,” Rita replied, while Bree just looked guilty and shrugged. “I want to know why he didn't tell me that Marcus was going to try to get back together with you... Huh.”

“What?” Eden did her best not to squirm with impatience in her seat.

“It seems he didn't know.”

“Neither did Owen.” Bree held up her phone with the screen turned toward Eden to prove it. “He's going to text Marcus now.”

There was a little part of her that was hurt Marcus hadn't told his friends. How serious could he be about pursuing her again if he hadn't talked to them about it? Especially since their girlfriends were her best friends? Why had he kept it quiet?

I don't want him to be serious about pursuing me, remember?

Right.

Chapter 3

Marcus

Patting down the soil around the potted orchid, Marcus put an ice cube on top of it. The ice cubes were his favorite method for watering the orchids. He could control exactly how much water they got without having to measure out every drop. Plus, that way, the water slowly dripped down to the roots rather than flooding the soil.

Tending to the plants in his nursery always made him feel better. Ten years ago, he would have never guessed he was a plant person, but his heart attack had changed his life completely. When he was recovering, taking care of a potted geranium an old co-worker had brought him as a get-well-soon present had been soothing, but it had also given him purpose.

Purpose he'd lost when Eden left him.

It seemed strange that caring for a plant had done that, but it was true. He'd ended up going to get the geranium, which he'd named Gerry, a friend at the store, so Gerry wouldn't be lonely when Marcus couldn't be home with him. Then he'd added another, and another, filling the balcony of his

apartment with greenery, which had soothed something inside him.

That was where he went to meditate. He also had an indoor room for the winter where he could keep the less hardy plants during the cold months, though he had to be careful to make sure there was space for them... which could be difficult because as soon as he saw another place where a plant could fit, his impulse was to fill it.

Investing his savings in the nursery had been risky, but it had not only paid off, it allowed him to be constantly surrounded by plants. Caring for them and finding good homes for them made him happy. He could always recognize another plant person, often dragging their resigned partner through the store while their face lit up with every plant they added to their cart.

Working a job that not only paid the bills but gave him true personal satisfaction had been a revelation. Even with the stresses of being the owner of the nursery, he was far less stressed than he had been before. His doctor had been a little worried when he'd first decided to purchase the space, but now, he was fully on board with the changes it had wrought in Marcus.

It was true flower power.

His phone chimed with a text message.

By the time he'd reached his hand into his pocket, it had chimed again. And again.

Concerned, he frowned as he unlocked the screen to see what was going on.

Multiple texts from both Owen and Andres, with almost identical messages.

You're trying to get back together with Eden?

Well, it looked like Eden had gone running right to her friends. He probably should have expected that, but back when they'd divorced, she hadn't gone to talk to her friends about it. Of course, all her friends had also been in some way involved with him and his job. She'd probably talked to some of her friends at work about it, but none of the people they'd hung out with... because all their non-work time had been about making work connections for him.

That wasn't who she was anymore, so he probably should have expected that this go around would be different, and she wouldn't be keeping everything to herself. It wasn't that he hadn't wanted to talk to his friends or keep it a secret. He'd just figured he'd let her decide whether she wanted the others to know.

Especially since she'd been so quiet to their social circle about their divorce. Different circumstances, obviously, but he'd wanted the ball in her court. For some reason, he really hadn't thought she'd go running right out to tell everyone, though. He thought he'd have some time to prepare.

Oh, well.

As always with Eden, he should probably expect the unexpected.

Both of them had texted him individually, but he moved to the group chat to answer them rather than having to reply twice.

Marcus: I saw her this morning to tell her that I want to try again. I didn't tell you because I wasn't sure if she'd want everyone knowing her business.

That was short, succinct, and hopefully would clear everything up.

Owen: *Good luck with that, man. Bree says she's not interested.*

Andres: *Rita says she doesn't want to be interested, but she is.*

Marcus liked Rita's interpretation better, so he'd go with that one. The one that gave him hope.

Maybe he should let Eden know he wasn't going to give up that easily.

Marcus: *Where are they?*

Owen and Andres answered at the same time, and the responses made him grin. The House of Starrett was just down the street from his nursery. It was also one of his favorite places to go because he, Andres, and Owen were all pretty good friends with the owner, Saul. Which meant it was the last place he would have expected her to go.

Sneaky, sneaky Eden.

He realized he was grinning. She was going to keep him on his toes, that was for sure.

"Hey Judy, I'm going to take a walk. Shouldn't take me long."

"Okay, boss." Judy was thirty years older than him and thoroughly enjoyed teasing him by calling him boss when, really, she did as much work as he did running the store. Eventually, she would want to retire, and it was going to be a bitch replacing her when she did. Giving him a salute, she sashayed away to check on something in another aisle.

Chuckling, Marcus headed out to the street, turning in the direction of the restaurant. It was a nice day out, a good one for a walk. What he was going to do when he got there, he wasn't sure, but he wanted Eden to know both of them could use their friends to their advantage.

Plus, he wanted to see what she would do when she saw him.

He was in luck. Just as he walked up to the door, Eden, Rita, and Bree all spilled out from the exit, laughing, until Eden spotted him and came up short.

"Afternoon, ladies," he said with an easy smile, his gaze flicking over each of them before landing on Eden and not moving away.

"Hi, Marcus!"

"Hello!"

Rita and Bree looked at Eden to see what she was going to do. Tipping her nose up in the air, Eden turned toward her friends.

"I'll see y'all later." She opened her arm for a hug.

"Ah, good. I see I've already gotten to you," Marcus said.

Eden whirled around to glare at him before remembering herself and turning back to give Bree the hug she'd started.

"If you're trying to convince me you don't care at all about me, the fact you feel the need to put up a barrier isn't going to do it, sweetheart." He drawled the words, knowing she'd hear the challenge in them, knowing his easygoing and relaxed mocking tone would spark even more anger from her, which was what he wanted.

Old Eden had been endlessly patient. She'd gritted her teeth when she was annoyed. Tamped down her reactions when her emotions were running high. Not so new Eden. He was pretty sure he could use that to his advantage right now. Was he entirely sure where he was going with this? Nope. But he felt calm. In control. Like the universe was taking him where he needed to go.

"Oh?" Eden turned around to face him, planting her hands on her hips. Her glare would have set fire to his hair, if he had any. "So, what will convince you that I don't care about you at all?"

"Scene with me." The words popped out of his mouth without thinking, but as soon as he heard them, he knew they were right.

Behind Eden, Bree and Rita's mouths dropped open in twin expressions of shock.

"What?" Eden practically screeched.

Marcus shoved his hands in his pockets and grinned at her.

"Scene with me. If you really don't care about me at all, if you're not worried about having lingering feelings for me, it shouldn't be a big deal, right?"

"I only scene with men I'm attracted to." Eden sniffed, lifting her chin defiantly.

Oh, hell no. Though her feelings might be ambivalent, the chemistry between them was undeniable, and he wasn't going to let her get away with that. He stepped toward her, into her space, the same way he'd done this morning, but this time she didn't have a door she could put between them. And with her friends there, she wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of

making her back up with witnesses—especially since that would be proving his point.

“Well, then, that shouldn’t be a problem, should it?” he asked, raising one eyebrow. Placing two fingers under her chin, he used them to tilt her head back, as if he was going to kiss her. Her breathing stuttered, pupils dilating, and her lips parted automatically. “Attraction was never the issue between us.”

The air between them sizzled. It took an immense amount of willpower to step away, letting his hand drop. Willpower and control. He liked touching her again—far too much.

“So? Scene with me next Saturday at the Outlands?”

“Fine.” The expression on her face as she bit out the word revealed she wasn’t nearly as sure of herself as she wanted to seem. He wasn’t sure that was what she’d actually meant to say, but she had said it and in front of her friends. There would be no backing out now, unless she was willing to swallow her pride. Marcus was betting she wouldn’t. “But afterward, when it’s clear I don’t have any feelings left for you, you agree to leave me alone.”

“It’s a deal.”

It was a risk, but one he was willing to take. Now, all he had to do was prove to her that she still had feelings for him and convince her that it was worth admitting it.

Chapter 4

Eden

If you really didn't care, you wouldn't have accepted his damn challenge.

Shut up, brain.

She'd fallen neatly into his trap, and she couldn't get out of it without basically admitting she cared, whether or not she said the words. So, now she was going to go through with it just to show she could scene with him and shake it off immediately afterward. The way someone who didn't care could.

It was just attraction.

It didn't help that the whole week she'd been unable to keep memories of past scenes from playing out in her head like the world's most taunting movie reel. But memories weren't always truthful. Chances were, things hadn't been as hot as she remembered them. Her brain romanticized it because once they were deeper into their marriage, once things started falling apart, it wasn't like that anymore. So, her brain romanticized the earlier relationship, telling her the sex had

been hotter than it had been to help her justify why she'd stayed with him for so long.

That made sense, right? So, once she had sex with him again, she would know that it wasn't as good as her brain was trying to make her believe. It was just sex. Then she'd be able to walk away with her heart intact.

Are we having sex? He said scene, not sex... maybe he doesn't plan to have sex...

Shit.

Right back to the mental circles she kept running around all week because her brain kept interpreting 'scene' as 'sex' and there was a part of her that really, really, really still wanted to have sex with him. That part was her slutty vagina, which didn't care that he'd broken her heart all those years ago.

Looking down at her crotch, Eden scowled.

"Stop being so selfish," she scolded the part in question. "You can't just run things from your own agenda."

Since her vagina didn't have ears, it couldn't exactly listen.

The alarm on her phone went off, letting her know it was time to head to the Outlands. Taking a deep breath, she grabbed her purse and headed to the front door, pausing to take one last look in the entryway's mirror. It hadn't been easy to find an outfit that combined "I don't care about you" with "Eat your heart out because you made a mistake when you lost me," but she thought she'd done pretty well.

No babygirl stuff here—she was wearing a sexy pink dress that clung to her body and matched her hair, which she was wearing down. The dress wasn't fetish wear, but it was hot as hell, sexy, and made her feel damn good. With the bright color, low cut top, and tight skirt with a slit up both thighs, it was the

kind of dress Marcus would have had a shit fit over if she'd tried to wear it out anywhere.

Which was exactly why she'd chosen it.

Even if it didn't bother him now, it was a reminder to both of them that—at one point—it would have. Memories were better armor than any clothing she could put on, and she had a feeling she was going to need every advantage she could get.

Or you could just cancel.

Shut up, brain.

That would be admitting defeat. Then she would have to face the reality that she'd be disappointed at not getting the chance to see what things were like now. Besides, how was she supposed to wash away the romanticized memories with reality if she didn't do the reality?

She'd always be left wondering if it was really as good as she remembered and wishing she'd taken the opportunity to find out. Plus, he'd agreed to leave her alone after they scened. Well... as long as it was clear she didn't have any feelings left for him.

And it would be clear.

Right?

Shut up, brain.

Shaking her head to clear it, she yanked the door open and headed out.

The Outlands kink club wasn't far from her in downtown Pittsburgh. It used to be a restaurant that turned into a dance club at night on the top floor and a BDSM club in the basement, but last year it had undergone some renovations. Now it was just a BDSM club. There had been an increase in

membership fees to use all the amenities, but Eden had felt it was more than worth it.

The new club had two floors, all dedicated to kink. The top floor still had a bar and a dance floor, but now there were private rooms, stations for sceneing along the walls of the main floor, and a large space balcony where they could look down on what was happening below them. The lower floor was still where most of the sceneing equipment was out in the open and there were more private rooms down there as well.

Eden wasn't surprised to find Rita, Andres, Owen, and Bree already there at one of the bar tables with Marcus when she arrived. Marcus was always early for everything, and she didn't think any of their friends were going to want to miss whatever happened between them. The moment they spotted her, all of them straightened up. Rita didn't bother to hide her excitement, her blue eyes sparkling as if she was about to watch a movie she'd been looking forward to.

Lifting her hand, Eden sent her bestie a one-finger salute, which made her and Bree laugh. Marcus shook his head before he caught himself.

Uh huh.

Some old habits died hard. Just seeing that little head shake was enough to help clear her head. Part of the reason she'd focused on Rita was because of the visceral reaction she had to seeing Marcus waiting for her, his gaze running over her body like he was mentally undressing her. He hadn't looked at her like that before now.

Not even when he'd made the challenge. The heat in his eyes flustered her, made her want to avoid his gaze, made her want to turn and run out the door... so she responded by

antagonizing her friend and doing something that would have pissed him off in the past.

It didn't help that he looked damn good, wearing leather pants and a vest that proved he was in fantastic shape. Even better shape than he had been before when he was working at the office all the time. Granted, she'd sort of known that, but she hadn't seen him in full-on Dom gear or with his shirt off before now. She'd seen the way his shoulders and biceps had filled out his clothes, but who knew those Flower Power t-shirts were also covering up pecs and abs?

Well, she knew now, and so did everyone else.

Eden pressed her lips together, lifting her chin up and sauntering over to the table. If Marcus wanted to undress her with his eyes, that was fine. It didn't bother her because she didn't have feelings for him. She recognized he was an attractive man and enjoyed his appreciation of the effort she'd put into her appearance for tonight without it meaning anything more.

"Did someone send out a memo to get here early?" she asked when she reached the table.

"Nope, just wanted to make sure we didn't miss anything," Rita said, still grinning unrepentantly. Bree shot her a look.

"She means we wanted to be here in case you needed anything."

"I said what I said."

The laughter helped break the tension, and Eden could breathe a little easier. God, she loved her friends. They were going to have her back no matter what, and they knew what she needed. She was acutely aware of Marcus watching the interaction, like he was studying them. Studying her.

She couldn't help but wonder what he saw.

She'd never been like this with any of her friends while they were married. Not once he started becoming more concerned with appearances. A lot of her friendships from before their marriage had fallen by the wayside, other than the co-workers she was friendly with, but she hadn't really been friends with them, either. Her social life had been consumed by Marcus' needs. She'd known to behave 'properly' around their joint friends... because they all worked with Marcus. The ones who didn't actually work with him were either married to or romantically involved with someone who did.

This kind of behavior would never have been acceptable. She sure as hell wasn't going back, though. Not that she'd need to. Marcus wasn't at that job anymore. He'd seen who she was now, how she interacted with her friends. If he was still interested, he needed to take her as she was currently. She wasn't going to change for him or making herself smaller for a man ever again.

He apologized for that, remember? He knows.

A really heartfelt apology. Which just made him more dangerous to her. Deep down, she knew she wouldn't have agreed to tonight without that apology having already happened. He'd offered it up before she'd asked for it, and by the time he challenged her to a night together, it had gotten under her skin and was motivating her to make stupid choices.

"Would you like a drink?" Marcus asked. "Or would you like to jump right in?"

"Jump right in."

She didn't need a drink. She needed to get this over with, so she could figure out what happened next.

Chapter 5

Eden

The jerk had gotten them a private room.

She hadn't been surprised when he'd led her to it, but the confirmation had upped both her arousal and her anxiety. Part of her had wondered if he'd want witnesses. Especially when this scene amounted to a bet.

Instead, he'd chosen privacy.

Intimacy.

I am so fucked.

Her traitorous vagina cheered.

Not that kind of fucked, you slut.

Her vagina was going to be a problem. Maybe if she'd had a boyfriend or a play partner within the past six months it would be easier, but the truth was she really missed being with an actual man. Someone who could spank her and hold her, then fuck her to a screaming orgasm.

Toys were fun, but they couldn't do all that.

The room Marcus had chosen wasn't themed, though it was very attractively decorated. The dark wood and lush red fabrics made for an erotic boudoir, filled with all sorts of implements, along with the furniture. There was a St. Andrew's cross, a wooden frame, a spanking bench, a couch, and a bed all squeezed into the space of the room, yet somehow, it didn't feel crowded. Whoever had designed and decorated the place deserved what they'd earned.

"Let's go over to the couch and talk for a minute," Marcus said, taking her by the hand and leading her over.

Eden bit her lip against a snappy comeback.

Without her friends standing there watching, she was feeling more vulnerable and a little less brave. It was one thing to be sassy to Marcus when her friends were there or she was at her apartment. It was another when they were at a kink club, and she'd agreed to let him dominate her for the night. She might be a brat, but she wasn't sure where his head was at, and he'd have every right to discipline her for disrespect if he wanted to.

Sure, she could say her safeword—and she would if she really felt she needed to—but that wasn't how she wanted this night to go.

So, she reined in her brat, following him docilely to the couch and sitting down where he placed her. Marcus sat right next to her, spreading his knees wide so his leg was touching hers, and she wouldn't be able to change that without moving away.

Which she wasn't going to do.

She couldn't back down from a challenge, but she also... liked it. Little sparks were traveling up her leg to her core.

Touching him felt nice, and he'd been the one to make the move, so she hadn't started the touching.

Besides, there was going to be a lot more touching soon enough. She needed to try to get a handle on her reaction to his touch while it was innocuous. Soon enough, it wouldn't be.

“So, what do you want to talk about?” she asked with forced cheerfulness, reaching up to run her fingers through her hair. Marcus' gaze followed the movement. She dropped her hand back in her lap, feeling awkward rather than the confidence she was going for.

“Well, it's been a while since we've scened. I wanted to talk about limits.”

Right. Of course, he would. Marcus was a conscientious Dom. Eden did her best to meet his gaze. One of the things she loved about kink was, once limits were established, a Dom could sweep her off her feet, over his shoulder, and have his way with her. One of the things she hated was that they had to talk about those limits before anything could happen.

It was necessary, but when she was already feeling vulnerable, it only increased that feeling. She also had kind of expected Marcus to get right down to it, since he already knew all her limits, but of course he wouldn't jump right in. Things might have changed, and he wanted to address that.

Still, she could try to move the process along a little. Eden shrugged one shoulder.

“All my limits are the same as before. If you remember them.” Was she taunting him?

Yeah... maybe just a little.

Marcus

He remembered Eden's limits, every last one of them were burned into his brain, despite the amount of time since they'd last scened, but that wasn't the point.

“Are you saying you want to abide by all those old limits? So, I can put you on your knees right now and slide my cock in your mouth?” He reached out, curling his fist under her chin to lift it up, his thumb sweeping over her lower lip, as her eyes widened. “Or put you over the spanking bench, spank you with a wooden paddle, then fuck your pretty little ass?”

His voice was harsh with need, because fuck if he didn't want to do all of those things, but he didn't think she was ready yet. He'd deliberately mentioned the wooden paddle, which she had a love-hate relationship with, making it a perfect implement for actual discipline. Eden hated being spanked with it, but she loved the afterburn.

Of course she couldn't just acquiesce easily and admit he was right and that they needed to talk.

He might have thrown her off for a moment or two, but she recovered quickly, licking her lip where his thumb had touched before answering him with as much sass as before.

“Well, it has been a while since I've had anal sex, so I would at least need some prep.”

His cock, which had already been thickening, was instantly hard. She wasn't saying 'no.' He wondered exactly how long it had been.

Since the last time *he'd* had anal? Which had been with her. It could mean something, or it could mean nothing, so he didn't want to get hung up on it, but he knew he'd be obsessing about it later.

Right now, he didn't want to ruin the moment by finding out there had been someone else because he knew himself well enough to know it would make him jealous. Irrational but true.

"But you're okay with sexual intercourse during this scene?" His cock was practically fighting to get out of his leathers in anticipation, so he wanted to be sure he understood what she was saying. He'd abide by whatever limits she wanted to lay down, but this was unexpected.

Sex wasn't necessary for a scene, and he hadn't expected it with her tonight, to be perfectly honest. However, he was absolutely willing to adapt if that was not one of her limits.

Eden shrugged one shoulder.

"Sure. Sex is fine. Whatever you want to do. It won't make a difference to me." She batted her eyes at him, but he saw the uncertainty behind her casual smile.

So, that was how she wanted to play it. She was going to do her best to prove that she didn't have any lingering feelings for him by pretending sex wouldn't matter. Well, hell, if she wanted to make things easier for him, who was he to argue with her?

He knew Eden. It didn't matter how much she'd changed over the years, the core of her was still the same. She wouldn't give him this much leeway unless she still trusted him on some level.

No new barriers.

No keeping herself from him.

All in the name of proving she didn't have feelings for him anymore, but really, she was revealing the feelings remained. Or maybe, like him, her feelings had changed over time, but when they'd met again, she'd found something to like about him.

He'd gotten over her after their divorce, he really had... until she'd come back into his life, and he'd found that he liked the new her. Maybe she liked the new him, too. Hell, she should. A lot of the changes he'd made were things she'd asked for while they were together that, to his shame, he hadn't implemented until after she'd left.

"And no objection to calling me 'Daddy' for the course of the scene?" he asked, keeping her chin firmly held in place with his forefinger and thumb, so she couldn't look away or hide her expression. Which was why he saw the flaring of her nostrils as she sucked in a quick breath, her eyelashes fluttering in reaction.

"No objection." Her voice was higher. Shriller. Less confident.

He hadn't earned the title of Daddy from her yet, and he'd held it without merit for too long while they were married. Marcus intended to start making up for that tonight.

"No objection, what?" he asked, because he needed to hear her say it.

Something flared in her eyes, her tongue flicking out over her lips again.

"No objection, *Daddy*."

Little brat. The emphasis she put on the title made it sound almost sarcastic, but it didn't matter. His body responded with pure need.

Chapter 6

Marcus

Letting go of Eden's chin, he took her hand and pulled her forward. It took no effort at all to drag her over his lap. The tight dress she was wearing was sexy as hell, but he recognized an unspoken attempt to brat when he saw it. Did the dress bother him? No. Did he know that she'd worn it in an attempt to bother him? Yes. That was enough of a reason to indulge in some funishment, especially since she'd already agreed to a scene.

“Hey!”

“Tell me, little girl,” he said, resting his hand on her upturned bottom, the tips of his fingers brushing against her thigh where the hem ended. It was just under the curve of her ass, so he was touching her sensitive sit-spot and felt her shiver in reaction. The soft side of her stomach was pressed firmly against the bulge of his cock, rubbing the leather over the aching shaft and head as a massive tease when she squirmed. “Did you wear this dress because you thought I would find it inappropriate?”

Eden went still.

He could practically hear her thinking.

If she admitted it, he could spank her for it.

If she didn't admit it, he could spank her for lying.

This was a funishment, not a punishment, so it didn't really matter what she said. Either way, she was in trouble. Even if she didn't admit it, they'd both know she was lying. He could still read her like a book. He knew exactly why she'd worn that dress.

“What's inappropriate about it, Daddy?” she asked, her voice so overly and insincerely innocent, a judge would condemn her on that alone.

So, that was how she was going to play it.

Rather than answering, he lifted his hand and brought it down hard on her bottom, making her squeal. She jerked upward, and he used his forearm to pin her down across his thighs, his cock throbbing in response to... well, everything.

“It was a yes or no question, little girl, not an invitation to ask Daddy a question.”

Eden squirmed. Since she'd indicated sex was fine, he dipped his fingers down, brushing the tips along the wet fabric covering her pussy. She was already incredibly turned on.

Fuck.

Keeping his desire under control was going to be a massive feat of willpower.

“Noooo, Daddy, I wore it because it matches my hair.”

Marcus snorted. He had no doubt that was part of the reason—that was a very Eden thing to do—but that wasn't the

whole reason. He lifted his hand and gave her bottom another hard swat.

“And because I wanted to look hot!”

He yanked up the skirt, revealing the skimpy, lacy black underwear. It cupped her curves, her paler skin peeking through the lace, a hint of blush on the places where his swats had landed.

“Okay, fine, and because I thought it would piss you off,” she huffed, but he could hear the amusement in her voice. She wasn’t admitting it because the spanking had actually hurt her. She was playing the game, playing the role of naughty little girl who didn’t want the spanking.

Even though she really did.

“That’s what I thought, naughty girl,” he said, shaking his head as he pulled down her panties. Not because they would protect her bottom at all—they wouldn’t—but because there was always a psychological component to scenes like this. The lack of any protection over her bottom, the knowledge she was completely bare, would have an effect on her.

He’d also chosen to use his hand for the same reason since it was more intimate than using an implement.

His hand came down hard on her cheeks, making her squeal and squirm again, even as her hips pushed upward, lifting her bottom for more punishment. Fuck, he’d missed her.

Missed this.

“Such a naughty girl, deliberately trying to provoke your Daddy,” he said as he rained down swat after swat on her curves, turning the skin from its normal creamy hue to a nice, hot pink, while she squealed and kicked.

He knew he wasn't really hurting her; she just liked the production of it. He did pause to check, dipping his fingers into her eager pussy and giving the wet folds a stroke before returning to his work.

Eden

Fuck, she'd missed this.

As much as she hated to admit it, even to herself, she couldn't deny that being over Marcus' lap felt different from when she'd scened with some of the random Doms here at the Outlands. Even the Daddy Doms. It hadn't been the same as this.

Hadn't felt the same.

Because she still had lingering feelings for him, dammit.

Or, at least, new feelings that had grown when he'd come back into her life, and she'd realized he'd turned into a new and improved version of Marcus. She couldn't even say he was the Marcus she'd married—he wasn't. He was even better.

More self-aware. More mature. More introspective. More observant. More present in the moment, rather than half his focus being on work even when he was 'home.' Not that she'd seen him at home, but that he had things to talk about other than work when he was with his friends was a huge difference from before.

Sure, he talked a lot about plants, but he was talking about actual plants, not just the business side and how much money

he was making or how well the nursery was doing. He had *hobbies*. He took time off. He was... fun.

Which was why she was constantly snapping at him. She was so mad he'd waited until she was gone to turn into her dream man.

One tear leaked down her cheek. Then another. And another. Each blazing swat added heat to her bottom and another tear sliding down her cheek. It wasn't the spanking that hurt though, it was her heart.

A sob ripped from her, and Eden's hands flew up to her mouth to cover the noise, but it was too late.

"Eden? Baby?" Marcus sounded panicked as he pulled her upright, resting her hot bottom on his thigh, turning her so he could look at her face—which she immediately tried to turn away because she didn't want him to see her tears. If they'd been from the spanking, she wouldn't have cared, but right now, she felt so vulnerable, she couldn't bear for him to look at her. "Eden, what's wrong? Did I hurt you? Fuck, I'm sorry, I should have checked in to make sure the spanking was—"

She opened her mouth to tell him that the spanking had been just fine, that he hadn't hurt her, and what came out was a wail. Burying her face in her hands, she felt him wrap his arms around her as he rocked her on his lap, making soothing noises and telling her everything was going to be okay. Even though he couldn't guarantee that, he said it, and he sounded like he meant it.

Which just made her cry harder.

Had she shed tears when their marriage ended? Sure, but not as many as she had during their marriage.

She'd never allowed her inner Little girl to grieve. She'd let herself cry over the end of romance, over the loss of her husband, for letting go of the future she'd envisioned for herself... but she'd never cried over losing her Daddy Dom. She'd shut that part of herself away to keep that lonely Little girl inside her safe, long before their marriage had ended, way back when she'd stopped being able to rely on him.

So, she'd never really mourned that loss.

Now, it was all bubbling up to the surface at the worst time possible, and she couldn't stop it. The barrier had broken, and there was no time to rebuild it. So, she sobbed and sobbed against his shoulder, letting the Little girl at her core cry on her Daddy's shoulder and receive his comfort.

The comfort she'd needed so long ago, when he hadn't been there to give it to her.

By the time she was hiccupping and finally able to get a hold of herself, her tears slowing, her breathing normalizing, she felt utterly spent. Marcus continued to make the soothing noises, his chin resting on top of her head, his hands gently stroking her. Her butt was still on fire, but the rest of her felt... better.

Calmer.

Empty but in a good way, as though she'd been holding something toxic and terrible inside her, and it had been purged. She felt lighter.

"Eden?" Marcus' voice was hesitant. Soft.

All he knew was he'd been spanking her, and suddenly, she'd been sobbing in a manner extremely disproportionate to the spanking he'd been giving her. He was probably freaking the fuck out.

Eden giggled.

“Eden.” The hesitation was gone, and there was a hint of warning in his voice. “What just happened?”

“You’re right, I have feelings for you, but some of them are that I’m still so, so mad at you.” She hiccupped again.

Chapter 7

Marcus

Relief flooded through Marcus. He didn't think he'd been spanking Eden hard enough to make her cry like that because of the physical pain, but he'd worried there was some unknown injury or something that he'd hit upon. Instead, it had been an emotional injury, one inflicted by him... which meant it was incumbent upon him to make it right.

"You have every right to be mad," he said softly, stroking her hair.

"There were things I could have done, too," she admitted. "I was mad at myself by the time our marriage ended. It was my own fault for letting your life and your needs consume mine. I didn't fight for myself until I realized that nothing I did was going to change your behavior."

"I should have been paying more attention to you. I should have noticed how unhappy you were." Instead, he'd been blindsided because he'd been so focused on himself. And that had made him angry and uncompromising. Neither of which had been good.

“I could have told you sooner. I could have gone out and made my own friends... I just, I hit a point where I didn’t know how to separate myself from you without actually separating myself from you. And I didn’t want to be with the person you’d become.”

“I don’t blame you.” The person he’d become had been a pretty crappy husband and an absolutely terrible Daddy. All things he’d made strides in changing after she’d left him. “Losing you was a huge wake up call to me.”

“Even bigger than your heart attack?”

“Much.” Because it was losing her that had motivated him to actually open his eyes to what he’d turned into. He couldn’t blame his diet or anything else for that. It was his behavior that had driven her away. Sure, he’d been angry and had wondered why she’d kept her unhappiness to herself, but he’d also known—deep down—that once she started trying to tell him, he hadn’t been listening.

A lot of therapy had helped him work through all of that and recognize what he could have done. Yes, there were things she could have done, too, but fundamentally, their marriage had needed a big shake-up regardless, and he hadn’t been willing to give it one until she shook herself right out of it.

He sighed. Even though she’d admitted that she had feelings for him, this wasn’t how he wanted her to give him a chance. He didn’t actually want her to be forced into it. He wanted her to want it. He’d hoped that sceneing tonight would put her in a position where she’d realize that a second chance was what she wanted.

“Eden... thank you for giving me the chance to scene tonight. I will leave you alone after this, I promise. The ball is

in your court, and I won't pressure you, and I'll stop trying to antagonize you when we see each other with our friends."

She shifted on his lap, stirring his cock again—his erection had deflated the moment she started sobbing so brokenheartedly—and he manfully ignored the involuntary reaction. Eden was not a pretty crier. Now that she was sitting so he could see her face, he could see her swollen nose and red-rimmed eyes, and the way even her lips had puffed up.

It didn't matter.

She was always stunningly beautiful to him.

"What if I don't want you to leave me alone?"

Marcus stilled, staring at her, trying to decipher if she was serious or if she was teasing him. But it was Eden. She might be a brat of epic proportions, but she wouldn't joke about something like that.

"Really?"

She took a deep breath before answering him, as if she was gathering her courage.

"Really. I mean, I'm still mad. Like, how dare you become exactly what I wanted you to be *after* I left you." She hiccupped and laughed again.

"But since I am, you might as well give this version a try?"

"Exactly." She tilted her head, one side of her lips curving up. "I deserved this version before."

"You did. You won't regret this, I promise." He lowered his lips to hers for a kiss, tasting the salt of her tears. Regretting that she'd shed them while simultaneously wanting to cheer that she was giving him this chance.

“Uh huh.” She didn’t have the chance to say anything more before his lips touched hers, which was probably a good thing. He could tell from her tone that whatever response she’d had, it was pure brat, and he didn’t think he could spank her again. Not right now.

The kiss was meant to be gentle. A brush of the lips, a promise for the future...

Her hand came up to wrap around the back of his neck, and she met his lips with unexpected hunger. Marcus’ grip on her tightened as his need roared to life, thrumming through him with heavy demand. That had not been his intention, but once her lips latched onto his, she wasn’t willing to let go.

She wriggled in his lap, deliberately rubbing herself against his growing bulge. Little brat. He should have expected that she would try to take over and push things in the direction she wanted, whatever his intentions were.

Thankfully, he was more than willing to go in the direction she wanted, but they were going to do it on *his* terms.

Sliding one arm under her knees, he wrapped the other securely around her back and stood. Eden squealed, breaking off the kiss and clinging to him as the stable lap she was resting on disappeared, until she was being held in front of him.

“If you don’t want to continue the scene, now is the time to say so,” he warned her, walking toward the bed.

“If I somehow wasn’t clear enough, I want you to hurry up and do me, Daddy,” she retorted, her fingers stroking over the back of his neck where she knew he was sensitive. All the hair on his arms stood up in response to the ticklish sensation. If he had any hair on his head, it probably would have stood as well.

His cock sure as hell was standing at attention again.

Part of him wanted to ask if she was sure, just because he wanted the reassurance, but he knew that was guaranteed to piss her off. When it came to asking for what she wanted, Eden didn't say things she didn't mean. Asking if she was sure she really wanted to have sex with him was questioning her judgment, and they'd already been through enough emotional upheaval this evening.

"If you're sure," he said, which got him an eyeroll from her, but she didn't get mad like she would have if he'd asked rather than left it open. "Don't roll your eyes at Daddy, little girl." He tossed her onto the bed, making her bounce, and she immediately rolled to her side with a squeal as landing on her butt reignited all the sting from the spankings.

"Ow, Daddy!" She pouted up at him, and he shook his head because he knew that it was all an act. "My bottom hurts."

"Oh, no. Poor baby," he replied, giving her his best mock sympathy. "Here, let Daddy make it all better."

Grabbing her by the ankle he pulled her toward him so he could finish stripping off her clothes. Not that he did it quickly. No, he enjoyed baring every delicious inch of her, taking his time to caress, stroke, and kiss the skin revealed as he relieved her of her underwear and rolled her dress up and over her head. She wasn't wearing a bra, so he fell upon those pert, sweet, brown nipples like a starving man.

Moaning, Eden arched her back, running her hands over the smooth skin of his head and down to the nape of his neck to hold him in place. Not that he needed any encouragement to lick, suck, and bite the swollen nubs. He showered attention on

her breasts like the starving man he was. He hadn't truly fed since long before the divorce papers had been signed.

Now, she was offering to let him back into her garden, and he fell upon her like the manna from heaven that she was. Once he was done with her breasts, he moved down her belly, coming closer and closer to her promised land. His tongue delved into the valley, the taste of her ambrosia exploding on his tongue.

Eden cried out, writhing, her thighs clamping around his head as he swept his tongue between her folds, flicking the tip against the little bundle of excited nerves at its apex. Her hips moved in time with his tongue. Sliding his hands under her thighs, he pushed them farther apart with his shoulders, wrapping his hands around them to hold her open for his oral assault.

And he feasted.

Chapter 8

Eden

This was better than she'd remembered.

It was a good thing she was no longer following her plan to try to convince herself that there was nothing between her and Marcus and that the sex with him couldn't have been *that* good. If she had been, the plan would have been blown out of the water. Marcus was lavishing attention on her, worshipping every inch of her body, and she was drowning in pleasure.

This was what she'd dreamed of—those lonely nights when she'd been hoping for her husband to turn back into the man she'd married. Was she crazy to give him a second chance now? Maybe. But it did look like he'd truly put in the work and made the changes, and after all that she'd given up, shouldn't she get the benefit of that?

“Oh, fuck... oh, Daddy...” Eden writhed as he sucked her clit into his mouth, pulsing the swollen nub with his tongue. Pleasure welled up in her core and washed over her in a wave as her fingers dug into the base of his skull, gripping him, trying to pull him more firmly against her as she came for him.

She'd barely come down from the high when he pulled away, licking his lips, his eyes hot with need. Shoving his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a condom packet.

"I'm still on birth control, Daddy. Just fuck me," she pleaded, sliding her hands over her body to tempt him. She didn't want to feel him through the rubber. She wanted to feel just him inside her, the way it had always been between them. The birth control was necessary to keep her periods regular, even when she wasn't having sex, so she'd never stopped taking it—besides, better safe than sorry.

A decision she definitely didn't regret now as desire flared in Marcus' eyes, and he dropped the packet.

"I got my tests run at the doctor's three months ago, and I haven't been with anyone since," he said, his voice a growl as he dropped forward, his forearms bracing himself against the bed on either side of her.

"Two months ago for me. And same."

His mouth claimed hers in another kiss, and this time, she could taste her pleasure on his tongue. As his big body moved over hers, she spread her thighs wide for him, moaning against his lips as she felt the blunt head of his cock rubbing between her pussy lips, coating the tip with her arousal. She squirmed, moving to get him in the right spot, needing him inside her.

Both of them moaned as he thrust forward, stretching her open. The pointed tips of her nipples brushed against the wiry hairs on his chest, adding to the pleasurable stimulation as he sank into her. Eden moaned again, lifting her hips to meet his thrust and wrapping her legs around his to dig her heels into the backs of his thighs, wanting him deeper inside her.

“Oh fuck, babygirl,” he groaned, flexing his hips to retreat, then thrust in again.

If she hadn't already been cried out, hearing those words from his lips would have made her tear up again. It felt as if she'd been waiting forever to hear him call her that, in exactly that tone.

“Daddy, harder, please, fuck me harder!” She whimpered as his hands curved around her arms, sliding from her biceps over her elbows to her wrists, pushing her hands up above her head. Their fingers joined, his weight pushed her arms down into the bed, pinning her as he began to move harder and faster within her.

Unable to do more than wriggle beneath him, Eden moaned and squirmed, her pussy clenching around him with every hard thrust. His body rubbed against her swollen clit as he lowered his lips to hers for another searing kiss, muffling her cries of pleasure.

It was everything she'd been missing.

Her pussy clamped down around his thrusting cock as her pleasure mounted, another, bigger orgasm growing within her. Shuddering, her legs tightened around his waist, feet pulling him into her so she could rub her sensitive parts against his hard body. As his thrusts grew wilder, driving deeper, he could no longer maintain the kiss. He pulled his lips away, allowing her cries to fill the room again.

“Oh, Daddy, I'm going to come... oh fuck, I'm going to come...”

“That's it, babygirl.” His voice was a deep growl, reaching to some inner part of her that craved his command. “Come for me, come all over Daddy's cock.”

It was filthy and hot, so wrong, yet so right. Eden cried out as her orgasm peaked and the waves of pleasure crashed over her. Her back arched, her arms straining, but she couldn't move them from where he had her restrained by his own hands. The inability to move increased the pleasure of her climax. She writhed on his cock as he pumped harder and harder.

With a wild cry, he buried himself inside her, and her pussy clenched hard as she rubbed her body against his. The stimulation sent another wave of ecstasy sweeping through her. She dug her heels into his thighs as the intensity of her erotic bliss became almost painful.

“Daddy!”

Feeling the burst of his climax inside her, the hot pulses of cum filling her, her muscles spasmed around him as if her body was trying to pull every drop of cum deep into her. They'd talked about having kids, but their marriage had fallen apart before they'd done more than discuss the possibility. Even though she was on birth control now, there was something incredibly hot about knowing he was filling her with his seed.

The fact that her brain was already there said more about what she felt about him than any of her sassy shields and barriers had.

She was so fucked.

And not because he'd just filled her with his cum, though that, too.

“Holy fuck, babygirl...” Marcus' words echoed her thoughts.

He lifted his head, looking down at her, and her gaze darted around as his intense look, while he was still inside her, made her feel more vulnerable than ever. One of his hands slid down her arm to cup her cheek, and she met his gaze, inwardly and outwardly trembling at the intimacy. Marcus' dark eyes were soft. Loving. The way he'd looked at her forever ago, yet somehow different.

“Guess you were serious about giving me a second chance, huh?”

“And using you for sex while I do so,” she retorted. Her sassy barriers were coming back up as she tried to hide her rising panic.

Yes, she'd decided to give him another chance.

Yes, she'd wanted the sex.

But now that her arousal had been reduced to a simmer rather than a firestorm, and her desires were no longer playing havoc with her brain, she was panicking a little. This was what she wanted, but it was also too much, too fast—and her pride wouldn't let her admit it. Her first instinct was to prod Marcus and try to push him away.

Instead, he chuckled and lowered his lips to hers for a kiss.

“Consider my dick at your disposal.”

That wasn't the response she'd expected, and as Eden laughed, she felt something inside of her relax. Not completely. Her brain was still picking apart all the ways this could go wrong. All the ways she could be hurt again. But at least she wasn't panicking anymore.

“Let's get you cleaned up, babygirl,” he murmured, brushing his lips over hers again for one last kiss. Eden sighed,

focusing on the now and pushing thoughts of the future away as best she could.

“Yes, Daddy.”

Her body hummed with satisfaction, her bottom a little sore from the spanking, her pussy sore in a good way from the fucking. And her eyes were a little sore from the crying, although it felt like most of the aftereffects of her emotional breakdown had been wiped away by the hot sex. At least in a kink club, when they left the private room, no one would think that evidence of tears was unusual.

Well, Rita and Bree might, but they wouldn't bother her about it.

“So, now what?” she asked as Marcus helped her put her dress back on.

“That's up to you,” he replied, slipping the straps back over her shoulders, caressing her skin with his fingers. Not like he was trying to turn her on, but like he couldn't stop touching her now that he'd started. “I'd like to take you out on a date.”

“I've got nothing going on tomorrow.” Although she hadn't really meant it to, the words came out sounding like a challenge. Spontaneity had never been Marcus' strong suit, and during their marriage, it had been nearly impossible due to his work schedule.

Which wasn't fair now since he owned his own business, and he really did have to work.

“Great. I'll bring you breakfast before I have to go to work.”

He kissed the top of her head, amusement threaded through his voice as if he'd known what she was doing. The

itch to get out of there to get some space and put up some shields again was growing stronger. As if he sensed it, Marcus wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

“Come on, let’s get back to our friends.”

As much as Eden wanted to pretend like everything was normal and nothing major had happened, it was kind of hard to do with his cum slowly dripping down her thigh... but she was going to try her best.

Chapter 9

Marcus

Showing up at Eden's door in the morning was a little nerve wracking. Things had been weird last night when they'd rejoined their friends. Well, when they'd rejoined Bree and Owen, who had waited for them. Rita and Andres had ended up finding an empty spanking bench to claim.

Bree had been concerned, Owen had been concerned because Bree was concerned, and Eden had put back up all the walls Marcus had broken down during their scene. He'd stepped back a bit to give her space, unsure if he was doing the right thing, but since they'd done a one-eighty from a bet about her feelings to her giving him a second chance, he'd decided not to push.

He was still questioning whether that had been the right decision.

She'd texted him this morning that Rita and Bree would be joining them for breakfast and to bring enough for everyone, as well as giving him coffee orders. Was it another test? Absolutely. Was Marcus determined to pass with flying colors? Yup.

Was he going to punish her for testing him later?

Undecided.

He understood why she was doing it and understood why she'd invited Rita and Bree on their 'date.' Which he no longer considered a date since they had chaperones.

He'd gotten under her skin last night, even more than she'd expected, and now she was trying to walk back some of the progress they'd made, which was fine. Marcus still had a toehold, and he was going to make the most of it.

Besides, the way to a woman's heart was often found through her friends. If the friends approved, his job would be a million times easier. He needed to win them over anyway since they were going to be part of his life for years to come. Whether or not things worked out with him and Eden, he wasn't going to be giving up his friendships.

That was why his anxiety spiked a little when he heard voices and laughter behind Eden's door. They were all there. Straightening up, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath, quelling his racing heartbeat and slowing his breathing. Anything to do with Eden felt high stress, and he did his best to avoid that.

Once he felt calmer, he knocked on the door.

All the voices within fell silent. A moment later, Eden called out in a sing-song voice.

"Who is it?"

"Daddy."

The door jerked open, and her face was bright red. Marcus grinned and pushed the tray full of coffee drinks at her.

"Good morning, babygirl."

“Oh my God, get in here. The last thing I need is Mrs. Vaughn hearing you and getting ideas!” She grabbed his arm—the one attached to the bag of food, not the coffee—and pulled him into her apartment. Marcus raised his eyebrows.

“You care what the neighbor thinks about you?” That seemed very unlike her.

“I care that she’s on a smutty-Daddy-romance-reading binge and overshares on everything. I don’t care about what she wants to know about me. I don’t want to hear what she has to say about her and Mr. Vaughn’s sexcapades.” Eden shook her head, brushing strands of pink hair out of her face as she looked up at him with a pained expression. “They’re in their eighties, and I can tell you the exact day she lost her anal virginity. Because she told me. Because I made the mistake of telling her that I also read naughty romance.”

Marcus nearly choked. He hoped to meet Mrs. Vaughn one day, not because he wanted to know about her sex life—he’d have to watch what he said—but because anyone who could discompose Eden was worth meeting.

“Good for her,” he said. “I would think you would find her inspirational.”

“She does,” Rita piped up from where she was sitting at the kitchen table. “But it is still a little uncomfortable. Mrs. Vaughn reminds me of my grandma. And I absolutely approve of grandma getting down, but I’m not so enlightened that I want to hear too much about it.”

“Especially when she describes how she gets Mr. Vaughn to get it up,” Bree muttered.

Marcus cracked up, shaking his head as he went to the table and began to unload the bag of goodies he’d brought.

Bagels, cream cheese, several omelets, and fruit salad. He grabbed the Southwestern egg white omelet he'd gotten for himself and sat down in the chair next to Eden's.

At least she had left that chair open rather than putting Bree and Rita between them.

"I'll be more careful about what I say in the hallway," he promised. Though he might find it funny, he was trying to make a good impression on everyone, especially Eden, which meant making sure she stayed comfortable.

"Thank you," Eden said primly, taking the seat next to him. The next few minutes were silent while everyone grabbed what they wanted to eat, loading up their plates, and claiming their drinks.

Marcus began to eat his omelet, just happy to be there. He was going to treat Eden like a skittish animal—first step was getting her used to his presence. If they had been alone this morning, it might have been a different story, but they weren't.

Eden

Marcus was sitting in her apartment, eating breakfast at her kitchen table. Even with her friends there, it felt oddly intimate. Maybe because it was so unexpected.

She stared at his meal.

"Are there vegetables in that?" she asked.

"Yes. It's a Southwestern egg white omelet. It's got peppers, spinach, and low-fat cheese." He grinned at her. "I've

changed up my diet a bit.”

Apparently. While she knew the job and stressful lifestyle he'd been leading had led to his heart attack, she'd also known his diet wouldn't have helped. He'd had the tendency to eat a lot of takeout and fast food, and he didn't usually choose anything that had vegetables in it—burgers, fries, steak and cheese subs, tater tots. For breakfast, he'd been more likely to down a few sausages than anything else. Nothing wrong with those things in moderation, but it had started to be all he ate unless she made something for him. Which had eaten into her time, and he'd never reciprocated.

To be perfectly honest, she'd expected to see him show up this morning with the usual kind of breakfast he'd gotten when he'd been in charge of food.

It was good to see him taking care of himself, especially in the wake of the heart attack, and another reminder of how things had changed. If they got back together, she wouldn't have to nag him about his diet. He was already taking care of it.

“So, Marcus, what are your intentions toward our friend?” Rita asked, tilting her head toward Eden.

Eden rolled her eyes, but she didn't protest. She knew she'd be doing the same thing in Rita's shoes. Even kind-hearted Bree didn't try to temper Rita's bluntness. Instead, she gave Marcus the same hard look Rita was as they waited for his answer.

“To show her how much I've improved as a romantic partner and hope that she's willing to give me a second chance to cherish her the way she deserves,” Marcus replied with perfect sincerity, his gaze moving to meet hers rather than looking at Rita or Bree.

“Awww,” Rita and Bree chorused in unison. Bree had softened more than Rita, but they were both looking a little starry-eyed now. Their own romances had prepped them to be open to anything romantic that came out of Marcus’ mouth.

Truth be told, Eden was feeling a little melty after the pronouncement as well.

Yes, he’d said something similar to her last weekend, but it wasn’t the same as announcing it to witnesses. Especially since last weekend had been a surprise and this weekend... well, she’d already really been able to see some of the changes he’d made to his life and the differences in his approach to her. Now, he was setting himself up for what could be an embarrassment since he was announcing his intentions so baldly.

He didn’t have to.

He could have hemmed around it or said something less declarative. But he hadn’t.

The shields around her heart were already starting to feel a little cracked, even though she’d pulled them back up overnight. Now he was battering at them some more.

Rita gave herself a little shake.

“So, you’re not going to fall back into old bad habits, right?” she asked pointedly.

Eden coughed as she swallowed a piece of bagel wrong, and Marcus reached out to pat her on the back as he answered.

“I’ve had a few years of practice now,” he replied with a chuckle, not at all put out by Rita’s questioning. He was a lot chillier than he had been while they were married. “And I’ve been through a lot of therapy and done a lot of introspection.”

“You went to therapy?” At some point, she needed to get past being surprised by all the things he’d finally done *after* she’d left him.

“I did. I still go in for a tune-up sometimes.” He grinned at her. “Dr. Silverwood would be happy to meet you any time you’d like to come with me, in fact. I’ve told her all about you. She’s kink friendly.”

Eden knew that. She’d actually heard the name before, from her cousin Eben who worked at the Outlands. Sometimes, it seemed like Eben knew everyone in the community. Dr. Silverwood was one of the therapists the Outlands recommended to anyone who asked for a suggestion.

“Uh, maybe some time.” Depending on how things continued on with Marcus, it probably wasn’t a bad idea, but it wasn’t something she was willing to jump into right away. Hard to do couples therapy when you weren’t officially a couple yet.

Bree asked Marcus a question about his nursery, taking him off the hot seat, and conversation flowed much more easily until he had to leave. Eden walked him to the door, feeling as though she was on a first date, even though she’d invited her friends along.

Will he kiss me?

It turned out the answer was yes. When she opened the door, before she could step away, Marcus leaned down to steal a kiss... and she let him.

“I’ll give you a call later, baby— ah, beautiful.” He winked at her and sauntered away, whistling as he went.

Eden let herself check out his very fine ass for a few moments before shutting the door and sighing as she pressed

her head against it.

“Girl, you are in so much trouble,” Rita called from the couch. “That man means business.”

“I know.” She turned to look at her friends. “I’m not being crazy, though, right? Like, it’s worth giving him a second chance?”

“Seems like it to me,” Bree said immediately. “It’s not just that he wants one. He’s been doing the work to be a better partner.”

“And a better Daddy,” Rita chimed in, grinning widely. “Besides, you know you’re going to regret it if you don’t at least try.”

“Are you okay?” Bree asked. She sat up a little, appearing concerned. “You know you know you don’t have to give him a second chance if you really don’t want to. We don’t *have* to be three couples.”

“Oh, she wants him. That’s why she’s struggling,” Rita answered before Eden could open her mouth.

Bree rolled her eyes.

“Rita’s right.” Eden groaned, making her way over to flop onto the couch between her friends. They were both right. Marcus had clearly been putting in the work, and if she didn’t give him a chance now, she would always wonder. Always imagine. It wasn’t about what was fair to him. It was about what was fair to her... “I deserve to know where this could go. I’m not over him, or at least, I’m not over the idea of him, and I want to check out this reality.”

Bree studied her closely for a moment.

“Okay. I’m just a little worried because you seem subdued.”

“That’s because he subdued her with his penis,” Rita suggested helpfully.

Picking up a pillow, Eden whacked her bestie with it.

Chapter 10

Eden

“I can’t believe you brought me to the Mattress Factory.” Eden turned in place, a slow spin, so she could take in every inch of the exhibit around them. She loved art installations and had been to this particular gallery many times on her own, but trying to drag Marcus to immersive art experiences—really anything to do with art—had always been a painful endeavor, one that she’d given up on after the first couple of tries. He’d never enjoyed them and always spent most of the time on his phone, which meant she ended up wishing he wasn’t there at all.

This time, he’d been the one to choose the location for their date, his phone was firmly in his pocket, and he was walking through the installation with interest. It was uncomprehending and confused interest, but Eden would take it. She didn’t expect him to love it the way she did. It was enough that he was taking the time and effort to arrange the date and be there with her.

Talk about putting in the work.

“I know you like it here,” he said, his incomprehension clear in his voice. Eden giggled and squeezed his hand when he looked down at her. Marcus was never going to be an art person. “Sorry, I know you always wanted me to pay attention to these things, but... I don’t get it. It’s interesting?”

“Is that a question or a statement?” she teased. The lilt at the end of his sentence had rendered it far more like a question than an opinion.

“I mean, it is interesting...”

“But you’re not really interested. That’s okay.” She leaned against his arm. “I prefer knowing your true thoughts, good or bad.”

Marcus looked around again, studying the walls.

“I think it’s just not really my thing.”

“Thank you for being here with me, anyway.” That was the point. It wasn’t his thing, but he was doing his best to make the whole experience enjoyable for her, despite his personal feelings about it.

“Of course.” This time it was his turn to squeeze her fingers, and Eden smiled back at him. There was no ‘of course’ about it, going by their past experiences, and they both knew it. But she was doing better at appreciating the changes he’d made without the bitterness of wondering why he’d waited until after she’d left. She was happy it had happened, even if it had taken longer than she’d wanted.

They’d spent the past few weeks getting to know each other again—without all the bickering and sniping that had characterized their interactions ever since their lives had collided for a second time. They’d done a lot of catching up about what they’d missed over the years. Eden had been

surprised, but not shocked, to hear that *all* of his old work friendships had fallen by the wayside after he'd stopped working.

She'd thought maybe a few would endure, but Marcus didn't seem to be broken up about it. Then again, his whole attitude now seemed to be zen and going with the flow. He seemed to accept that their lives no longer intersected with his. Their interests had remained focused on work, and they didn't have time for anything outside of that.

He didn't say it, but she got the feeling it helped him understand how she'd felt about him and his relationship with the office during their marriage.

They'd had a few more scenes at the Outlands, too.

Eden had insisted on keeping the sex there for now. Was it one of the barriers she was keeping up? Absolutely. She knew it. He knew it.

Walking through the gallery, she was starting to feel like she might be ready to lower it. Yes, they were still in the 'new relationship' glow where things were shiny and bright, but it wasn't as if Marcus had completely changed. He still worked hard. He just didn't make the nursery his entire life, even though he owned it.

He took time off. He had hobbies outside of it. And friends outside of it, although technically, Owen and Andres were *right* outside of it in their food trucks. So, they were nursery-adjacent. But none of them spent all their time there.

She was starting to feel like this new Marcus wasn't just real but as though he really was everything she wanted.

She was starting to fall in love again.

And hoping the fall didn't completely decimate her this time.

Once they'd made their way through the current installation and stepped out into the sunshine, she felt the kind of happiness in her soul that always came from good art. Sighing, she closed her eyes and lifted her face to the sun to soak in some of the rays. All the good things.

"Ready for lunch?" Marcus asked, giving her hand a squeeze. Eden opened her eyes and beamed up at him.

"Sure. I'm starved."

The words had barely left her mouth when his phone rang. Immediately, his hand went to his pocket, but instead of picking it up and answering it—what he would have done during their marriage—he pressed the side to turn off the ringer. Eden raised her eyebrows at him.

"If it's important, they'll leave a voicemail," he said firmly.

Well, okay then.

They hadn't taken more than a couple steps before it started to ring again. A little pit formed in the bottom of Eden's stomach. This was all too familiar, but she tried to shove it away.

Marcus frowned, reaching into his pocket. He still didn't answer it, but he was checking to see who it was, which was fair. That was two calls right in a row. It was probably something important.

"It's the nursery," he said, still frowning. Hesitating.

She knew if she wasn't there, if they weren't on a date, he would have answered immediately because he was the owner

of said nursery. He was hesitating because she *was* there, and they *were* on a date.

“Answer it.” She managed to sound mostly supportive and cheerful. After all, he had just taken her through an art installation he had no interest in.

“I’m sorry. It’ll be quick, I promise.”

Eden nodded her understanding, keeping her fake smile firmly planted on her lips, but Marcus surprised her again. He didn’t turn and walk away, phone to his ear, as he would have in the past. Instead, he stood right there, still holding her hand as he answered it, so she could hear the conversation.

Not that she could understand every word. Whoever was calling him was frantic, their words spilling out as soon as he answered the phone. Marcus straightened up, his expression becoming stony. His gaze cut to hers, softening with apology.

“Janet... Janet. It’s okay. Close up shop. I’ll re-open it when I get there, okay? You go with Dillon.”

Eden’s heart clenched.

This wasn’t the same. It wasn’t.

He owned the nursery. He wasn’t just another worker. Whatever had happened, it was bad, and it was ultimately his responsibility. Which meant he needed to be there.

So, this wasn’t the same as before.

Marcus sighed as he hung up the phone, his fingers tightening around hers.

“Plant emergency?” she asked, trying to push amusement into her voice.

“Sort of. One of my employees, Dillon, who also happens to be Janet’s nephew, tripped and fell. He is bad off enough that she called for an ambulance. She wants to go to the hospital with him. It sounds like he might have broken his leg.” Marcus winced, and she could practically see the wheels turning in his brain.

His sympathy for Dillon and Janet was clear, but he also had to think about things like worker’s comp and the fact that if Dillon needed the hospital, he was also going to need his hours covered.

“Do you want to come with me?”

Eden blinked. That was unexpected. Not that Marcus could have ever offered to take her with him to work in the past, but she was so used to being pushed aside and left out of anything to do with work, she’d thought it would be the same.

“You don’t have to,” he said hastily. “I can call around to my other workers and see if anyone can come in. And I can order you food to eat in the breakroom? I might even be able to eat with you if it’s not too busy.”

Not too busy on a Sunday in the summer. He was kidding himself if he thought that was possible, especially since he was going to be taking the place of not one but two of his employees. His expression became pained.

“I’m sorry, I know it’s not ideal, but—”

Letting go of his hand, Eden reached up with both of hers to cup his face, cutting off whatever he was going to say as she went up on her tiptoes to kiss him. He relaxed as her lips pressed against his. She dropped back down, smiling up at him, and this time, the smile wasn’t at all forced.

“Tacos or grilled cheese in the breakroom sound great.” She didn’t need to explain that she was talking about getting lunch from either Andres or Owen’s food trucks, both of which would be outside the nursery at this time of day. Marcus beamed at her, his gaze full of sheer relief.

“Thank you.”

Hey, if he was going to put in the work to change, so could she. This wasn’t the same as before, and she wasn’t going to react like it was. He was including her, not pushing her away.

It made a world of difference.

Chapter 11

Marcus

What could have been a disaster of a day had turned out to be... well, definitely not what he'd been hoping for, but not a total disaster, either. Mostly because Eden had taken pity on him. It could have been a lot worse if she'd gotten upset about him ending their date early, and he wouldn't have blamed her.

The circumstances were out of his control this time, but he was sure it brought up a lot of bad feelings from the past. He'd seen it in her face when he'd first picked up the call from Janet, even though she'd been doing her best to smile and pretend she wasn't bothered. Thankfully, she was a compassionate person who really *wasn't* bothered once she knew what was going on.

She didn't just sit in the breakroom and eat, either. Though she did eat first—a Hangry Eden was not an Eden anyone wanted to be around. Marcus didn't have that problem, so he grabbed bites between customers. Once she was done eating, she came out, grabbed an extra Flower Power shirt, and joined him on the floor.

Did she know anything about plants?

No.

She laughed and joked with the customers, encouraging them to teach her instead... and they loved it. She wasn't any more interested in the details of caring for miniature roses than he was in art installations, but she smiled and listened, anyway. If he hadn't already been in love with her, he would have fallen today.

"So, boss," she said, hopping up on the back counter where he was organizing the receipts and balancing the register. The front door was locked, and the food trucks outside were long gone, leaving them completely alone in the place. "What kind of pay do I get for all the work I've done today?"

Little brat. Marcus shook his head. The sultry tone of her voice let him know exactly what she was angling for.

"Oh, well, I don't know... I wasn't expecting to have to pay an extra employee for today." He shook his head regretfully. "I don't think I can pay you for today. Maybe we can work... something else out."

Eden's eyes widened in mock surprise as she put her hand to her chest like she had a pearl necklace there to clutch. Her fingers lingered over the top petal on her Flower Power t-shirt. Maybe it was silly, but seeing her in his nursery's shirt did things to him.

"Are you suggesting alternate payment?" she asked in pretend shock.

"Sure. I can pay you in sausage." He winked at her and grinned as she cracked up, unable to keep a straight face after his suggestion. Hell, it wasn't such a bad idea. She did deserve a reward.

Covering her mouth, she snorted as she tried to get her laughter under control, trying to get back into her role, but she couldn't keep the grin off her face.

"I, uh, suppose that's acceptable." She coughed, trying to cover more giggles.

"You're going to have to come back to my place to get it."

"Also acceptable."

"And you're going to have to leave me alone for a few minutes so I can finish this."

Before he'd finished speaking, Eden was already shaking her head, a mischievous smirk on her lips.

"Absolutely not acceptable."

"Brat," he retorted, chuckling as he looked back down at the receipts. Still giggling, Eden sat beside him in companionable silence, doing something on her phone while he finished everything he needed to do for the evening. Having her there was nice. Distracting but nice. Marcus whistled under his breath as he locked up before turning to Eden and holding out his hand.

She slid her fingers into his.

"Sorry our date got messed up."

"That's okay. It wasn't like you could plan for an injured employee. At least he's doing all right." During the afternoon, he'd gotten the text from Janet. Dillon had a nasty sprain, but at least his leg wasn't broken, which had been the initial worry. He also had a minor concussion, but they'd released him to go home. She'd offered to come back in, but at that point, Marcus had told her to stay with her nephew and that he'd see her tomorrow.

“Yeah, and he wasn’t supposed to work tomorrow, anyway. I’ll have to figure out the schedule for the rest of the week and tweak some things so he can stay on the cash register once he comes back until his ankle is healed up.” His mind was already moving ahead to all the little things he was going to have to take care of—then he yanked it right back to the present. Where he wanted to be was here, with Eden.

Thinking ahead was natural and easy for him, and it was easy to get lost in his head, but that meant he’d sometimes accidentally left Eden behind while he was distracted by his thoughts. He was doing so well today, he didn’t want to get bogged down with his head on work. Those were issues for future him. Right now, he wanted to focus on current Marcus, who was about to take Eden back to his house and fuck her silly.

“Already figuring out the schedule in your head, aren’t you?” Eden asked.

At least she sounded amused rather than upset. Something had shifted between them today, even though he’d had to cut their date short.

Maybe because he hadn’t just canceled it completely and asked her to come with him. If that was the effect it had, he’d happily take her along to work anytime. Not that he wanted more of their dates cut short by issues, especially not ones involving people getting hurt, but as the owner of Flower Power, sometimes there were things only he could handle. And, in an emergency, he was the one ultimately responsible.

“I’m trying not to,” he admitted, making her laugh.

“Go ahead. I know you’ll feel better and be better focused on, ah, doling out my payment once you’ve got it figured out.”

She winked at him as they reached the car. Shaking his head, Marcus smiled and opened the door for her to get in.

She really didn't seem bothered by his preoccupation, so he let his mind dwell on the schedule, what Dillon might need, and how to balance the hours he'd been putting in the entire way home. He was mentally writing out the email in his head when they pulled into the driveway, and he gave her a guilty look.

Eden laughed.

“Do whatever it is you need to do.” She pointed her finger at him in warning. “It better not take more than five minutes, though. Tops. That's a real five minutes, not a Marcus-five-minutes.”

“Done,” he agreed. “I just need to send a quick email to the other employees, letting them know about Dillon and asking them to send back any openings they have to help cover the gaps in the schedule.”

“Okay, I'm going to hold you to that,” she said.

It was more than he'd expected.

Letting her into the house, Marcus went to his computer in the den since he could type faster on the keyboard than on his phone. He didn't get pulled into checking anything while he was there—he wouldn't let himself. No looking at the other emails, definitely no opening them. Just get in, type up the email, and get out in exactly four minutes from the moment he sat down.

Hopping up, he went to look for Eden. She'd been in the kitchen getting a glass of water when he'd gone into the den, but now she was nowhere to be seen. Marcus frowned.

“Eden?” he called out. She hadn’t left, had she? No, he would have heard the door close. Besides, Eden wasn’t the type to leave in silence. If he’d upset her enough to leave, he would have heard about it *before* she walked out the door.

But she didn’t answer.

Frowning, he walked through the house, heading to his bedroom. Maybe she’d gone back there to wait for him. Especially since he was supposed to be paying her in sausage.

The door was closed, which confirmed that Eden was behind it since Marcus never left his doors closed during the day. He always left his bedroom door open when he walked out of it.

Opening it now, he stood in the doorway and stared at the bed. Eden was in the middle of it, stark naked, but she wasn’t posing and waiting for him... no, she’d gotten started without him. One hand cupped her breast, thumbing her nipple, while the other was between her thighs. Her knees were pointed to the ceiling, feet firmly planted on his comforter, giving him the most open view possible as her fingers moved between her slippery folds.

“Oh, there you are.” She smirked at him, pink hair spread across his pillow. “Took you long enough.”

The little brat. She was definitely getting a spanking before she got his sausage.

Chapter 12

Eden

Provoking her Daddy was always playing with fire, but it was also a way to get all of his attention focused on her, and that's exactly what Eden wanted right now. She wasn't mad he'd had to attend to work, but she wanted to make sure she now had his total attention.

It seemed she did.

His gaze was now laser-focused on where she was making little circles around her swollen clit with her fingers. He shook his head, like he was trying to come out of a trance, and lifted his gaze to meet hers. Heat and desire burned in his dark eyes.

"You've been a very naughty little girl." The growl in his voice sent a shiver down her spine.

"Oh no, Daddy. I was a good girl, getting my pussy ready for your cock."

Pressing his lips together, Marcus shook his head as he kicked the door shut behind him. Stalking toward the bed, he stripped off his shirt, his hands going to his pants to undo the closures.

“Did Daddy say you could play with your pussy?”

Eden pouted at him because, of course, the answer was no. She hadn't asked, and she'd known she'd been courting a spanking. Stopping at the side of the bed, Marcus shucked off his pants and boxers, placing his hands on his hips. His dick was pointing at her like a compass at true north, giving her the urge to reach out and boing it.

So, that's what she did.

“Boing.” She giggled as it bobbed up and down.

“That's it.”

Marcus' reaction was completely predictable. He yanked her off the bed and over his lap before she could say, “Daddy, don't,” and started swatting her butt with enough force to make her squeal. His cock rubbed against her side, the soft skin covering his hard shaft feeling like silk as she squirmed and rubbed herself on it.

“Ow, Daddy! I'm sorry!” She wasn't sorry yet, but if he kept spanking her like this, she might get there.

Each swat was firm and crisp, the burning sting flaring hot and barely getting the chance to subside before his hand came down again. He moved the location of the swats all over her butt, covering the area completely, but there was some overlap because Marcus had big hands. The overlap stung the most until he started spanking her sit spots. Eden shrieked and wriggled as he heated up the extra sensitive areas.

“Daddy, no!”

“Oh, are you getting exactly what you asked for, babygirl?” His mock sympathy made her want to kick him even as it turned her on. “Are the consequences of your own actions too much for you to take?”

“No! Ow!” Her high-pitched whine negated her ‘no’ as he managed to catch both sit spots with one swat. It didn’t stop her from persevering with her claim. “I can handle whatever you dish out!”

She could, too, because she knew he’d never harm her. No matter how they’d hurt each other in the past, her Daddy would never do anything to injure her. She still trusted him. Hell, she might trust him more now than she had back then.

“I’m so glad to hear you say that, babygirl,” he purred. Another flurry of swats on her already heated cheeks had her shrieking and squirming until she lay panting over his lap while his hand caressed her burning skin. Tears had sprung to her eyes, though they hadn’t spilled over to her cheeks yet, and she whimpered as Marcus squeezed her abused flesh.

Between her legs, her pussy pulsed with need. She’d already been turned on when he’d started spanking her, and now, she was extra aroused.

“Such a naughty girl.” His fingers dipped between the swells of her cheeks, and Eden sucked in a breath as the tip of his finger rubbed over the crinkled star of her anus. “I think it’s time to remind you where naughty girls get Daddy’s cock.”

“Daddy, nooooo,” she whined, even as excitement surged up inside her. It was one of her favorite fantasies back when they were married. Part of Eden loved butt sex, part of her hated it, and she loved to indulge in the hate of it. Especially when Marcus made her feel like it was extra dirty, often only indulging when she’d been a ‘bad girl.’ It turned her on and made her feel utterly wicked and like a bad girl.

“I think the punishment fits the crime,” he said, lifting his hand. She felt him lean to the right and heard the sound of his nightstand drawer opening. Lube was in there. “You were

playing with your pussy without permission, so now your pussy doesn't get my cock. However, I shouldn't be deprived just because you were a naughty girl."

"I'll suck your cock!" she said, squealing as she felt his slick finger probing her anus. Wriggling, she tried to lean forward to escape the insistent pressure, but Marcus' forearm across the length of her spine kept her pinned in position over his thighs as his finger began to stretch open her little hole. Eden whimpered at the slight sting.

"I don't want your mouth, babygirl." His finger pushed in deeper, making her cry out, a demonstration of where he wanted his cock to go. He thrust it back and forth several times before beginning to push a second finger into her protesting hole. "Where do naughty girls get their Daddy's cocks?"

His fingers twisted, adding to the sensations coursing through her, and Eden clenched down around the probing digits, even though it did no good.

"In their bottoms." Her pussy clenched as well as he made her answer the question, his fingers moving and stretching her open, readying her bottom for his cock. She made a whining sound. "They get Daddy's cock in their bottoms."

"Damn right." His fingers spread inside her, pushing at the tight ring of her entrance, and Eden squealed. The stretch burned. It hurt. Yet her pussy pulsed with need right next to her aching hole.

There was no real relief when Marcus finally removed his fingers, knowing something larger was about to replace them.

A moment later, Eden was on her hands and knees on the bed with Marcus behind her, the tip of his lubricated cock pushing at her tight entrance. She whimpered. Though he'd

used a plug on her a couple times in the past few weeks and his fingers as well, this was the first time they'd have anal sex since their separation.

The intimacy of it was almost painful in its intensity.

“Oh, fuck... Daddy...” She dropped her head between her arms, bracing herself as he pushed in. Her muscles trembled, and she panted for breath, shuddering as she clenched around the thick log slowly impaling her. Though his fingers had prepared her somewhat, they weren't as thick as his cock.

It hurt.

It cramped.

It filled her.

And she loved it as much as she hated it.

Feeling Marcus' cock slowly sliding into her bottom, she truly did feel like a naughty girl. Not just like a naughty girl, like a *dirty* girl. Only a wicked, dirty girl would call her man Daddy and let him put his cock in her bottom. Only a truly perverted girl would cum while he fucked her forbidden hole.

“That's it, babygirl.” Marcus' fingers flexed on her hips as he crooned the words. “Take it for Daddy.”

He thrust in deeper, and she cried out, panting again, her body pulsing as he slid his dick between her heated cheeks. The last man to fuck her ass had been Marcus, so it had been a long time since she'd had anal sex. She didn't want to be anyone's naughty girl except his.

“Now, you can play with your pussy all you want, babygirl,” he said as his cock bottomed out, his groin coming to rest on her hot cheeks. She could feel the stiff bristles of his pubic hair rubbing against her sensitive skin. “Daddy's going

to fuck your ass hard.” He groaned, and she felt him flex inside her. “Daddy missed this ass.”

He began to move, not gently but not too roughly as he started to ride her. Eden didn’t need to be told twice. As soon as she could shift her weight onto one hand, the other was between her thighs, rubbing her swollen clit. She already knew she wasn’t going to last long, which was exactly what she wanted—to cum while Daddy’s cock was embedded deep in her ass.

Her elbow buckled as pain and pleasure washed over her as Daddy slammed into her harder and harder. Going down onto her forearm, she rested her head against it as she braced herself against the steady onslaught of hard thrusts, her fingers working furiously on her clit.

Heat and need billowed out from her core, her ass spasming around Marcus’ cock as she cried out from the ecstasy that exploded inside her. Waves of pleasure washed over her with every thrust of his cock, sending her higher and higher into sexual bliss.

“Fuck... Eden...” Marcus thrust in deep, holding himself within her as he began to pulse. Hot liquid splashed inside her, her ass gripping him, milking him, sucking every last drop into her bowels while her orgasm crested and rolled through her, leaving both of them spent and satiated.

Wrapped in her Daddy’s arms, curled up as his little spoon, Eden was drifting off to sleep when she heard his whisper.

“I love you, Eden.”

“I love you too, Garden Daddy.”

“If I’m Garden Daddy, what does that make you?”

“Your hoe.” She didn’t need to spell out the pun for him. His chuckle rumbled against her, and she smiled into the darkness.

Everything was perfect.

The End

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About Golden Angel

Golden Angel is a *USA Today* best-selling author and self-described bibliophile with a “kinky” bent who loves to write stories for the characters in her head. If she didn’t get them out, she’s pretty sure she’d go just a little crazy.

She is happily married, old enough to know better but still too young to care, and a big fan of happily-ever-afters, strong heroes and heroines, and sizzling chemistry.

When she’s not writing, she can often be found on the couch reading, in front of her sewing machine making a new cosplay, hanging out with her friends, or wandering the Maryland Renaissance Fair.

Visit her online at www.goldenangelromance.com

Bound to the DA by
Vivian Murdoch

A MF story by Vivian Murdoch

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, places, locales, and events are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, and events are purely coincidental.

Acknowledgments

*To all the broken people that just need a
daddy to cling to.*

Husdom

No Daddy book would ever be possible without the love and support of my own Daddy. He keeps me sane and grounded when everything feels like it's coming apart.

Awesome Alphas

I know Daddy isn't what I write the most, but thank you for loving Michael just as much as I did. Also... sorry about the diapers. Blame Stella.

Thank you, Ashley, Bianca, and Rita!

Bestie Beta

Stella, you are invaluable when it comes to the help, love, and support you give me. Thank you for believing in both me and my Daddies.

Shout Out

Thank you, Jessica Goodman, for never batting an eye. You take all my work in stride and make it the best it can be.

Trigger Warning

Warning!!!

This book is intended for adult audiences and contains adult themes. The acts in this book are not meant to depict an actual dynamic and can be dangerous if done incorrectly. Please play responsibly. Author is not held responsible for readers' actions.

Kinks, Fetishes, Triggers: Includes not limited
to...

Daddy Kink, Slight Humiliation, Edging, Denied Orgasm,
Spanking (honestly... this is pretty much my least trigger
book.)

Chapter 1

Michael

The surrounding voices drone on, the sounds like incessant buzzing in my ears. Try as I might, I find I cannot concentrate. *We have found you a mate. Be at the Mackey-Shaw Convention Center at 3 pm sharp. Do not be late.* I mull over the text message from the Governing Body, my muscles tensing as I watch the trial before me.

If the Governing Body was so high and mighty, wouldn't they have the foresight to know I'm in court right now and pick some other day to do this? Shaking my head, I lean back in my chair, watching the buffoonery before me. Out of all the lawyers defending this jackass, I'm stuck fighting against the most inept one of all.

Usually, with cases like this, it's open and shut—I do my spiel, the lawyer rebuts, the jury sides with me because I'm, quite literally, the best, and we all go home. Not today, however. Today seems to be a lesson in patience as Charlie prances about in his tweed jacket and clashing tie, his gestures just as theatrical as the fiction he weaves.

With a sigh, I rub my forehead as tension tightens my shoulders. Normally, his shrill voice doesn't get me riled up, but today, it seems like everything grates on my last nerve. Having pending nuptials in the back of my mind doesn't help either.

I should be focusing on my response, and yet, all I can think about is my future bride. I should be rejoicing at the thought of finally having an omega of my own, but I can't help the tendrils of unease as they coil around me, making my gut clench. If I'm being perfectly honest, I think giving me a wife is the absolute worst thing the Governing Body can do.

Elected officials like me, people who serve the community, shouldn't be held to the same rules as everyone else. We are put in place to uphold the law, to make sure criminals are taken off the street. How can we do our jobs fully if we have to juggle both a professional and personal life?

Or maybe it's just a me thing. Maybe I don't *want* to handle the idea of having a wife on top of all my other responsibilities. Because, let's be honest, that's what a partner is, first and foremost—a responsibility, one that I plan to take seriously. Once I say "I do," that's it. I'm in this for life.

Gripping my pen in my grasp, I force my mind back on the trial at hand. Already I'm distracted, and I'm not even married yet. It only serves to prove my point. In a desperate attempt to focus my mind, I doodle on the legal pad, allowing the simple motions to bleed off the fractious energy buzzing in my mind.

Just as I get back into the rhythm of court, a sudden motion pulls my focus. Glancing up, my eyes narrow as I take in Rosalind Kennedy. She's the ex-wife of Jacob Kennedy, the man currently on trial. To my knowledge, she's been at every hearing, every summons, never leaving his side. Why now

would she get up in the middle of the very trial that will determine if he stays in prison or goes free?

How many times have I studied her, wishing I could get her on the stand as a witness? However, since potential mates do not have to testify against their spouses, and I refuse to put her through the humiliation of stripping her bare to look for a mark, I allowed her to say no, causing her to rebuff me at every turn.

Though my gut tells me she knows something that could help bring him down, it doesn't really matter. I have more than enough to lock him up, and her testimony would be mere icing on the shit cake that comprises the rap sheet on this guy. Still though, having someone so close to him, so intimate, would be an extra sympathy play toward the jury, and I detest not utilizing every tactic available to me.

Unfortunately, the look I've seen cross her face whenever I asked her about their life together speaks volumes. There's a pain there, a sorrow that shines through despite her paltry attempts to hide it. She's stuck, no doubt bonded to the jackass. Anger lances through me as I look back at the punk, fury swirling until I can't see straight.

Right now, he's up for drug trafficking, grand larceny, aggravated assault, armed robbery, and no doubt many more charges that don't really matter since those big ones are more than enough. With all that against him, I'd be shocked if he didn't do or say something to make her far too scared to testify. He seems to be the type to do whatever it takes to get his way.

People are just a means to an end for him. That's where he and I differ greatly. And though I'd love nothing more than to have Rosalind face her fears and help put this scum where he

belongs, I refuse to cause harm to someone else, be it mental or physical, to get what I want.

Giving them pleasure and pain to elicit specific responses, however, is something else entirely. Stifling a groan, I shift in my chair, willing my cock to stay put. Just because I'm getting married and might soon have an omega willing to satisfy my more deviant urges doesn't mean I can let my body run away with me.

There's the distinct possibility she won't even like anything beyond vanilla sex. Yet one more issue I have with these arranged marriages. Genetics can only tell you so much. They don't take personality and proclivities into account.

A sigh drifts from my lips as I glance back over at Rosalind. There's also the matter of getting stuck with a partner who doesn't have your best interests at heart, like her. She didn't deserve this, but genetics don't see the reality of situations.

I watch as she maneuvers past the people, her onyx hair shimmering in the fluorescent lights. There's a tightness around her lips that hasn't been there before. One would think with her ex so close to going away for a very long time, she'd be relieved.

That is, unless he really did claim her. Life would be agonizing for her if that were the case. With a bond, she'd only last so long with the separation. Flipping the page on my pad, I scribble out a few words and slide it over to my assistant.

Conjugal visits?

Heat suppressants?

Glancing behind us, he notes her movement and shrugs. Practicing law must have been so much easier before this

damned virus turned us into monstrous Alphas and subservient omegas. It was bad enough when criminals were merely human instead of gifted, or cursed depending on who you ask, with all the strength, speed, and aggression that comes with being an Alpha.

Granted, it helps others like me and those in law enforcement. But still. I can't help but wonder what it was like without all this extra added boost. People like Jacob would have still committed crimes, but it wouldn't have been as easy to manipulate others or use brute strength to get their way.

I sit back, a frown furrowing my brow. How is it, in all my visits with her, I never asked if he claimed her? It's such a simple question, one I'm entitled to know. If she does, in fact, carry his mark, there are concessions that will have to be made.

Glancing back up at the clock, I close my eyes and pray this will all be over soon. But, of course, I don't get my wish. With a groan, I watch as another hour and a half drift by so slowly I swear I can hear my hair growing. At this point, I don't have much of a choice.

It doesn't matter how good I am at my job or how fast other cases go by, bastards like Jacob are entitled to due process no matter how long it takes. I only wish on days where I have other obligations it can be a bit speedier. If only we ended or at least adjourned for the day a good bit ago. Now, I'll have no choice but to reveal my business to everyone.

Unfortunately, I can't wait any longer. Rising, I give the judge a sympathetic smile. "Forgive me, Your Honor, but I need to request a recess." Over to the side, Charlie snorts, his bright eyes dancing with mirth.

No doubt he thinks I'm in a bind and need to regroup my thoughts after his stupendous oration. Oh, I'm in a bind, all right, but certainly not because of him. At this point, I'm surprised the jury is still listening to his drivel.

“On what grounds?”

Passing my phone to the bailiff, I shrug, my lips twisting into a smile. “Seems I have another appointment I must keep.”

The judge's eyes widen as he reads the message, chuckling as he hands it back to the bailiff. “My my, seems our very own Michael Sullivan is due to get married. I would say congratulations, but any omega saddled with you will have their work cut out for them.”

“Thank you,” I respond, my tone dry and humorless. “I'll be sure to pass on your condolences.”

“We will reconvene in the morning. That is unless you object. Will you need more time?”

“No, Your Honor. My wife will need to learn at some point that I can't just take off at the drop of a hat. Tomorrow will be fine.”

“So be it.”

At the bang of his gavel, I rush out, glancing down at my watch. Just thirty minutes to get to the convention center and in place. At this rate, I don't even have time to change into a better suit.

Grumbling under my breath, I race toward the venue, my mind in a blur. This is happening. This is really happening. For the next six months, I'll be forced to share my life with someone else—a marriage trial.

I should be grateful to know there's an endpoint if we don't work out; however, I was raised with the idea of marriage being forever. At least that's how my parents portrayed it. Granted, as betas, they had options I never will. They married for love. I'm getting married because the law dictates it.

My stomach churns as I maneuver through traffic, dread dripping through my veins and into my fingers as they clench around the steering wheel. As a DA, I know the law firsthand, and I know how people can get things so wrong. Am I really supposed to entrust my future to some numbers on a screen?

My mind whirls, making the time pass in a blur, yet I somehow manage to make record time. The only saving grace is that the location wasn't all that far off from the courthouse. Without allowing myself to slow down due to overthinking, I hurry down the myriad of hallways bisecting the place. The relief on the faces of the assistants is evident as I find the room and make my way down front. Two minutes to spare.

Nervous energy thrums through my body as I pace back and forth, making myself okay with what's about to happen. Since getting the text message, I haven't been able to fully come to terms with it all. I knew I'd be getting married eventually, but foolishly thought I'd have time to get used to the fact—not while sitting in a courtroom deciding a man's fate.

Soft strains of Pachelbel's Canon in D drift through the room, setting my heart to pounding. What if we're not a good match? What if it's six months of absolute torture? What if-

My thoughts scatter as the woman in question rounds the corner, her lips turned down into a stern frown. She blinks up

at me, her emerald eyes widening as she realizes just who I am.

Shock freezes me, holding me hostage. What if my intended wife is the ex of the criminal I'm trying to put away? Not much surprises me anymore but watching this vision as she walks down the aisle throws me for a loop.

Is that anger shining in her gaze or tears? I can't tell, and with how far away she still is, I can't scent the air to note her reaction. Heck, I don't even know my own reaction.

How in the hell can the Governing Body condone this? Do they not realize she was just recently married to another, possibly even bound? Or does this mean they know for a fact he didn't mark her? Leaning over to the officiant, I turn so she can't hear what I'm saying.

“This isn't right. She can't be my wife.”

The man gives me a wan smile, unease rolling off of him. “I just work here. Okay? I'm just trying to feed my family.”

Of course he doesn't know anything. It was stupid of me to think he was the one who orchestrated this. Tomorrow, however, I will reach out. But honestly, what's even the point? After today, we will be married, whether it's advisable or not.

Turning, I catch Rosalind out of the corner of my eye. It seems like it's neither sadness nor hatred that surrounds her like a dense fog. Annoyance is a better word for it.

Her bottom lip pokes out a touch in a petulant pout. Everything about her screams irritation, both at me and the fact that she's forced down the aisle once more. Though I don't blame her, it doesn't stop my hand from itching with the need to take her over my lap and spank the aggravation out of her.

We're both in this together, whether she likes it or not. A loud sigh drifts from her lips as she stands across from me, her arms crossed so tightly I'm afraid it will crush the small bouquet in her hands. She stands there, rigid, defiant, and fuck me, but her look of rebellion gets me rock hard.

It's been far too long since I've had someone in my life I could discipline and mold into who I want them to be. And based on her little pouts and sass, it seems as if little Rosalind could use a firm hand to bring structure and order to her life. Based on what I know about her ex, she needs all the security, comfort, and consistency I can give her.

Even now, that bottom lip juts out just a bit more, tempting my fingers to glide across it before giving it a firm pinch. But we've only just met. There'll be plenty of time for that later. My cock twitches as she looks away, rolling her eyes as the officiate speaks.

Oh, but every inch of me wants to dominate her, to show her who's boss, but more importantly to show her she's safe and secure with me. Realization dawns as it hits me. What Rosalind needs right now more than anything else, is a Daddy.

Fuck me.

Chapter 2

Rosalind

I blink up at the man who is destined to be my husband. This will make two men occupying this role in a matter of four months. How is this even right? Are they so sure Jacob will go to prison that they're like, "Here, let the DA have her as a reward"?

Though I long to wrap my arms around my waist, to shield myself from the emotions slamming into me, I don't want to leave myself vulnerable. This man looks at me as if he can see every thought, every emotion. Just like an Alpha, he tips his nose into the air, scenting me, stealing my secrets.

It's enough to make me scream. Forcing my body rigid, I roll my eyes, giving off the air of a sulking teenager as opposed to the quivering woman that lurks inside, threatening to leak out. The DA must buy my act because soon, he no longer looks at me with that maddening empathetic stare.

I'm so sick of everyone feeling sorry for me. Oh, poor Rosalind, how awful for your mate to be in prison. Oh, poor Rosalind, whatever will you do now? Oh, poor Rosalind... If I hear poor Rosalind one more time, I'm liable to snap.

“Dearly beloved, we,” the officiant pauses and glances about. “Well, the two witnesses are gathered together to watch as I join this Alpha and omega together in holy matrimony. Remember, though this is only for six months, it is a legally binding marriage.”

As if I can forget. Anger slithers up my spine as I stare at the man putting my ex in prison. Though I am truly grateful to be free from that monster, it’s still disconcerting to be back in the very same room, but with someone else. For something that’s supposed to be legally binding, the Governing Body had no issue ending things early the moment Jacob was arrested.

Granted, with the charges stacked against him, they probably knew he’d be away for so long that there wasn’t any point in staying together. Still though, in the span of four months, it’s as if I’ve gone through the entire grieving process. I should be over all of this, especially since he and I were only together for two of those months.

Yet, I cannot seem to get out of the cycle that oscillates between anger and denial. I’m furious that the Governing Body didn’t research Jacob better before putting us together. I’m enraged that I endured two months with that asshole, and now, I’m forced to join with another.

The man in question frowns down at me, his brown eyes warm and full of what seems to be concern. *Are you okay?* His lips move silently. At least, I think that’s what he’s trying to say. Turning back to the officiant, I ignore this obvious show of an olive branch.

He doesn’t care about me. What Alpha can truly care for an omega? Shaking my head, I force myself to pay attention even though I’m merely going through the motions.

“May I present to you, Michael Sullivan. What his friends and family would like you to know is that he’s a workaholic. In fact, if he’s actually standing up here going through a wedding, then you need to actually touch him to make sure he’s not a hologram.”

Blinking up at him, I lean over and pinch his arm. Hard. With a stern slash of his lips, Michael glares down at me but refuses to rub the spot. Just like a macho Alpha.

“What?” I simper, looking over at the officiant. His eyes are wide with shock as he watches our interaction. “You said to make sure he wasn’t a hologram.”

“I’m pretty sure he didn’t mean literally,” my future husband growls.

“I—um. Right,” the officiant fumbles, clearly flustered. “Well, anyway. Despite his need for things to be just so, he’s a caring man that will always see to the needs of everyone else. And, just between us, he’s been known to spoil those he loves. Don’t let his rough demeanor fool you. He’s a softie inside.”

Across from me, Michael laughs, the rich sound pouring over me until I can’t breathe. “Who said softie? Was it my sister?”

Smiling back at him as if they’re the best of friends, the officiant shakes his head. “They never sign off on who says what. And trust me, based on some of the things I’ve seen revealed, many people don’t want them to know who said it.”

It makes no sense that they can joke around at a time like this. It’s supposed to be serious, a potential lifelong commitment and not a comedy hour. But I guess it’s for the best, seeing as I don’t plan to stay after the six-month mark.

The need to scoff burns at the back of my throat as I mull over what the officiant said. To think an Alpha knows anything about spoiling or loving. Bitterness wells up, nearly choking me as I think about Jacob.

Though he was the first Alpha I knew in an intimate setting, he taught me everything. He was my first, my painful, gut-wrenching, heartbreaking first. I was naïve, wide-eyed with wonder. That all came to an abrupt halt the moment he dragged me into the bedroom.

Shaking my head, I clear my thoughts, anxiety creeping up as I realize it's my turn. What will they say this time? Or will they just rehash what they said at the other wedding?

“Allow me to present to you, Rosalind Kennedy.”

“He knows me. Can we just get on with it?”

“My apologies,” he murmurs, shuffling his papers. “I didn't realize you two knew each other. This is highly irregular. I—”

“Don't worry about it,” I snap, my nerves finally getting the better of me.

“We know *of* each other,” the DA says, his voice low and soothing, as if attempting to make up for my ill temper.

What does it matter anyway? It's not as if we will see the officiant again after this. Well, I won't, anyway. My soon-to-be-husband is probably just making nice because he works in the system.

Michael steps over to the side, invading my space in a way I don't expect. My heart pounds in my chest as he slips his arm around my waist, pulling me close to his warm bulk. “Behave,” he growls, just low enough that only I can hear.

His hot breath against my ear sends shivers down my spine, and his voice makes my knees shake and my insides quiver. What the holy hell was that? But before I can ask him or at least shove him away from me, he's gone, back to his side as if nothing ever happened.

My mind stops for a moment, and before I can even think, my lips part, a retort heavy on my tongue. But it's as if he's anticipated this somehow. After clearing his throat and giving me what looks like a warning headshake, Michael continues out loud. "I would love to know more about this lovely lady I find myself marrying."

Again, I roll my eyes, earning another frown. My stomach flips as warmth infuses my limbs. What the hell type of reaction is this? Granted, he's not like Jacob who screamed at me and hit me, but I still shouldn't feel any sort of longing.

It's insanity, pure and simple. Could be something in Alpha pheromones just makes my brain go crazy. Honestly, it's the only reason I can come up with for why I still wanted to stay with Jacob as long as I did.

More than likely, the Governing Body would have let me out of the marriage if they knew I was *that* unhappy. And yet, something kept me by his side through everything. It took him being arrested and my marriage severed for me to even consider being back on my own.

In fact, I was finally starting to be happy. I went to every trial, needing to make sure he was going away for good and not returning to our married life. For a few days there, I even allowed myself to daydream about the DA that now stands before me.

His commanding tone, the way he moved around the courtroom was nothing less than tantalizing. But more than

that, he was the man who would give me my freedom. That, more than anything, made him so attractive.

If only I knew then I'd have to give up my freedom to be with him. I wouldn't have let myself picture him naked, fucking me in the jury box. I wouldn't have imagined him as the judge and me as a poor miscreant who just needed a thick cock to set me on the right path.

It was safe to fantasize about him because, in my mind, I knew it would never happen. But now, with us being face to face, so close his scent threatens to cloud my mind, reality isn't at all what I want. After Jacob, I never wanted to be tied to another Alpha.

If only Michael could stay in the realm of make-believe where I could get myself off, or even use him mentally as a means to deal with my heat. But no. I'm now forced to be married to him, tied with yet one more fucking Alpha.

“What Rosalind's friends and family want you to know about her, is that she's a ball of mischief.” Michael's eyebrows shoot up even as mine widen. Who the hell did he interview? Who would even say that?

“She will get on your last nerve, but you'll love her in spite of that.” This time, I groan. It would have to be my cousin. Who else would talk about me like that?

“She's a princess that's used to getting her way.” Definitely my cousin. “But she's always the first to admit she's wrong and has the most loving, kind spirit of anyone I've ever known.”

As he finishes, tears mist my eyes. We love each other, sure, but I never knew she saw me like that. Most people see the arrogant princess, an attitude stemming from being raised

in a household where we had more money than sense. But my cousin always saw through that. She was one of the few who saw me.

Glancing up at Michael, I note a twinkle in his eyes, as if now that he sees the softness and vulnerability underneath, he thinks he knows me. Fat chance. He'll never get that far. I made that mistake once before, and I'll never make it again.

Six months. I just have to wait it out. Maybe, if I'm lucky, the Governing Body will realize though my genetics make me compatible with Alphas, I'm just not a good match for anyone.

Happiness infuses my limbs as the officiant babbles on about love and marriage and making things work. Mr. DA will be my husband, but in name only. It doesn't matter that my body burns by being so close to his. It will pass.

Besides, those closest to him say he's a workaholic. If I play my cards right, I'll never even have to see him. The six months will pass by in a blur, and this time, I'll find a way to drop off the grid.

Hell, if I have to, I'll find this Governing Body myself and demand they take me off the roster. There will be no third time's the charm.

"Now," the officiant booms out, scattering my thoughts. "This is the point in the ceremony where you have the option to kiss. Since you don't actually know each other, I won't force you to—"

"Oh, but I will," Michael grumbles, pulling me into his arms.

A gasp flutters from my lips as my flowers drop to the floor. They lay there, scattered, abandoned as his iron grasp encircles me, leaving me with no escape. I lay my hands

against his chest, unsure if I plan to push him away or feel up the strong muscles that bunch underneath his suit jacket.

My heart shouldn't pound this hard behind my ribs, threatening to burst out. He shouldn't smell so damned good—like smoke, leather, and decadence. But worst of all, I shouldn't be reacting to his nearness.

We stand there, his lips lowering toward mine, but he doesn't kiss me. He hovers just above, close enough I can feel his breath fan against me, smell the coffee he had earlier. Why isn't he kissing me?

Why do I want him to? Oh god, but I don't. Not really. I really want him to let me go, to free me. But then, his lips touch mine.

Electricity scatters my thoughts until nothing else seems to make sense. Heat races through me, forcing slick to gather between my thighs. The scent of arousal swirls about our bodies, hanging heavy in the air like a cloud. There's no way he doesn't know the effect he's having on me.

I don't want his kiss. I don't want to feel the things he's forcing me to feel. But most of all, I don't want the promise I feel in his limbs as he deepens the kiss, urging my lips to part so he can slip his tongue into my mouth.

But I do want this. I want all of it. I want everything. Damn it, there's no way this can be a good thing. It just can't. And yet, a small tendril of hope unfurls in my chest.

Fuck me.

Chapter 3

Rosalind

I sit next to this stranger in silence as we drive. Nothing about this situation makes sense. Doesn't the Governing Body even look at who they're pairing? Or is it all just genetics and numbers, and we humans don't factor in?

The irony that my husband is none other than the man that is putting my ex away doesn't escape me either. It's as if they decided it was funny to pair us up. As if we could ever have anything in common. I thought genetics were finicky enough that the possible matches were few and far between.

The sample pool is only in the United States, so there can't be that many to choose from. How is it I'm not only compatible with a hardened criminal but also a man of the law? It makes no sense to me, and every time I try to think about it, my head pounds in protest.

Leaning forward, I rub my forehead, desperate to find relief. My eyes are closed, shutting out any extra light that might pierce my eyes. It's not a migraine, not yet at least, but I want to stave it off as long as I can.

Suddenly, warm fingers rub at the back of my neck, the gesture so intimate it makes my stomach churn. This is the action of someone who's been with a partner for a long time and not someone they just met. Turning, I watch Michael out of the corner of my eyes.

He looks straight ahead, his face giving away nothing. With one hand, he steers the car. With the other, he threatens to shatter every bit of my resolve to hate him. His touch is somehow both gentle and firm, commanding and yielding, seeking my permission but taking it anyway.

How can one person house such a dichotomy? Closing my eyes again, I conjure up images of Jacob. Did he ever rub my neck when I was in pain? No. The bastard just yelled at me and called me useless.

It's not my fault I get headaches every now and then. It's not as if I choose to be in pain. But somehow to him, everything I did was on purpose to make his life harder or more difficult. Biting down on my lower lip, I hold back the sob that threatens to burst forth.

This man isn't what I expected. But then, we're so newly married. Perhaps he thinks by being nice to me, we'll enjoy a wedding night. Fat chance. Just because every inch of his body screams sex doesn't mean I have to give in.

Again, I glance over, noting the firm set of his jaw. He should frighten me. He certainly has the Alpha strength in spades, strong enough to force me to do anything he wants. Even though Jacob was massive, this man seems to exceed him.

Perhaps it's just the size of the car. Straightening up, I urge Michael's hand away. This time, he finally looks at me, a frown twisting his lips. "Is your headache gone?"

“Well no, but—”

“Then I’ll keep rubbing you.” There’s a finality to his voice, a tone that brooks no argument.

He continues his rubbing, sliding down to grip my shoulders. His touch hurts, but in a good way. Despite everything going on in my head, I find myself melting into him, wanting more, craving more. Besides, if it’s helping my head stop hurting, what’s the harm?

It’s not like I’m having him ease the ache between my thighs. That’s certainly a line too far. Still though, I can’t help but look back up at him, marveling at his massive hand as he maneuvers the steering wheel with practiced ease.

Two months since I last had an Alpha touch me. Since Jacob was my first, I didn’t realize just how much an omega’s body craves them. But now that I’ve been without, my entire being sobs, desperate for relief.

It’s not my heat, unfortunately. At least that way, I would have an excuse to want to sleep with this man. No, this is simply my body being needy, wanting to be stretched out beneath this behemoth of a man.

Squirming in my seat, I opt to look out the window, studying the area I’m going to be living in. This time, it’s my turn to frown. Gone are the large houses and sprawling estates I’m used to.

Each neighborhood seems to be smaller than the last. Could this be a joke? A prank? I don’t have any point of reference for how much a DA makes, but surely it’s more than this... right?

My gut clenches as he turns off of a main road and down into a side street ending in a cul-de-sac. The houses here are a

touch bigger, but still far smaller than I expected. I know my cousin was teasing when she referred to me as a princess, but it doesn't negate the fact that I'm used to so much more than a white picket fence and 2.5 kids.

Hell, even Jacob had a massive house with servants and assistants to take care of everything. But then, as a criminal, I guess it makes sense. So many things made sense after the cops took him away.

"We're here," Michael says softly, interrupting my thoughts. "Home sweet home. Oh, and don't worry about the grass. I know it's a little tall. I'll take care of that this weekend. I've been occupied with... well... you know." He pulls out his phone and scrolls through, punching in some information.

"Yes," I murmur, not trusting myself to speak. "I know."

"Come, let's get you settled."

Looking back into the car, I glance at the empty backseat and back up at him. "It's not as if I have anything."

"No, but apparently your family was contacted at the same time we were. Since we both seem to live close enough, they were able to help with this arrangement. Your things should be inside the house waiting for you."

"Oh? You have helpers to let them in?" Excitement tinges my tone as I pull ahead, relief flooding through me.

Michael tilts his head, his brow furrowing. "No. But a few of my coworkers know how to get in if there's an emergency. And, well, let's face it. Marriage while handling a high-profile case is somewhat of an extenuating circumstance."

"I see." I try my best to keep the disappointment off of my face, but apparently, I'm not quick enough.

“Do you find something about my home lacking?”

“I—Of course not,” the lie tumbles from my lips.

He crosses his arms, his eyes narrowing. “We may not know each other that well yet, princess, but there are many things I take umbrage with... some more so than others. Lying is at the top of my list of things I won’t tolerate. Are we clear on that, little girl?”

Little girl? My heart thumps so hard in my chest I’m sure he hears it. Needing to pull my armor back around me, I rely on the tried-and-true method of having an attitude. “Of course you don’t,” I grumble, pausing as I note the heat in his gaze.

Maybe tried and true isn’t the correct response right now, given just how little I know of him and don’t want to push his buttons... yet. And so, I affix a meeker demeanor, letting him win this one so I can live to sass another day. Just barely, I managed to resist rolling my eyes. “I’m just surprised is all. Your house isn’t what I was expecting.”

“It’s got four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a living room. What more do you expect?”

Well, for starters, maids, a pool, a game room, a den? But even as I think that I realize just how shallow it is. “I just thought DAs made more. That’s all.”

His frown deepens even further somehow, causing my insides to clench. God, but how is this hot? I should be frightened of him, not wanting to tackle him here on the sidewalk.

“Not all of us can beat people and have money appear. Some of us actually have to work for a living, and, shocker I know, pay bills. But don’t worry, I will not make you get a job or anything. If that’s what you’re worried about.”

Well, until he said that, the thought hadn't even crossed my mind. "Well, thank you for that, at least."

I study the man before me. Though he says nothing, I feel the irritation rolling off of him in waves. He's upset, and it's all my fault. Before I can make it up to him, he turns and walks up the steps to the door.

"I don't have a key for you, but you'll have one tomorrow. Do you have any vehicles or anything that needs to be brought over?"

"No."

At that, he turns around, his eyes wide. "Then how did you get around? Don't tell me someone like you took the bus."

"Someone like me?" I narrow my eyes, aggravation crawling up my spine.

"Yes. Someone who's obviously used to much fancier things than I can provide you with."

"You're out of line," I snap out, taking a step forward.

He crosses his arms. "Am I? Then tell me how you got around?"

My shoulders slump as I realize he does, in fact, have a point. "I had a driver. Happy now?"

"Not quite, but I'm sure we'll find some commonality before too long."

Grumbling under my breath, I follow him in, stopping as we clear the door. Though smaller than I would have thought, the place seems well laid out. The nice open floor plan makes it look much larger on the inside, and everything is perfectly arranged. Just so.

“Where’s my stuff?”

“I had them put it into the spare bedroom. Here, let me give you a quick tour, then we’ll get down to business.”

The way he says that makes my stomach flip. What sort of business could we have so soon in this relationship? Following him through the house, I shove my worry out of my mind and concentrate on where everything is.

Even though we’re married now, I can’t say I’m not relieved to know we’ll be in separate bedrooms. I never had that option with Jacob. Though I’ll never say our first time together was forced, it wasn’t as willing on my end as I thought it should be.

But he was my husband. I couldn’t refuse him his marital rights. Just like Michael is now my husband. If he asked me right now to go to bed with him, I would probably say okay. As an omega, what other choice do I have?

I’d rather go of my own volition than be dragged to the bedroom and forced. At least by making the choice I can always say it was never taken from me. Deep in thought, I run into Michael’s back.

With a soft squeak, I bounce away, not wanting to feel just how warm his skin is or take in another deep breath of his intoxicating scent. Reaching out, he grabs my shoulders, steadying me.

Instead of pulling away once I stop swaying, he stands there, his thumbs running up and down my shoulders, brushing across my collarbones. This is it. This is when he’s going to ask me to become his wife in every sense of the word.

I stand there, my insides cringing as I wait for his subtle command, for the Alpha voice to move me into action. But it

never comes. He just looks down at me, his brown eyes peering into my very soul. It's as if he's stripping me bare without saying a word.

"Is the room to your liking?" He finally breaks the silence but refuses to move his hands.

"It's not as if I have a choice, you know." I giggle, desperate to break the tension.

This time, he finally pulls away, his brows pulling down. "You will always have a choice with me." With a sheepish shrug, he looks back at the room. "Okay, in this instance, you don't really have a choice. It's the only room that's free. If you'd rather my master bedroom, the gym, or the office, I'd have to move things around."

"It's fine. I would never put you out like that."

"You wouldn't be putting me out. Not exactly. But it would take work to accommodate your request. I'm not an ogre. I can bend at times."

"An Alpha can bend? Shocker." His broad smile makes my heart flutter, but the moment he slides his fingers under my chin to tilt my face up, it begins to pound.

"I may be an Alpha, but I'm very much aware of the sway we hold over omegas. I will never use that against you. That being said, it's time to go over the rules."

"Rules?" That one little word is like a bucket of water crashing down upon my head. "I don't need rules. I'm your wife. Not some wayward child who has to be controlled."

For a second, his eyes darken, his pupils eating up his irises. But then, they go back to normal so fast, I'm not sure if I actually saw it correctly. However, there's no mistaking the swirl of arousal that drifts off his body.

It calls to me, forcing me to answer in kind. For a moment, I sway toward him, desperate to be closer, to nuzzle deep into that intoxicating scent that floods my brain. But no. I must be strong. I must resist him. But for how long?

Chapter 4

Rosalind

He looks me up and down, his full lips turning into a frown. Ever so slightly, he scents the air, and I'm sure he knows just how dreadfully aroused I am. However, he says nothing about it.

“I never said you were a child. I didn't even imply it, really, but for us to function efficiently, rules have to be put in place and obeyed.” Is it my imagination or is his voice getting huskier with each word? “Come, let's do this in my office. It feels more official that way.”

I follow him into the room, my heart skipping as I take in the orderly shelves. Just like with the rest of the home, everything is in a place. For some reason, it makes slick gather between my thighs, but that's just absurd.

Why would seeing him so organized make me want to sleep with him even more? *Perhaps it's because you've never had that growing up? Everything was so chaotic and disorderly despite the money your family had. Somehow, seeing this level of control makes you feel safe?* I scowl at the voice in my head, not wishing to look any deeper into this.

He's an Alpha and I'm an omega. That's it. End of story. It's the only thing making me think delicious, sexy thoughts. Nothing more. However, when he finally takes off his suit jacket and drapes it on the back of the chair, all additional thoughts flee.

When he moves to roll his sleeves up, I'm done for. I'm so wet I'm shocked it's not showing through the fabric. My only saving grace right now seems to be he can't smell the arousal literally dripping from my body.

What the hell is wrong with me? I should be hating him, and that includes his long, thick fingers as they run over the fabric in a way that seems almost indecent. I detest the fact that my pussy wants him to slide over it too, teasing it just like he does the edges of his sleeve.

His muscles bulge with each movement, reminding me just how strong and massive he is. They strain against the cotton, making it look as if the fabric is almost painted on. I resist the urge to reach out, to run my fingers along his arm just so I can feel the power that flows through him.

“Now then, typically, I'm not one to draw up contracts for this sort of thing, but if it's something that will make you feel more at ease, I can certainly do that.” He reaches into his desk and pulls out a legal pad.

Fingers poised above the yellow paper, he looks up at me.

“A contract? I—Is this a sex thing?” I've heard of things like this in passing when we went to the club Jacob managed, but I never delved too deeply into it.

Again, his eyes flash. “It can be, but it certainly doesn't *have* to be. This is more a matter of what you need. Do you

need something to look at to remind you of the rules? Or do you think you can remember them on your own?”

“Do you really think I’m that stupid? Or do you have so many rules I won’t have a chance to remember?”

Frowning, he sets the pen down. “I’m not implying you’re stupid. I don’t know you yet, Rosalind. I’m trying to ascertain your needs. That’s all. So here’s what we’re going to do— I will write down the rules as I give them to you and place this paper on the fridge. If you find you need a refresher, you’ll know where to look.”

I cross my arms, feeling every inch a petulant child. Why does he get to me like this? Normally, I’m cool, calm, and collected, but around him, it all just disappears.

His very presence threatens me, making me want to curl up inside myself and lash out. “Whatever.”

“What was that?” There’s a growl to his voice, a deep timber that drifts down my spine like fingers.

“I said *what-ev-er*,” I snap, emphasizing the syllables in a slow tone as if he can’t understand me.”

He shakes his head and starts to write. “The biggest one for you, I think, is no excessive spending. Anything over one hundred dollars, you discuss with me first. Every week, you will have a maximum of three hundred to use, but that’s for everything. Groceries, household items you need such as cleaning supplies, personal items you might want, travel to and from stores, and things like that. You must make it work.”

“Three hundred? Are you serious?”

He pins me with a stare. “I’m not made of money. What I make is decent. It pays the bills and gives me extra to do stuff with, but three hundred is the highest I can go and still feel

comfortable. I know it's a step down from what you're used to, but that's the way it's going to be."

Again, I cross my arms, huffing. "I can stay within that budget. Just watch me."

"Oh, I have faith in you."

I study his face, looking for the joke, but he seems in earnest, as if he really does believe in me. An odd sensation swirls in my gut as I try to figure him out. "What's next?"

"Lights out at eleven pm, sharp."

"Oh, come on. That one's just unreasonable. Even on the weekends?"

"Even on the weekends."

"No one goes to bed at eleven on the weekends."

Leaning back in the chair, he steepled his fingers. "I do. I need to be at my best for my job. Eleven ensures I get enough sleep. Where people mess up is thinking they can disrupt a routine on the weekends and still function at maximum on the other days of the week. It's not possible. So no, again, this is non-negotiable."

"Prison has better rules than this," I grumble, feeling on edge and angry.

"Do they? Truly? Are you sure? Because I've been in the prisons. I know exactly what it's like in there."

I huff, turning my face away so he can't see the expressions that shift about, getting me into trouble when I can't really help it. Unfortunately, though he refuses to touch me, I turn my face to look at him, as if he's moving me, holding me there. It's insane, but something deep inside needs

to see him at his worst, to know just what sort of a monster I'm saddled with.

“If you want to experience prison life, I can certainly make that happen,” he murmurs, his voice deadly serious. “It's obvious you need a better lesson in manners at the very least. Perhaps you need more rules then? Would that make you feel more comfortable, more akin to being in a prison? Would you like me to take you firmer in hand? Trust me, princess, I can make this far worse than prison.”

“Impossible,” I cry out, just moments before clapping my hand over my mouth. That wasn't supposed to come out.

His lips curl up into a humorless smile. “Oh, but I certainly can.” Leaning back, he threads his fingers together and rests the back of his head against his palms. “How does a crib sound? I could tuck you away, coddling you like the child you're acting as. Or, since you want it worse, I can order some diapers, forcing you to wet yourself if I choose to not allow you to go to the bathroom. That would certainly be worse than prison, yes? Or does the idea of pissing all over some cartoon bears in pink fluffy dresses turn you on?”

Shocked, my mouth drops open. What the hell can I even say to that?

“No? You don't want to ask me permission for bathroom breaks, for food, for everything? Do you really want to try me on this? Because trust me, if it's a battle of wills you want, I will win. There is no question about it.”

Finally, words fly from my lips. “A crib? Diapers? What kind of kinky fucker are you?” My voice is soft, nearly breathless as my pulse pounds in my ears.

“The worst kind.” He smiles, showing me his teeth. “I’m the type who can punish with no remorse. So again, I ask you: Do you want to try me?” Once more, he puts pen to paper.

“I guess not.”

“Good girl.”

Those two words slam into me, stealing my breath. When have I ever been anyone’s good girl? Never that I can remember. Soft gasps slip between my lips as I mull them over, feeling them out. I could get used to that.

“Last rule. Since I’m not making you work, you will keep the house tidy. You know, laundry, vacuuming, things like that. And dinner will be on the table at six pm sharp.”

All the good feelings leach out of me. I can’t cook. I know nothing about a kitchen. However, I don’t want to not be his good girl anymore. Panic eats at me as I become defensive, deflecting my feelings with an attitude.

“Anything else?”

He raises his eyebrows in shock. “Don’t you think these are enough for now?”

Again, I roll my eyes, not sure what is actually wrong with me that I keep antagonizing him like this. “Fine. Yes, Daddy.” Sarcasm drips from my lips as I jut out my lower lip.

Michael rises, his large body looming over me. I feel so small, so inconsequential, so... little. “Careful, babygirl,” he growls, setting my pulse to a rapid staccato as my pussy throbs in time. “I enjoy hearing that word drip from your lips. Keep it up, and I’ll make you say it again.”

Nervousness eats at me as I stand there, unsure of what to do or say. He shouldn’t have this effect on me. He shouldn’t be

pulling these feelings or sensations out of me. Especially not with something like ‘good girl’ or ‘babygirl’.

“Whatever.”

“You will respect me, Little Rosalind. I will never negotiate on that.”

“Oh, sorry. My bad. Whatever, *Daddy*.”

A soft growl rumbles through his chest, threatening to turn me into a pile of goo. “You’re playing with fire, babygirl. But I’ll let it slide tonight since you’re still getting used to things. But if I have to impress upon you that I’m not a man to be trifled with, I will.”

In that moment, part of me so desperately wants to see just what he’ll do if I push his buttons. Will he hit me like Jacob? Will he yell at me? Scream at me? Call me degrading names? I’d like to think that Michael is different, but how different can Alphas really be?

But then, memories flood my body, reminding me just how bad an Alpha can be and just what they can do. I don’t want my second marriage to start off like this. Besides, with him being even bigger than Jacob, his blows would hurt even worse.

“Sorry, Michael,” I whisper, terror clutching my insides.

My body trembles as I war within myself. As much as the idea of him taking me in hand turns me on, I want none of it. I don’t want to spark his Alpha urges any more than I already have. Eyeing him with suspicion as he slides around the desk, I watch as he makes his way closer to me.

Sliding his fingers under my chin, he once more forces my gaze to his. So small, so little, so overwhelmed. “Thank you for your apology. That was very big of you. But I’m not mad.

Not even disappointed. We're still learning each other." He pauses to brush a strand of hair from my face. "This will be an adjustment period, but I'm committed to trying my best. Are you? Will you be my brave girl and try for me?"

What can I even say to that? Wordless, I merely nod, my thoughts in a jumble. Without realizing it, I nuzzle his hand, desperate for the strength I feel vibrating through him.

It's what was missing between Jacob and me. Yes, he was a big oaf who got his way, but he never possessed this same quiet strength that made me feel safe and secure. Pulling back, I ease away from Michael, furious with myself for allowing that moment of weakness.

With a sigh, he drops his hand. "There is one more thing I need to know."

Unease clenches my insides. What else could he want to know right now? Does he want me to tell him how my pussy throbs, desperate for his domination? Will he make me say out loud how his words make me drip with need?

"Yes?" I detest the temerity in my voice.

"Did Jacob claim you?"

Of all the questions swirling through my mind, that was the last one I expected from him. But it makes sense. "No. I'm not sure if he ever planned to do it, but now, we'll never know."

A smile crosses his face, making his eyes crinkle. The relief flowing off of him is nearly palpable in the air. At least I made him happy, I guess?

Holding out his hand, he waits for me to take it. "Ready for dinner?"

I stare at the limb, my mind hashing out the possible repercussions of giving in even a little. “Do I have a choice?”

He pulls back, running his fingers through his hair. “Is that how every conversation is going to be between us? Because if it is, I want to clear the air right now. In many things, no, you will not have a choice. My rules are set in place in order to keep this house running smoothly. After we try it for a bit, we can talk about it and tweak what’s not working or add something that will help. None of this is ever to make your life just unbearable.”

Refusing to comment, I divert and turn it back onto him. “And I suppose you have rules for yourself? What happens if you break them? Do I get to spank you?”

My fingers fly over my lips as that last question pops out. What the actual hell was I thinking? Not even Michael mentioned spanking, and here I am opening my big, fat mouth.

This time, there’s no mistaking his reaction to my words. The front of his slacks tents up as his eyes darken. *Fuck, fuck, fuckity fuck.* That was *not* the reaction I was trying to get out of him.

Backing up, a soft whine slips from my lips as he eats up the distance with his long stride. There’s no escaping him now. My back slams into his bookshelf as he leans forward, caging me with his arms.

“Oh no, babygirl. The only one here who does the spanking is me. And that’s only if you’re a good girl for me.”

“Good girls don’t get spanked. That’s like an unspoken rule or something.”

“My good girls do.” Before I can respond, he pulls back, allowing chilly air to rush in and cool my flamed cheeks. “It’s

almost six. Ready for dinner?”

And just like that, my blood drops to my feet. Dinner. That means I’ll have to cook. I don’t cook. I never have. What am I going to do?

He chuckles as he glances back at me, misunderstanding the anxiety racing through my veins, threatening to make my knees buckle. “It’s just pizza and breadsticks. Nothing odd, I promise. And don’t worry, you can make whatever you want for dinner from now on. I’m not picky.”

A thin smile crosses my lips as I follow him out to the kitchen. He says he’s not picky, but that won’t matter if what I serve is inedible. Leading me to the table, he motions for me to sit as the doorbell rings.

“Ahhh, right on time. I wasn’t sure what you liked, but I figured a plain cheese was universal.”

So that’s what he was doing on his phone when we first got to the house. I wasn’t even thinking about dinner, and yet, here he was planning everything. What exactly have I gotten myself into?

It’s not the ordering dinner—even Jacob did that occasionally. It’s me not having to even ask or bring it up. He just did it. He thought about me when I wasn’t even in a state of mind to think about myself.

I watch his lips curl up into a smile as he brings the steaming boxes over to the table. The need to tell him the truth eats at me as he maneuvers around the kitchen, grabbing plates, forks, and glasses.

“I don’t know how to make pizza,” I murmur, twisting my fingers under the table.

“That’s quite all right. That’s what takeout is for. But if it’s all the same to you, I’d rather not eat fast food that often. It just doesn’t sit right. There’s nothing quite like a home-cooked meal to warm the soul after a long day.”

Fuck. What do I even say to that? “I... um... well... you definitely deserve one after the work I’ve seen you do. You must be famished when you come home.”

He raises an eyebrow and spears me with a knowing look. “Are you okay with cooking? I know we didn’t really discuss roles in this marriage, but if you’re content staying home, I’m fine with that. If you’d rather work, then we’d have to come to a different arrangement.”

Oh. Well, working is right out too. I’m not fit for anything. I have no experience that can translate into me getting a job. At least here, I can fudge with the cooking. He said I get three hundred dollars a week, and if that won’t buy me enough dinners to keep him happy, I don’t know what will.

Giving him a soft smile, I duck my head in a show of submission. “I would love to stay at home and cook for you.” God, what have I just done?

Chapter 5

Michael

My cock throbs as I watch her eat. It shouldn't be so sexy. By all rights, pizza is one of the least sexy foods there is, and yet, I cannot seem to draw my gaze away from her lips. Even now I can't stop staring at the smear of tomato sauce that keeps bringing me back to that delectable bottom lip.

How I so want to suck it in between my teeth and nibble down on the soft flesh. But I still don't know yet how receptive she'd be to my dominance. True, she became aroused, but there are still so many other factors at play.

I know many other Alphas who have married and made the omega align their entire lives with them. But I'm not that kind of Alpha. Am I really in the wrong for wanting her to enjoy the things I want to do to her? I want her to beg me for my belt, to crave the pain and violence that slithers through my veins at any given moment. I don't want this little omega afraid of me. Quite the contrary.

I want her so consumed with me that each breath is laced with, "yes, Sir." I want her so entrenched in the lifestyle I want

us to live that she doesn't even think to call me Daddy. It's just natural to her.

When she called me that, even in sarcasm, it shifted something in me. I always considered myself a nurturing dominant. I knew I had a penchant for being a Daddy, but I never allowed myself the freedom to explore. It's a responsibility I refused to take on with the casual betas and omegas I played with.

To me, Daddy is a commitment, one I would take seriously. It's not just some term I feel comfortable tossing around like I would Dom or Top. A Daddy is so much more, and from the pain I still detect swirling around this little omega, she needs that from me.

She needs me to give her my all and then some. I can only hope it's enough. Sometimes, people have wounds so deep that nothing can touch them, even the love of a Daddy who tries his very best.

Switching to something less depressing and deep, the conversation from earlier replays in my head as she takes another bite of pizza. Spank me? Even now, the thought makes me chuckle as I snatch up a breadstick, hovering it just out of reach of her questing fingers.

There's more than enough to go around, but she has her heart set on this piece, and I long to see if there's a playful girl underneath that hardened exterior. With each swipe of her fingers, a soft smile tilts her lips, giving me hope.

But soon, it's gone as she abandons the game and grabs a different one. With a sigh, I set it down and reach for her hand. The moment I brush against her, she jerks back, taking her breadstick with her.

“I’m not going to steal your food. I was just playing with you. If you want this one, you can have it.”

“I’m good. Thank you.”

My heart breaks as I watch her take little bites, her eyes constantly glancing back at me. What damage did Jacob manage to do to her in just a span of two months? Or is this something left over from her family?

The need to pry into her life, to seek out every demon and slay them beats at me. But we’re nowhere near close enough for me to even ask her. Hopefully soon, she’ll come to me.

Silence hovers between us, only broken by the sound of chewing. It’s tense, and I detest it. Soon, she’s done, and sets her plate in front of her, looking up at me with questions dancing in her eyes.

Clearing her throat, she glances around. “In my friends’ houses, whoever cooked didn’t have to do the dishes. But since you ordered out, what does that mean?”

Interesting. In my house, the omega, or wife in my mom’s case, took care of all of it—cooking, cleaning, everything. Then again, my mother was very domestic and enjoyed caring for us. I’d like to think my father would have never forced her to do it if she didn’t want to.

“What it means is that we can do them together. And I’ll even make an amendment to the rules. When you cook, I’ll clean. How does that sound?” Is it my imagination or does her face fall at that concession?

I thought she’d be happy about it. Not dancing around or anything, but at least excited to see me bend the rules so early in the relationship. With a nod, she reaches for my plate, but I stop her, grabbing her hand.

She flinches and pulls back, her eyes wide, haunted. Just what did that bastard do to her? “Hey now,” I murmur softly, keeping my tone light. “I’m not going to harm you.”

“Sure,” she sniffs, derision lacing her tone. “I’ll believe that when I see it.”

Pulling back as if stung, I rub my heart. “Have I not shown you? What more proof do you want?”

“Give it a week or two,” she grumbles, so quiet I almost don’t hear her.

“Or, and hear me out,” I attempt to tease. “I’m not a bad guy?”

“You’re an Alpha. The very definition of a bad guy. You can hide behind your job as a DA and claim you’re so good, but at the end of the day, you can’t deny your dynamic. Your biology is bad.”

Frowning, I cross my arms, disappointment and anger warring within me. How can she just paint all of us with such a wide brush? “Your words are unkind and unfair. But I know you’re hurting, so I’ll choose to ignore them.”

“Oh, how magnanimous of you.” The disrespect in her tone makes my fingers itch with the need to pull her over my lap and show her that actions have consequences.

But again, we’re not there yet. How I wish we were. How I long to teach her the love and freedom that can be found in submission and discipline. Instead, I ignore her, not allowing my anger to get the best of me.

Grabbing both of the plates, I head into the kitchen, half expecting her to follow me, spewing her tirade. Honestly, it’s not the first time I’ve heard an omega say this, and I know it

won't be the last. It's really not her fault she feels this way, especially if she suffered at the hands of an Alpha.

I look back behind me, but she stays at the table, fidgeting with her hands. And so, I take a moment to rinse the plates and put them into the dishwasher before heading back to the table. Once I'm by her side, she looks up at me, her eyes wide.

“Are you going to hit me now?”

“Have you done something to warrant me disciplining you?” Even as I say that word, my traitorous cock jerks. *Say yes. Please say yes. Beg me to take you in hand.*

“I said hit.”

“I know what you said. I said discipline. There is a difference.”

“Do you hit when you discipline?” Her eyes flash, that hint of defiance coming back, and yet, underneath, there's still that raw vulnerability that makes me want to scoop her into my arms and kiss the pain away.

“My discipline takes on many forms. It depends on the girl and the infraction. Even then, I never just ‘hit.’ I spank, flog, paddle. Hit is so crude and undisciplined. What I do has finesse, and, more importantly, a reason. I will never strike you in anger. I'll never lift a hand to you without a discussion first.”

“I didn't do anything wrong.” Again, that petulant tone and pout make me long to gather her into my arms and just smother her with affection, kissing her until it disappears.

Shaking my head, I grab the pizza and breadstick boxes and clear the table. “In that case, I guess it's best if we just say goodnight then.”

“Wait, what?” She looks up at the kitchen clock, bewildered. “It’s not eleven yet. I don’t have to go to sleep. Per your stupid rules, counselor.”

This time, I can’t hide the smile that crosses my face. Maybe things will actually be okay between us. This could simply be her testing her boundaries, seeing where things are.

Turning, I cross my arms, affecting a mock glare. “And what evidence do you have that I’m not holding up my rules? I merely said we should say goodnight. I never once said you had to go to sleep. You are correct. It’s not eleven yet, so feel free to do whatever you want until then.”

For half a second, her face falls. “Wait. Alone?”

“Doesn’t have to be. That choice is yours. But I don’t imagine you want to spend any more time than necessary with me when, how did you put it, my Alpha biology is bad?”

“Well. I mean...”

“Yes?”

“Ugh. Whatever. I’ll just go unpack my room.”

“Seems like a reasonable way to spend your time. I was going to suggest popcorn and a movie, but seeing to your things is a far more responsible way to occupy yourself.”

Turning back to the cabinets, I make a grand show of pulling out containers to store the remaining food in, hoping she’ll let go of whatever grudge this is. But she doesn’t. In a huff, she leaves the table and disappears into her room, slamming the door behind her.

She’s not mine to discipline. Not yet anyway. Putting the food away, I walk over to her door, prepared to ask her not to

slam doors in my house, but stop as the soft sounds of sobs drift through the door.

She probably doesn't intend for me to hear it. With a heavy heart, I walk away, giving her space and time. It kills me to leave her like this, guts my insides to hear the pain in her cries. Unfortunately, I still have to prepare for tomorrow's court case, and that can't wait.

Now, more than ever, I want that bastard behind bars. Though I don't have proof he touched her and not her own father or another relative, I'm fairly certain. I've been nice enough so far, not forcing her to testify when she's no longer held by spousal privilege.

Stupidly, I've wanted to spare her that agony. More than that, I wanted to keep her out of his crosshairs. If she doesn't testify, he can't blame her for going to prison. Still though, it's an ace in my pocket I can use at will to get her to talk to me. I only wish I could convince her to open up without it.

A hint of movement, a slight shifting in my periphery, catches my attention, rousing me up. Who the hell is in my house? But more importantly, who the hell is near my bed? Unfortunately, the first name to come to mind is Jacob.

No doubt he's hired someone to take me out so I won't be able to put him away. But what he doesn't understand is that it's no longer just about me. There's a Little girl in this house that needs me, and I'll be damned if he causes any more harm to her because of his grudge and misplaced anger.

Reaching up under my pillow with a slowness that causes my shoulder to burn, I wrap my fingers around the handle of a

knife and ease it out. Then, when the figure gets close enough, I grab them, taking them down to the mattress. Just as I bring the knife up to rest against their throat, my brain clicks into gear.

Rosalind.

Fuck! Tossing the knife back down I hold her close, allowing my heart to slow. Underneath me, she barely moves, barely breathes. Am I hurting her? Pulling back, I blink down at the small figure huddled into a small ball.

“Talk to me, baby. Are you hurt?” A soft sniff pierces my heart. “Fuck. Did I hurt you?”

“N-no.”

“Then why—” Not even finishing that thought, I get out of bed and turn the light on, causing us both to blink from the brightness.

There, with her knees pulled up, head burrowed into a pair of shiny pajama bottoms is Rosalind. Tears stain her face, turning everything blotchy and red. It seems as if she’s been crying longer than I thought.

Earlier, before turning my lights out as I got ready for bed, I stopped back by her door and listened. There was no crying and no sounds of any kind. A quick check on the camera feeds showed she was fast asleep.

My tone is soft, as devoid of accusation as I can make it while still gaining consciousness. “Why are you here?” Instead of answering me, she glances over at the knife and shudders. “I wasn’t going to use it on you. It’s there for my protection. I put away a lot of bad people. Sometimes they want revenge.”

“Like Jacob?”

“Like Jacob.”

She turns to me then, her eyes growing wide as she zeros in on my waist. I sleep naked, and just because I’m married, that’s not going to change. Standing there, I let her gaze roam over my body, studying me as she plucks at her pajama pants.

“You’re bigger.”

With a smile, I widen my stance and puff out my chest. “I do work out, so thank you for noticing.”

“No, you dork,” she snorts, tears drying up. “Not your body. Well, yes, that too. But your... you know. That.” She gestures toward my dick.

“My cock? Come now, surely you can say that. Try it for me. Cock.”

A pretty blush spreads over her cheeks. “You know what I’m talking about, so no. I won’t.”

“Come now, can’t you say it for me? Can’t you be my good girl and say it? I want to hear it drip from your lips.”

Her breathing becomes shallow as her mouth drops open. “I... uh... your... cock.” She says the last word so softly it barely reaches my ears, but I hear it.

With that one little word, it hardens, growing as she stares at me. She gasps, her breath catching in her throat. “Am I still bigger?” Not that I care exactly, but knowing there’s a difference between him and me makes my heart pound with anticipation. “You never answered my question. Why are you here?”

“I... well...” Again, her face turns pink as she looks away from me.

Not giving one damn about my nakedness or insistent cock, I slide back onto the bed, taking a moment to stash the knife back under the pillow, and hold my arms out. I'm not sure why I do it, but instinct screams at me that she's hurting. I don't force her, though. I leave the option open for her to accept my comfort.

She looks at my arms as if they're snakes, her body quivering. But after a moment or two, she inches closer. It doesn't matter that she's not in my arms yet, it's a step in the right direction. I don't move or even breathe as she moves yet another small inch.

After what feels like an eternity, she collapses into my arms, her body shaking as more tears pour from her eyes, coating my chest. "Nightmare," she manages to choke out.

Wrapping my arms around her, I purr, my cock twitching as she melts into me. There's nothing quite like feeling an omega relax, the tension draining from their bodies at this simple sound. Granted, when I do it, it's usually for victims I'm speaking with, and I'm fully clothed and seated away from them.

This is the first time I've been able to do this for an omega of my own. My heart breaks right alongside hers as I rock back and forth, allowing all the hurt and anguish to flow from her. I stay strong, taking all of it. It's a burden I'm very willing to share.

Chapter 6

Rosalind

Stifling heat threatens to overwhelm me as he continues to hold on to me, rocking me as if I were a child. I don't hate it, exactly, but it still makes my insides squirm. When was the last time someone just held me?

I comb through my memories, going as far back as my mind will let me. Our maid hugged me at times, but it was more perfunctory than anything. Jacob sure as hell never held me. Even when he apologized for hitting me again, gracing me with a half-hearted arm around my shoulders, he didn't so much as address the injured area.

Not only is this stranger comforting me, but he's also purring, doing everything an Alpha can do to put me at ease. Perhaps I was wrong about him? Leaning up, I look into his eyes, the vision blurred by my tears. Do I dare trust him?

Pushing away, I wrap my arms around my waist. This is all too fast, too sudden. And yet, everything in me screams to fall back into his arms and allow him to take care of me. If only I had met Michael first.

Unfortunately for both of us, this sort of interaction makes me nervous. It's too sweet, too kind. When will he morph into the Alpha monster I know he is? With Jacob, it took about two weeks. After that 'honeymoon' period, all bets were off.

With Michael, would it be sooner, later, or somewhere in between? Feeling self-conscious, I look back into his eyes, seeking out any hint of anger. But I find none. Oddly enough, his eyes look sad somehow. But why?

I need to break the tension, to get us out of this intimate space. "So," I stumble about, desperate to find an avenue of conversation. "Since I was your good girl and said," lowering my voice, I feel the flush creeping back up, "cock, does that mean you're going to spank me now?"

Of all the conversations I could have started, this is the one I pick? There's no way this won't turn awkward. Still though, I need to understand, to know his terms and what they mean on a physical level.

Is spank code for a beating? After Jacob, I feel like I can handle almost anything, but only if I can prepare and brace for it. Gripping the sheets under my fingers, I wait for him to speak, but the silence extends for what feels like an eternity.

"Do you feel like you earned a spanking?" he finally says, shattering the gulf between us.

"I... well. I don't think... that is... look, I just don't know, okay? It's like you're speaking a completely different language. Do I want a spanking? No. Have I earned one? Probably. I've been an ass to you. But I apologized. That should be enough." Then why is there still a niggle of guilt that just won't let go?

Again, he stares at me, crossing his arms, refusing to speak. What? Does he want me to keep babbling? To spill my secrets and confess my crimes? Does he want me to berate him out loud for a dynamic he has no say in?

“What’s troubling you?”

“You, you oaf. You’re what’s troubling me. When are you going to act like a real Alpha and just stop with all this pretending?”

His left eyebrow raises, a slow movement that has my insides squirming and my pussy tingling. This is definitely something different between him and Jacob. My ex never made me throb with just a look. Michael, on the other hand, is going to force me to spend my budget on new clothes since my current ones keep getting so wet.

“Pray tell what a ‘real Alpha’ is like? I fear I haven’t received that memo.” His words are soft enough, gentle even, and yet, there’s a bite to them.

“I—You know. Just... mean, ogreish...” I trail off, not wanting to finish the sentence.

“Abusive?” His strong fingers stroke my jaw with such tenderness it makes my heart ache.

“Yeah. That one.” Hanging my head in shame, I refuse to look at him.

Besides, I don’t want to see either the pity or satisfaction that’s sure to be dancing in his eyes. And yet, when he forces my gaze up, it’s anger that blazes from those deep brown depths. It should make me quake with fear, and yet, I still feel perfectly safe being as close to him as I am.

“Did Jacob hit you?”

“I don’t have to answer that.”

“You damn well do,” he growls out, sliding out of the bed so he can pace about.

“I’m not on trial here.”

He whirls around, stealing my breath with the hot, possessive look that crosses his face. “And I’m not standing here as the DA. I’m not here as an agent of the law. I’m here as your husband, as the man who has a vested interest in your well-being.”

“Yes!” I scream out, tossing my hands in the air. “Is that what you want? You want me to tell you how he slapped me if I said something he didn’t like? You want me to regale you with the mean and nasty words he said to me when no one else was looking? Or what about the fact that he’d be the kindest, nicest man in the world, giving me everything I wanted, just as long as there was an audience? But the moment we were alone, he’d lay into me, spouting off about how I was a user and did nothing for him.”

Tears pour from my eyes both from anger and sorrow. This time, when Michael steps forward, pain shining in his gaze, I hold him at bay, my hands shaking as I fend him off. “So yeah, spank me. Just get it over with. Because I’d like to know who I’m saddled with now, in the beginning. I need to know what I’m stuck with for these next six months.”

Silence hangs between us as he drops his hands to his side. “We talked a lot about your rules, Little Rosalind, but we haven’t discussed mine.”

I snort. “Your rules? As if an Alpha has rules.”

“I do. I’m not just any Alpha. First and foremost, I’m *your* Alpha. I’m your husband. Hopefully, someday, I can be your

Daddy.”

My lips curl into a sneer as I turn my head away. “I already have a father.”

“I said Daddy. There’s a hell of a difference. For one, I would hope your father doesn’t think about your body the same way I do. I would hope he doesn’t want to strip you bare just to kiss and worship every curve you own.”

I struggle to breathe as I look back at him, noting the molten look in his eyes. He’s serious. Does he actually see me like this? Like he wants nothing more than to devour me?

“More to the point,” he continues, “as your Daddy, it would be my job and responsibility to see to your safety and happiness. I can’t keep you safe if I’m the one harming you. And I sure as hell can’t keep you happy if I’m causing you nonconsensual pain.”

“Who the hell is consenting to pain?” At my question, his cock once more becomes hard, surging up, long and thick.

“Trust me, after a taste of what I can give you, you’ll be begging for more.”

“I don’t beg.”

“Maybe not yet,” he groans, cupping his balls and squeezing, “but soon, you will.”

“You’re crazy,” I whisper, huddling back into myself.

“The jury is still out on that one.” At his teasing tone, I can’t resist the smile that tilts my lips. “Anyway. On to the rules. Rule number one: Your safety and happiness is paramount. Now, that doesn’t mean you’ll always get your way. But it does mean I will take your feelings into consideration at all times.”

“No chores?” I cry out, desperately hoping that means I won’t have to cook.

“Nice try.” He chuckles. “But I can’t afford to give you money *and* hire a maid. So, that can be your choice. Do nothing but have to ask me for every little thing you want to buy.”

I hang my head, realizing that freedom is worth way more than a measly meal every night. “Fine. I concede.”

“Good girl. I figured you’d appreciate that. Rule number two: I will never strike you out of anger. If there comes a time when I’m upset, I will put you in a corner and walk away until I’m collected. It goes without saying that I will never abuse you.”

“Spanking can be seen as abusive, you know.” Nervousness floods my system as my heart beats in a rapid staccato.

“Not the way I do it. Besides, that leads to the next rule. Rule number three: punishment will always come with a discussion first. You will never have to wonder if you’re in trouble with me. You’ll never have to walk around in fear, never knowing when I’m going to come at you. All discussions will be calm and collected. If not, see the rule before.”

“But there’s no guarantee you’ll even follow those rules.”

He sighs and extends his hand. “I know, babygirl. And that’s where trust comes in. I know you just met me, but if you allow me to, I’ll invoke rule number four: I will love you and care for you with all my being.”

I stare at the hand, so inviting. Do I dare? Can I actually trust this behemoth of a man who wants to be my Daddy?

Even now as the word swims about in my brain, I can't decide how I feel about it. On the one hand, there's that taboo element, the idea of calling someone else any form of a father figure. Just thinking the word causes my pussy to throb and my core to ache.

A large part of me does crave the idea of a man actually loving me, caring for me, nurturing me. It's something that's been absent my entire life, something I never knew I needed until this moment. On the other hand, there is a part that's scared—scared of change, of trust, of believing that this Alpha truly is different. More importantly, though, I'm terrified of how much loving him will hurt.

“I-I like the idea of rule number four,” I finally admit. “But I don't know if I'm there yet. I suppose this trial period could be a good way to decide that?”

“I agree. Declaring love for someone, deep love, the type I long to have with an omega of my own, is not something to just jump into. I think your plan is very smart. At the end of six months, we'll renegotiate and see where we are.”

My breath leaves my lungs in a fast whoosh. Six months. I can endure anything for six months. And after, if he proves to be just like Jacob, I can easily petition for a divorce. Granted, separation is the last thing on my mind right now, especially with how damned delectable Michael looks and smells.

But there's still that nagging issue about the spanking. There's no way he can make something so violent feel so good. Mulling over the issue, I almost don't notice him crouch down in front of me.

Reaching up, he smooths the deep furrows in my brow, releasing tension I didn't even realize was there until it was

gone. “You don’t need these muscles right now,” he murmurs. “They can relax. What has you thinking so hard?”

“The spanking.”

He pulls back and laughs, the throaty sound playing over my skin until I squirm under the onslaught. “Am I really that scary and threatening?”

“Ummm. Dude, have you *seen* your hands? Pretty sure they can smack through concrete.”

“Do you want to try for me? Do you want to feel for yourself instead of just guessing and agonizing?” His voice is deep, husky, and does all the right things in all the wrong places.

Crossing my legs, I squirm, unsure of how to answer. “I... well... I mean, yeah, but... Will it hurt?”

“It doesn’t have to. Do you want it to?”

“What type of question is that? Who wants pain?” Again, confusion flits about my mind, muddling everything.

Prowling forward, he climbs onto the bed, his cock jerking with each movement. “Some do. But we won’t know until we try, will we? I won’t ask you to be my good girl and do this for me, because refusing doesn’t make you bad. I need you to understand that. I want you to try because *you* want it. Not because you feel I’m trapping you or coercing you.”

There’s a desperation in his voice, a longing that matches the need flowing through me. Besides, how hard can it be? So he spans me. I’ll either like it or not.

“Can you put some clothes on first? It’s distracting.”

“Oh,” he teases, leaning back so I can see his massive erection. “You find me distracting? That’s a good start.”

“You know you look good, but I’m not sure if I should puff up that head of yours anymore.”

“Hmmm. You have a point.” With a large grin, he glances down at his cock. “Besides, I’m not sure if it can get any bigger, but I think if anyone can make that happen, it’s you.”

Precum pearls at his tip, releasing that deep, masculine scent of his into the air. My mouth waters for a moment, and I lick my lips, not even thinking about what my action would do to him. Arousal perfumes the air, and I realize it’s not just his, it’s mine too.

“Babygirl, if you keep looking at me like that, I might have to forgo spanking and use my fingers somewhere else.”

“I... um... I—” My mouth goes dry as I look up at him, stammering as incoherency threatens to take over.

“How badly do you want me to spank you?”

“I-I don’t know. I just... I’m scared.” The last word is barely a whisper, but it encompasses everything that’s been going on in my head since I even found out there was supposed to be a wedding.

“Are you willing to trust me?”

Do I dare? Not trusting my voice, I nod.

“Normally, when I give a proper spanking, I like the ass to be bare. I’m going to pull these pretty pajama bottoms off you now. Can’t have them get in the way of me touching you. All of you.”

My breaths come out in pants as the dark intention swirls in his eyes. God in heaven, what did I just agree to? Biting down on my lower lip, I lean back, allowing him access to the band around my waist.

It's too late to back out now. Desperation coats my insides as he leans forward. I need to know what it is that his eyes and hands promise. I need to feel. I need... I need a Daddy?

Chapter 7

Michael

I sit there, my fingers itching to touch her, even as I hold back. There's indecision warring in her eyes, and damn if that doesn't make me even harder. Normally, I wouldn't have to coddle a play partner this way, but with Rosalind, she's worth the restraint.

For the first time, I can explore this with someone new. I can take the time to build the intimacy that comes with being a Daddy. How long have I wanted this, waited for this? Rosalind's uncertainty is what makes it all the more enticing and delectable.

It's that frisson of fear tainting this moment that has me wanting to shove my cock so deep into her pussy she'll never be able to even think of another Alpha again. I want to drive every memory of Jacob so far from her that she'll never even remember him. But most of all, I want that moment where her body finally lets go and she surrenders to me.

She's so close. So very close. Every inch of her body is primed, ready, desperate, and needy. The fact that part of her wants this as much as I do is half the battle.

Easing my way forward, I grip the waistband of her pajama pants and slowly inch them down, leaving her panties on. For every bit of skin I reveal, I kiss her, keeping things light and fun. When I get to her feet, I dig my fingers into her tight soles, earning a soft groan.

Her thighs part as she relaxes into my touch, revealing the outline of her pussy pressed tightly against the cotton fabric. It sticks to her, clinging to her skin with how wet she is. Even covered up, I can tell her lower lips are puffy and swollen.

God but her panties are already drenched, fairly dripping with slick. Crawling up, I allow the tip of my cock to brush against her. A startled gasp flies from her lips as her large gaze meets mine.

It's torture holding myself back like this. But it's the groundwork I need to lay in order to garner her trust. She's worth this discomfort. She's worth me taking my time with her.

"P-please," she whimpers, her head falling back.

"Now, now, baby girl. You're going to have to ask specifically for what you want. I'm not a mind reader. Do you want me to touch you? To slide my fingers into this soaking wet pussy of yours? Do you want my tongue to lap at that little clit? Do you want me to spank you or fuck you? Because make no mistake, after seeing how wet you are for me, both are going to happen. I'll allow you to decide what order I put them in."

"Sp-spank me. Please, just spank me!"

"Since my good girl begged so nicely..." Shifting around, I let my feet rest against the floor as I maneuver her in between my legs.

With each movement, her thigh brushes against my cock, making my eyes nearly cross with need. This will no doubt be the quickest spanking I've ever done in my life. Tipping her across my thigh, I shift so that she can partially recline on the bed, allowing her a sense of stability.

Once she knows spanking can be a pleasurable experience, then I'll take away that safety net and have her balance across me, her fingers pressed against the floor as I warm her ass. Before I start, I run my hand over the back of her skull, running my fingers across her scalp. Poor little thing is still so tense.

After a moment or two, she melts into the bed, and that's when I go to work. Grabbing her panties, I pull them up a little, just enough to expose her round bottom to my gaze but not enough to lodge the fabric in between her ass cheeks. I squeeze one round globe and then the other, reveling in the feel of her soft skin beneath my fingers.

She sighs and shifts in my arms, her body still a little rigid. Lifting my hand, I pop her cheek with my fingers, letting her get used to the sensation of being touched this way. Once that proves to be manageable for her, I tap the other.

Lifting a bit higher, I come down, allowing the weight of my hand to press into her ass, spanking her just a touch harder. She squirms as arousal perfumes the air. Oh, my little girl likes this.

Based on the way her inner thighs glisten as she shifts about, she likes it a lot. Each smack is harder than the first. I move my hand around, getting a nice even red. Soon, she juts her ass into the air, silently begging for my dominance.

After several minutes, I slide my fingers lower, touching her through the tight, wet fabric of her panties. Rosalind

arches back, her body bowing with need. Frantic whines rip from her throat as she claws at the sheets.

“Words, babygirl. What is it you want from me?”

“I... please... oh God. Just please. I need you to touch me.”

“Oh, but I am touching you.”

Desperation laces her tone. “Harder. Deeper. Just. I... oh please. Daddy, please,” she begs, stopping as she realizes what she just said.

My cock jerks between us, rubbing against her side. There’s no hint of sarcasm in her plea. It’s just raw, unadulterated need.

“I hear you, baby girl,” I murmur, lifting her into my arms. “But Daddy is going to tease you first. I want you even wetter before I fuck that tight pussy of yours.”

Incoherent whines fill the air as I lay her down on the bed. Without removing her panties, I slide the tip of my finger down the front, grazing her before dancing away. Arousal coats the fabric.

Leaning down, I lap at her, the sensations dulled by the cotton barrier between us. Fuck me but she tastes like heaven. There’s a sweetness there, like summer berries covered in sugar. She’s like a frozen treat on a hot summer day.

I’m unwilling to torture us any longer. Grabbing the band of her panties, I slide them down and fling them to the side, revealing her soft, swollen, drenched lower lips. Spreading her thighs apart, I dip my face down, taking in the scent of her arousal.

Like a famished man, I feast upon her, licking and sucking. I leave no bit of her pussy untouched. Only when she's thrashing about, need evident in every tight line of her body, do I slide a pair of fingers inside her.

Her inner walls flutter around me, gripping me, milking my fingers as if it were a cock. Groaning, I continue to lap at her clit, curling my thick digits so they brush against her G-spot. Soft mewls of pleasure fill the room as she reaches between her thighs to grab my hair.

The soft pinpricks of pain spur me forward, feasting on her even more. I can't get enough of her taste, her smell. All of it ricochets around my brain until I can't even think straight.

Soon, her body explodes into a flurry of movement as her first orgasm rips through her. I continue pumping my fingers, riding out the wave as she bucks up underneath me. No longer can I continue to wait, not while her body begs for me.

Rising to my knees, I pull Rosalind forward until my tip bumps up against her opening. "I'm going to fuck you now, my lovely little Rosalind." I give her several moments to voice any worries or tell me to stop, but she says nothing. Lining up my cock, I slide in, groaning as her welcoming heat surrounds me, engulfing me.

Rosalind

With every inch he drives into me, impaling me, stretching me open, I lose just a little more of my sanity. He's so thick, filling me so full I almost can't breathe. And still, I want more.

The spanking was just the start. Now, I want to feel what else he can do to me. As the smacks got harder, it hurt, but nothing unbearable. Certainly not like anything Jacob ever did to me.

Every strike from Jacob was pain only. From Michael, however, it was different. Yes, there was a bite of hurt towards the end, but it was smothered with something else, something that still makes my insides twist with arousal. There's a heat there, a burning need that won't be satisfied.

Now, when he drifts his hands up to cup my breasts, that same warmth drifts through my body. He doesn't even have to spank me to make me respond. I want him, body and soul.

Even as he pinches my nipples, hard, bringing back that bite of pain, I find that I'm no longer scared of it. I'm no longer scared of him.

With a loud groan, he sinks all the way into me, filling me up like I've never experienced before. His cock stretches me out and fills me in a way that leaves me needy and wanting. And then he moves. Oh God, does he move.

He pistons in and out of me, slamming into me, invading me with each stroke. Again, the tendrils of an orgasm beat at me, tempting me to fall back into the blissful abyss. I clench around him, dragging another delicious grunt from his lips.

His warm brown eyes peer into my soul as he rocks against me, owning me with his body, claiming me. I cling to his shoulders, holding on, desperate to stay in the moment and not fly apart. Even though my nails dig into him, he doesn't seem to care.

With each hard thrust, he cracks away at my resolve, shattering my walls and defenses. I feel them crumble around

me, sending a shard of fear into my heart. Panic threatens to beat at me, to derail the pleasurable feelings coursing through my body.

As if he can read my mind, Michael wraps his arms around me, enveloping me in his strong grasp. “Don’t worry, baby. Daddy’s got you. Shatter for me, break apart. Trust me to put you back together.”

A sob rips from my throat as my body explodes around him. This orgasm is different from the other one. It’s as if I feel it from my very soul. Refusing to let me go, he continues to rock into me, impaling me with each thrust, dragging out the orgasm until every touch sends a shudder through my body.

With a loud shout, he grips my hips, holding me steady as he crashes into me one final time. At that moment, a sensation like I’ve never felt before draws my awareness in between my thighs.

He was big before, barely fitting, but now, it’s as if he’s getting even bigger. Smacking on his arms, I try to pull away but find that each tug brings a slice of discomfort through my core. It’s not painful exactly, but it’s enough to let me know I won’t like it if I keep fighting.

“Shhhh, sweetie,” he croons against my ear. “I’ve got you. Don’t pull away or you’ll hurt yourself on my knot. That’s the last thing I want to have happen.”

“Your knot?” My voice falters as my mind whirls about.

He looks down at me, confusion evident in his gaze. “Yes. It’s what’s keeping us locked together. I... as an omega that’s been married before, I thought you were aware.”

“No. It’s okay. It’s just... you knotted me?”

Michael rises onto his elbows. “Was I not supposed to?”

“I mean... you care enough about me to knot me? I didn’t realize you felt so strongly.”

Grabbing me into his arms, he rolls over, allowing me to sit on top. From this angle, the knot presses against that spot inside that makes my toes curl. Running my nails down his chest, I rock back and forth, grinding my clit against him.

He holds me still, wrapping his hands around my hips. “Talk to me. Then you can use me to get off.”

A whine hovers at the back of my throat as I look down at him, need flowing through my veins. “Jacob never knotted me,” I grit out, my body humming with arousal. “He didn’t want to get caught connected to me. Said that it would only slow him down if he had to get away. I... It wasn’t worth the time to stay locked inside me.”

Anger rolls off of Michael in waves, but he tempers it, sliding his fingers around to brush my clit. “You are more than worthy. Now ride me, baby. Let me watch you fall apart again.”

At his words, a shudder drifts through me. I obey his command, moving my hips, seeking out my pleasure. All the while, he speaks to me, urging me on as he touches me, teases me.

“If I have to spend the rest of my life showing you just how amazing you are, baby girl, I’ll do it,” he groans out, his cock jerking inside me. “Just give me the chance to be the Daddy you so desperately need.”

My core tightens at his words, another orgasm slamming into me. “Yes, Daddy!” I scream, my body melting as all the stress and pain leaches from me.

I've heard before that sex can be a powerful, healing tool, but until this moment, I never understood that. But now, with Daddy's cock stuffing me full and his strong, powerful hands stroking my body, I get it. Who knew what I needed above all else was not just an Alpha, but a Daddy Alpha?

Epilogue

Six Months Later

Rosalind

I bustle about the house, my fingers fluttering over every available surface. The house is clean, but for some reason, it doesn't feel like enough. Glancing up at the clock, my heart seizes in my chest. How is it already four pm? Pulling out my phone, I reread the text message.

Daddy: Hey, babygirl. I heard back from the Governing Body. A representative is going to stop by the house at five pm to check in with us. That won't leave a lot of time for making dinner, so I'm taking you out afterward. Just make sure the house is clean and ready to go like you always do. Thank you, my good little omega. I'll grab your outfit when I get home.

Just reading his words causes my pussy to spasm as I do one final check. No doubt he'll be here any minute. Adjusting my collar, I slide my fingers along the silver chain, a happy sigh drifting from my lips.

It's fitting that he would choose to take me out, seeing as my cooking skills are still lacking. He's patient with me as I learn, however, and that's all I can ever ask of him. Even now, my insides churn as I think back to that first month when most of my money went to sneaking in pre-made food.

If only I had just said something then, spoken up once I realized he wasn't an unfair ogre. And yet, my pride certainly got in the way—still gets in the way, unfortunately. There are times I wish I could just get better and prepare all these amazing feasts for him...

Thankfully, he eats every meal as if it's fit for a king, making all the right noises even as he puts in a little more salt or pepper. Though, to be honest, after all his hard work, I think he'd be satisfied with anything that's warm and made with love. And love I have in abundance.

With a sigh, I run my fingers over the mantle, pausing at a picture of Michael and me, a happy smile tilting my lips. Since marrying him, I've been so content, so safe and secure. Not just because he managed to put Jacob away for thirty years, but also because I know if that bastard ever gets out early, Michael will keep me safe. Nothing and no one will ever take me from his grasp.

If anyone had asked me six months ago if I'd fall for another Alpha after Jacob, I would have told them they were crazy. But Michael isn't like any other Alpha I've ever known. He's more than that.

Yes, there have been tears and headaches as we fell into our new rhythm, but I never once questioned how much he cared for me. Even with his punishments, he was always quick to scoop me back into his arms and assure me all was forgiven.

More importantly, never once has he broken any of the rules he's given himself. I watched him closely, waiting for the time he'd slip up, but so far, he hasn't even so much as gotten close to breaking any of them.

Under his firm hand, I'm far happier than I have ever been before. Never once did I think I'd get aroused from pain, but each day, my Daddy seems to teach me even more. Heat flushes my cheeks as I watch the door, just waiting for the knob to turn.

When he finally steps in, I sink to my knees, my hands on my thighs like he taught me. His warm brown eyes sparkle as he walks in, an odd bag in his hands. "Miss me, babygirl?"

"Oh yes, Daddy. But everything is ready like you requested."

He glances about, his smile growing wider. "So it is. And it's a good thing too. I have a surprise for you and didn't want it to have to wait until after I punished you. Now, go wait for me on the bed, pants off but panties on."

"Surprise? I love surprises!"

Again that deep chuckle of his slides over my skin sending warmth through my veins. "I know you do, princess."

Rushing over to the room, I slip off my pants and lay them across the back of a chair. I climb onto the bed on my hands and knees, sticking my ass out just how he likes it.

His dark groan sends goosebumps over my skin as his heavy tread echoes in the room. "My, what a pretty little omega you are." He skims his fingers over the exposed skin where my cheekies don't cover, drawing arousal up through my veins.

"Are you wet for me already?"

“Yes, Daddy,” I moan, arching up into his touch.

“Such a good girl.” Sliding his hand lower, he cups me, his finger rubbing my clit through the cloth.

A gasp catches in my throat as fire races through my veins. My inner walls clench as my body craves his with a passion. Whining softly, I push back against him, desperately needing this release.

“Poor baby,” he croons, pulling his hand away. “Do you want to come? Tell me how badly you want it.”

Stepping up behind, he grinds against me, rocking his cock against my pussy. “Oh please, Daddy,” I beg, arousal clouding my mind. “I need your thick cock deep inside me.”

“Daddy loves how you beg, sweetie, but you don’t get to come. Not yet.”

I turn to look at him, unease sending shards of ice through me. “Did... did I do something wrong?”

“Nothing of the sort. I just want you delirious for me later. Now, onto your surprise.”

He pulls an odd device out of the bag. Honestly, it looks like an alien life form. Without much preamble, he slides my panties to the side and works whatever it is deep inside. I’m full, but not nearly as stuffed as I want to be.

Before he puts my panties back in place, he places part of the thing in between my lower lips, letting it rest against my clit. Easing me up, he looks me up and down. “Let’s try it out, shall we?”

Fiddling with a ring on his finger, I nearly yelp as it comes to life. Deep inside, this “surprise” expands and recedes,

mimicking a small knot. At my clit, it buzzes, the pleasure nearly bringing me to my knees.

“You’re allowed to come, but I don’t want the official knowing about it. Keep this our little secret, and Daddy’s cum will drip from you as I take you to dinner. Can you do that for me?”

I nod, unable to speak. Arousal burns through my veins as he pulls away and washes his hands. Soon, he’s back with our clothes for the meeting. It’s bad enough that I have this toy stuck in me, but it seems as if he wants me to wear a skirt as well.

It leaves me feeling exposed, vulnerable, like anyone could just look up and see how dreadfully wet I am. Thankfully, Michael isn’t the type to let anyone get that close. Leading me out to the living room, he sits me down on the couch as we wait for the person who will sign off on our marriage.

If only I can come before they get here, but Michael turned the device off, forcing me to suffer, to wonder when he’ll turn it back on. All too soon, the ominous knock brings my attention to the door. With an evil smirk, he turns the ring.

In an instant, the toy comes to life, but thankfully, it’s at a lower setting, allowing my brain to work at least a little. The woman steps in, her business suit prim and proper. If only she knew the deviance that lurked inside this house.

Michael, of course, is all smiles, cordial as he sits her down in the chair furthest from me. He turns the ring again, amping the sensations up. Though my mind refuses to stay on the task at hand, I feel as if I do okay.

I answer her questions, keeping the tremor of need out of my voice. It goes on forever, at least that’s how it feels. And

still, I'm unable to come. No doubt it's because of embarrassment at doing something so intimate with a stranger nearby.

Giving her a wan smile, I watch as she leaves, Michael showing her the door. When he comes back, his smile takes on a darker turn. Rolling up his sleeves, he forces me to sit there and watch this show he puts on just for me, my thighs quaking as slick coats my skin.

“Such a good little girl. Ready for Daddy's cum?”

“Yes, Daddy!” I practically scream as he sits down next to me.

With slow, methodical movements, he undoes his pants, pulling out his thick erection. “Turn around and show me your ass.” Without hesitation, I lean over the couch, groaning as he lifts my skirt. As he pulls out the toy, I nearly sob. “Good girl,” he groans. “Now ride my cock until you get off. I want to feel you pulse around me. I want to feel your body beg me to stuff you with my cum.”

I go to take off my panties, but he stops me, guiding me forward as he moves them to the side. “No time for that, baby. Once you're dripping, I'm taking you to dinner. Better hurry. We have reservations in thirty minutes.”

Desperation claws at my throat as I straddle him, feeling the heat from his body against my sensitive skin. Sinking down, I moan as he stretches me open, filling me up with his massive cock.

“I'm not going to knot you this time, but it's not because you did something wrong. I just want to show off my pretty little wife. Now ride me, princess. Let me feel you explode around me.”

As I sink down all the way, my body twitches, need flooding my veins until I rock back and forth. “That’s it, baby. Christ, you feel so fucking good,” he groans, his fingers digging into my ass. “I’ve been thinking about this all day. I’m so fucking desperate for you. I’m not going to last long.”

Reaching between us, he strokes my clit, urging me toward my orgasm. It races through, exploding between us as we pant and strain. “That’s one,” he growls. “Now give me another.”

Whimpers claw at my throat as I ride him, reveling in the feeling of him pulsing inside me. Soon, we’re both frantic, him pistoning in and out as I rock back and forth. I feel his knot swelling, and I know he’s close.

Smiling down at him, I clench my muscles, bearing down on him as another orgasm overtakes me. With a loud shout, he also comes, his cock jerking inside as he coats my insides. Since he didn’t knot me, his cum coats my inner thighs with each thrust and withdrawal.

I’m delirious with need, not completely satisfied since his knot didn’t stretch me out. It leaves me feeling anxious, hovering on that precipice of wanting more and being far too sensitive.

Sliding his hand up to cup my face, he urges me down for a soulful kiss. “Ready for rule number four, babygirl? Ready for me to be your Daddy for life?”

“Only if you promise to knot me after dinner,” I tease, my body humming with satisfaction.

“Oh, don’t worry about that,” he growls against my lips. “I’ll knot you every damned day for the rest of our lives. And that, babygirl, is a promise.”

The End

About Vivian Murdoch

If you enjoyed this story, make sure to sign up for my [newsletter](#) so you can receive updates on all things bookish!! And if you're extra knotty, join my [group](#)! I don't bite... hard.

Vivian is a sassy romance writer that likes to brat just as much as she writes. As a fly-by-the-seat-of-her-pants author, she's usually working furiously into the night when her creative juices hit her the hardest.

Her books like to take you to the dark side and force you to dip your toes in, but don't drown you. She loves writing alphaholes, anti-heroes, and heroes you just love to hate. She likes to try out everything she's putting her heroines through, so the phrase "for science" is used in her house a lot!

When she's not writing, you can probably find her playing Animal Crossing or tormenting her cats and Husdom.

Mis(s)-Adventure by
Kara Kelley

A MF story by Kara Kelley

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Chapter 1

Pam

Leaning against the bakery case, chin in my palm, I gaze at the man in the third booth. I call him Mr. Adventure, but his real name is Nash McAllister, and he's my hero.

Not in the typical sense, although he always comes to my aid when I get a dick customer, or one that wants my number and thinks the word 'no' means 'try harder.'

Nah, he's my hero because he's fearless. And that's exactly what I want to be.

Oh, and there's this other little thing called terminal infatuation. I swear I'll go to my grave lusting over this man.

Nash rises in the booth, and his client does as well. The client is short, bespectacled, and sports a little paunch. He looks as if his only adventure experience is a round of golf in sketchy weather. But I suppose if he looked like Nash, all tall, fit, and golden skinned, with confidence bursting from every pore, dude wouldn't need an adventure guide.

"You may be rich and paying me, but out there, I'm the expert. I'm in charge. And I don't put up with any bullshit, not

when your group's lives are in my hands. So, if anyone wants to fuck around, I'll end the trip right then and there. Oh, and my refund policy is void as soon as we set foot at basecamp. Got me?"

I shiver at Nash's authoritative speech. I love when he gets all firm and bossy. Sometimes I imagine him getting like that with me—chastising me for not following his orders when my safety is his number one priority. Kissing me roughly after, just to prove he cares. My daydream pops like a soap bubble when the dude rings the bell at the counter.

He hands me the bill from the table as soon as I step up to the counter. I give him a small smile as I key the numbers into the register.

"Where's he taking you?" I ask breezily, knowing his type. Guys like him want to talk about the adventure they've just purchased for an arm and leg. Sometimes I think they book them for the bragging rights. Especially bragging to attractive young women, to which I must qualify, because he shoots me a cocky grin.

"Class five whitewater rafting. Most difficult before the last level."

"What's the last level?" I ask on cue.

His face grows serious, and he shakes his head. "*Never lived to tell*, class six. That's next year's adventure."

Nash glances up from his laptop, his silent chuckle making my heart pound at a level five. "Wow, you're so brave," I gush, giving the customer an admiring look. He puffs up like a peacock and hands me a fifty-dollar bill.

Winking, he says, "Keep the change, honey. You can't take it with you and where I'm going, I might not make it back."

I gasp, covering my mouth with my hand and try not to roll my eyes at his corny *off to war* speech. I sneak a quick glance at Nash, and he rolls his eyes. The guy will make it back. Nash never lets his clients get in too far over their heads. Oh, sometimes they come back with injuries, but they're never serious. They might pull a muscle, get scraped up, or bruised, or maybe even twist an ankle, but they're always fine. And their injuries are always from not listening to Nash's directions.

"If I do though..." He doesn't finish the sentence because Nash comes up to the counter, crosses his arms, and looks down at his client.

"Pam, would you mind wiping down my table? There's some syrup on it." He says this never taking his eyes off the guy. He's rescuing me from getting asked out and I appreciate it.

"Of course, Sir," I say, and rush off with a thanks to the customer. I use the word Sir not just to show the guy that Nash deserves respect, but also because when I call him that, his eyes flare and it makes my heart flutter between my thighs.

"Staff here. Off limits."

"Oh, yeah?" There's challenge in his voice, and I snicker to myself, because he has no clue who he's messing with.

Nash pulls open his folder and hands the guy a check from inside. "Consider your trip cancelled."

"What?" He looks down at the check in his hand, brow furrowed as if it got there by magic.

Nash turns, walking back toward the table and me. My heart flips at his crooked grin.

“Wait, no. I got it. Staff is off limits here. Take my check back!”

Nash turns to the guy, takes the check and slowly puts it back in the folder. “Consider this your one and only chance to challenge me. Yeah?”

The guy nods several times. “Yeah, sure. Yeah.”

“Sorry about that.” Nash places his big hand on my back, dismissing the dude without so much as a ‘good day.’ The shivers his touch cause should be illegal because, my god, my panties are going to fall off one of these days.

“It’s not your fault,” I say, sounding breathless as I scrub a sticky spot of Canadian maple syrup off the table.

“Maybe not completely, but I could do my business elsewhere where you wouldn’t be hit on constantly.” He frowns.

“But then I wouldn’t get to see you.” I flash him my flirtiest smile. “Besides, it got me a fifty percent tip.”

“As you deserve. And not just for the great service.” He returns my flirty smile, his naturally crooked on the right side. “That was some impressive acting too.” His deep chuckle heats my core, but his observation embarrasses me.

As if the gods are on my side, a group of hungry diners come in and I’m able to escape his gorgeous, deep-brown stare.

A little later when it quiets down, I peek at him through the bakery case. It looks as if I’m checking the inventory, but the only thing I’m checking is Nash.

Looking toward me, deep in thought, he chews his lip and strokes his rugged square jaw. He probably doesn’t even see

me. I am, after all, just a waitress.

Jeanie's diner is my life—as in all I do is work here and go home. Nash occupies the apartment above the diner, although not often. He always says the outdoors is his home, and the apartment is just an address to put on his taxes. That always garners a laugh from the people he meets here to take on adventures.

But yeah, he's here every Tuesday and Wednesday, writing his next blog post for Outdoor Junkie dot com, and meeting new clients, or even old ones, looking to hire him for their next adventure. The rest of the week he's out there... in the world, experiencing life outside the concrete jungle.

A glance at the clock tells me it's almost two p.m. and Nash has been here since I opened. Besides a buttered scone at around eight this morning, and four coffees, two of which he'd abandoned, he'd put nothing else in his stomach, so I slip into the back. My shift is over, so I tell the cook to go for a smoke break and take over the grill.

Grabbing a glass of ice water on the way out of the kitchen, I head to Nash's table.

“Some water, Mr. Adventure? Perhaps some lunch?”

Nash looks at his watch and then up at me, a slow smile growing on his stubbled face. “What would I do without you?”

I smile back; it's impossible not to. Sigh, because he's gorgeous and *nice*, and trust me, that's rare here in the busy downtown core.

“Probably starve,” I say, setting down the plate and glass I brought for him. He always says, ‘surprise me’ when I take his order, so now I just bring him whatever I'm in the mood to make him. Today it's a four-egg omelet with zucchini,

peppers, and onion, stuffed with goat cheese. Rye toast on the side and one of the peanut butter cookies I baked when I got here this morning. He's a big man, tall and built like a lumberjack, so I know he needs the calories. And none of the food will pad his flat belly.

He moans in pleasure as he shoves his MacBook aside and takes a big whiff of the omelet. Grabbing his fork, he digs in. "Marry me."

I try not to melt like the goat cheese in his omelet over his sentence, which is not a question and not serious, but I wish it was.

He nods at the bench across from him. The place is empty, except for a few regulars finishing up, so I slide in as he attacks his omelet with the same energy and focus he gives everything else he does. For a second my mind heads down a dangerous path in which we're naked and I'm his *focus*.

"What's the smirk for?" he asks, making me want to lick that little crinkle at the corner of his mouth.

I clear my throat, fingering the chunk of brown ponytail that hangs over my shoulder. "Uh, nothing. What's today's blog post about?"

"You actually interested?" He swipes his mouth with his napkin and looks at me, his eyes narrowed slightly as if inspecting me.

"I love your blog." I point double thumbs at my chest. "Huge fan here." That isn't a lie but the next words out of my mouth are. "I love the outdoors and adventure."

Okay, so it's not completely a lie since I *want* to love it. I just haven't experienced it yet. And I might possess a very real fear of... well, everything that doesn't involve taking the

subway to and from work, reading, watching TV, sewing with my mom, or daydreaming about Nash and me having said adventures.

Is an armchair adventurer still an adventurer?

He gently grunts as he assesses me for a moment. I grin and nod, hoping my face conveys honesty and energy. People who love these things tend to have a lot of energy, right? His head turns to the side, and he wipes his mouth with his napkin again, leaning back in the booth. For a moment I'm distracted by the way his chest fills out his black tee. Of course, my anxiety can't be side railed for long, so I start rambling.

"I'm not a diehard like you, of course, but I love hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding." I look up, trying to think of some more of the content he's written about in his blog. "That place you wrote about a few months ago, with the cliff jumps, man, I'd love to go there." I look up, trying to remember the name of it.

"The Grotto!" I say a little louder than necessary.

His brow rises. Just one. And it makes my middle swirl. Mostly because I feel like he knows I'm lying. And boy, it's a biggie, too. I can't swim—not even a dog paddle and The Grotto—yikes! People jumping from—Jesus, my heart speeds up just thinking about it—probably sixty-plus feet into rock-laden crystal-clear Georgian Bay water. Hell, no! I'm not suicidal. I've never ridden a tricycle, let alone a mountain bike, and horses are big, they bite and kick and Superman was paralyzed by one. I need to stop thinking because I'm starting to sweat and feel dizzy.

Shoving his plate aside, he leans forward, his forearms on the tabletop.

“You work too much,” he says, and the vibrations of his deep gruff words hit me straight in the sternum. I’m caught. My mind spins for a lie to explain when I have time for the activities I mentioned.

“Tomorrow’s your day off?” he asks as he lifts his water glass for a deep swallow. I swallow along with him and nod.

“I’ll pick you up at seven then.” He sets the cup down and pulls his plate back, scooping another bite of omelet into his mouth with his fork. He moans again and it sounds sexual to my perverted mind so I shiver, imagining what it might feel like against my skin.

“Wait, what?” I’m stunned as his words hit my brain. Like, mouth open, frozen in place, shocked. “Pick me up?”

“I’ve wanted to ask you out since you started working here, but I didn’t think you’d be interested. I actively avoid the city. Being here is my job; being out there,” he waves a hand toward the window, “is my life. And you seemed more like an indoorsy girl.”

I laugh, probably too hard at his truthful observation, but I’m just stalling. What the hell do I say to that? I want to be the type of girl that fits his life, does that count? And not just because I’ve been crushing on him for so long, I’ve forgotten other men exist, but because my fear has held me hostage as long as I can remember.

I could tell him that. He’d accept it and life would go on... life cooped up in my condo with my fretting, agoraphobic mother, dreaming about being someone else.

He waits patiently for me to say something, which I don’t, because this moment feels monumental—like a crossroad and one should take a moment when arriving at a crossroad, right?

He licks his bottom lip, watching me intently. “So, if I’ve been wrong this whole time... seven p.m., yeah?”

I gather a breath. “For—”

He cuts me off. My head spins and my stomach whirls. “Our date.”

“Our date?” I fiddle with my hair again, this time forgetting I need to breathe.

Now he laughs, but it’s low, soft, and patient. “Yes, Pam, our date. I like you and if I’m not mistaken, you like me. Either that or you’ve been checking out Bert.”

At the table behind Nash’s, our oldest customer, Bert Cranston, sits reading the newspaper with a magnifying glass. He’s ninety years young, hard of hearing, half blind, wears suspenders to hold up his too-big trousers and has a taste for sarcasm and western omelet sandwiches.

Bert doesn’t look up from his newspaper but speaks loudly. “New hearing aids.” He points a crooked finger at his ear. “And maybe my mind’s not as sound as yours, but even I can tell you’ve both got googly eyes for each other, so leave me out of it. I ain’t being part of no love triangle.”

I laugh but embarrassment creeps up my neck. When my eyes slide to Nash’s face, he’s grinning, so I ignore my jelly legs and rubbery tongue and rise.

“Um, okay. I’ll meet you here at seven p.m.” Walking away, I feel his eyes on me. On my bottom particularly and it makes me forget how to walk normally, so I move a little faster to get to the back room to escape.

When I return, he’s waiting by the register to pay.

“I do like you,” I say, quietly handing him his bill.

“Are you just saying that so I’ll tip you better?” There’s a spark of humor in his deep brown eyes.

“Of course not,” I say indignantly and then with a laugh add, “I only manipulate your clients.”

His lips suddenly curve and it’s practically blinding. Taking the bills he hands me, I look away for a few seconds to catch my breath.

“Besides, I have no fear. You always tip me well.”

His tongue slides along his bottom lip and my heart flutters.

“I tip you well because you’re such a good girl, Pam.”

The way he rumbles those last three words sends pulses of heat through me. And even though my knees are also still a bit weak from his date request, I push myself to reply.

“Not all the time, Mr. Adventure.”

The corner of his lip curls up higher on one side. “Good thing I love both good girls and bad girls.” He winks at me.

When he walks out, I grab a menu and slide onto the floor behind the counter to fan myself.

I have never wanted to be bad so much in my life.

“When you’re finished swooning, can you bring me my sandwich?” I peek through the bakery display at Bert whose face is still buried in the paper.

“I got it,” Jeanie says, passing me with the sandwich already in hand. “Go home, shift’s over.”

Chapter 2

Pam

My mother sits in the rocking chair farthest from the balcony, darning clothes. The creak, creak, creak is as familiar as the smell of her chamomile tea.

“Morning, Mom,” I greet as I give her a peck on the cheek.

“Good morning, honey.”

“Who are those for?” I motion to the clothes piled in her lap.

“Beverly.” She glances up at me, her brows rising to a peak in the middle of her forehead empathetically. “You know the single mother three doors down?”

I nod and her expression turns to one of disapproval. “Those boys of hers are so hard on clothes. They roughhouse too much at school.”

“I know.” It’s an automatic response.

“They’re going to get hurt one of these days.”

I watch her disapproval melt into sadness and I swallow dryly. Guilt also rises in me because I’m about to do

something she'd consider reckless. Going on a date with one of the customers from the diner. It won't matter to her that he's been a regular there longer than I've been a waitress. She'd say, "Oh, so he's a patient serial killer?"

"They'll be fine. They're being watched by the teachers."

Mom nods. "Like you were?" Her brow rises as she continues to sew. I know she's referring to the time when one of my classmates broke their arm on the monkey bars before she pulled me out of school. But what it makes me think of is the time I went with our neighbor's nephew to his prom. I was eighteen and it was the only dance I'd ever been to. It wasn't all that special since it was in his school gym, but I really liked Mathew. We snuck off and had sex behind the assembly stage basically under the chaperones' noses.

"You're so good to darn their clothes."

She gives me a small smile. She does this sort of thing for all the families in our building. She calls it being neighborly. But I think she does it so people won't gossip about her never leaving the building.

She waves a hand. "It's nothing. Their mama works a lot. Besides, I finished altering the three wedding dresses early. I'm starting on the dog's tuxedo later today." She laughs. "Whoever heard of a dog giving the bride away?"

She chatters on about the dog and it leads to a warning about chihuahuas, and how they're the breed responsible for most bites. I murmur in agreement with everything she says as I get my shoes on.

"Where are you going?"

I swallow dryly at the panic in my mother's voice.

"It's your day off. And you did the groceries last week."

“I know, Mom.”

The rocker creaks faster and my mother sets down her sewing to start wringing her hands. I grit my teeth, hating that I’m about to lie to her but also hating that I need to. It’s basically a regular thing now too. Since I’ve been out to dinner with Nash twice a week for the last month, and every time I’ve claimed to be working.

“Jeanie asked me to come in. You know I can never say no to her.”

“She’s been asking you to work a lot lately.” My mom eyes me. “You’re such a whiz on the sewing machine. We’d make more than enough to survive doing alterations together. I don’t know why you need to work out there. I hate when you ride the subway and the bus.” She visibly shudders. “They’re filled with creeps.”

I want to scream, “Because I can’t stay locked up in this condo with you forever, I’m suffocating” and “I’ve indulged you long enough. And I don’t want to just survive; I want to live,” but I don’t say any of that. Instead, I walk over and give her another kiss on the cheek because there’s a damn good reason she is the way she is.

“I’ll be careful, Mom. I promise.”

“Why are you wearing those clothes? You don’t work in jeans and t-shirts. And where did you get those boots?” The pitch of her voice goes higher, and I gather a breath.

“Mom, I got them at the thrift store yesterday when I was too early for the bus. They were five bucks and practically new. And I thought these clothes would be safer to ride the subway in. My work skirts draw unwanted attention.” I know

it's the exact right thing to say when her face relaxes. I hold up my bag. "I'm changing at work."

"That's a good idea, honey." As she drops her head back down to her darning, I know where her mind has gone, but I don't dwell on it. I have a date and that's what I need to concentrate on.

My hot, hot date with Mr. Adventure. Our first that'll be something other than eating a meal together.

He's leaning casually at the counter, talking to Jeanie when I walk in. His dark blond hair is short on the sides and a little longer on top in a sexy tousled style. His facial hair, little more than a shadow, accentuates his rugged jaw. My stomach flutters when I see him. And when he flashes me a smile the flutters spread low in my abdomen.

"Hey." He leans down to sweep me into a hug and whispers, "Is it good girl Pam or bad girl Pam today?"

Nash's manly smell is intoxicating, and my brain focuses on both it and on how good it feels to be in his strong embrace. When I do finally pull out of the hug and my brain comes back on line, he tucks me under his arm.

"That's for me to know and you to find out," I say as I look up at his downturned face. His eyes fill with heat, and I shiver. We've discovered something we have in common that I don't have to fake or lie about. And that's our love of dominance and submission. There's a natural power exchange dynamic between us.

He growls low so only I can hear. “I can’t wait. You ready?”

I take in his tan cargo pants, white t-shirt, and hiking boots and nod nervously.

“Where are we headed?”

“That’s for me to know and you to find out.”

I smile at his words that mirror my previous ones and reply as he had.

“I can’t wait.”

Crouched, I loop my boot laces, concentrating way too intensely on tying them to avoid thinking about where I am. A fly buzzes in my face and I swat it away as I rise. The strong smell of damp straw, sweet hay, and animal musk fills my nostrils.

Mr. Adventure is talking with an older man holding the reins of a brown and white horse with a long blond mane. It’s beautiful, but big. At least I think it is until another one is brought out from the barn and walked to the paddock. Its hair-covered hoofs are the size of dinnerware.

I think of my mother and what she’d say if she saw them and I stand up straight, swallowing all my anxiety and burying it under determination. I can do this. I can’t live my life like my mother, locked up in a condo mending clothes.

Nash hands me a clipboard. “Here, fill this out. I already told Joe what you told me, so he’s already chosen your horse, but he needs the paperwork.”

I nod, taking the clipboard from his hand. I'd told him I used to ride as a teenager but hadn't been riding in a while. Chalk up another lie for me. I've never ridden a pony, let alone a horse. Actually, I've never been this close to any animal besides a cat or dog—and my mother disapproves of even those.

The paper attached to the clipboard is two-sided. The first side is a legal document stating the potential risks and that I won't hold the owners responsible for any injury or my death should it occur. I close my eyes and sign a crooked scribbled signature, trying my best to ignore the intrusive thoughts pelting my brain. The second side of the form is about my experience level. It's a little harder to just sign blindly. It's also easier to lie via words rather than in writing.

I glance at Nash, who's filling his form out beside me. There's a slot for hours of experience. His says a hundred plus and he's checked off Western in the box that gives only two options, the other being English. I swallow and scribble twenty-five and decide to check off English. Might be an explanation for why we ride differently. How hard can it be to sit atop a docile pack horse, anyway? At least these ones look docile enough. And there's a child climbing onto the huge horse in the paddock. If a child can do it...

"I'll be right back." Nash gives me a quick smile and a peck on the cheek, taking both our clipboards to the man. When he returns a few minutes later, he has two helmets in his hands.

"Gotta protect this melon," he says, popping the black helmet on my head. Tipping my chin up, he does the clip up and checks that it's secure. "I love this place. The trail goes through the escarpment and there's a beautiful waterfall at the

end and a perfect place for a picnic.” Leaning past me, he opens the car door, pulling out a backpack and holding it up. “Which we’ll have, thanks to Jeanie.”

“A picnic sounds amazing.” I smile. And it would too if my stomach wasn’t as tumultuous as boiling water. I just need to get past the riding and the escarpment part, right? I’ll be fine then.

Joe walks the brown and white horse over to a small stepladder, waving me over. I swallow hard. The helmet strap suddenly feeling as if it’s strangling me.

“This here is Pearl. She’s a good mare.” He pats the animal’s flank. “A little stubborn, but with your experience, you’ll have no issues. I know you checked off English style, but we only have a Western saddle for Pearl. Just grab the horn and swing on up. She’ll still understand your cues.”

I nod, feeling numb as I climb the stepping stool. Saying a silent thank you to the universe that I watched the little girl get on her horse, I grab the handle-like thing on the saddle and pull myself up. Throwing my leg up and over is awkward and when I look to see if the Joe’s noticed, he says, “You signed the waiver, yeah?”

Oh, man.

I nod vigorously, holding the handle of the saddle harder than I’ve ever gripped anything in my life. “It’s been a while and yesterday was leg day at the gym.” I mumble the words, but he doesn’t reply. He simply gives me the once over, his eyes pausing on my white-knuckled fists gripping the saddle and moves on to Nash.

My legs dangle at either side of the horse until I remember the foot holders and tuck my toes into them. It makes me feel

only slightly more secure.

“As requested, Cameron’s bringing you Max,” Joe says turning to Nash.

Nash’s smile is wide greeting the horse as soon as he’s brought out of the barn by a young woman. I feel calmer watching the way the horse nuzzles Nash with his nose as if he’s meeting an old friend. Nash takes a minute to stroke the beautiful chestnut-colored horse and then without a saddle, grabs a handful of Max’s thick black mane and throws himself up onto the horse’s back.

“You ready?” Nash asks.

I swallow hard. “Uh, no saddle?” I ask, and hope he doesn’t hear the shake in my voice.

“Max and I are old friends. We don’t need anything between us. Do we, pal?” He gives the horse another pat, so I release one of my hands from the handle and very carefully lean forward to give my horse a pat too.

“Good Pearl,” I add, hoping it’ll make her like me. She just lowers her head to grab a mouthful of long grass. The sound she makes as she chews makes me think her teeth must be huge.

“Let’s ride,” Nash says, and takes off. “I’ll race you.” He looks back at me and smirks. “Last one there is a rotten egg?”

“Real mature,” I say with a laugh I don’t really feel. He takes off and I look down at my horse and grimace. She’s still eating grass. “Okay, Pearl, let’s go.” I swallow, heat rising to my cheeks as I notice Joe watching me. He twirls a piece of straw between his teeth a moment before spitting it on the ground and walking to me. He’s got the swagger of an actor in a Western movie.

“Come on, girl.” I move my hips trying to nudge her, but she doesn’t budge.

“You’ve never ridden a horse in your life, have you, missy?” He crosses his arms. They’re surprisingly muscular for a man his age.

I glance at the field where Nash is moving smoothly atop the horse. “No.” Guilt twists inside me. As well as embarrassment at the thought of Nash finding out. And worse, the thought of what he’ll do. He’ll likely take me home, disappointed in me for tricking him, and then we’ll go back to me admiring him from behind the bakery case.

“I take it Nash has no idea you lied about your experience.”

I shake my head. “He didn’t tell me where we were going today.” I plead with him with my eyes. He gathers a big, bored breath, shakes his head, and calls into the barn.

“Cameron, Pearl’s not up to riding today. Can you bring out Betty?”

“Betty? As in Brown Betty?” she replies, from inside the barn somewhere. She pokes her head out a second later, her light ponytail swinging around the barn door behind her.

“Yes, Brown Betty.”

The girl looks at me, brows raised and then nods. “Okay, Joe.”

“Thank you,” I say, and he shrugs.

“Don’t thank me yet. Nash knows this is the horse I give to newbies. She’s old and prefers slow and steady. She’s well-practiced in following the lead horse.” He holds Pearl’s reins

and moves the stool into a better position. “I suppose you’ll come up with a story for that though.”

“You won’t tell?” I ask, leaning forward so I can slowly bring my leg around and slide down the horse’s body onto the stool.

“Not my place.” His eyes pierce mine, and he points a dirty finger at me. “As long as you don’t come back here again and lie on my forms.”

I lower my face, but he clears his throat until I look up at him.

“If you do, I’ll tell Nash to take you to the woodshed, where your seat will burn so badly, you’ll smell smoke every time you even think about lying again.”

I swallow hard, my stomach flopping and my chest fluttering in humiliation, but deeper inside me there’s a little zip of excitement. The thought of Nash, so strong and dominant, manhandling me heats me up.

Cameron brings out the horse. Brown Betty got her name from her coloring and her stoutness. She looks like a round brown teapot. I pet her nose. It’s velvety soft. Her big warm brown eyes look at me with such trust, she puts me more at ease.

This time when I swing my leg up, I’m far less awkward. Joe gives me a quick lesson but says my horse will follow Nash’s with little to no urging. And she does. She takes off at a jaunty clip across the field toward Max after Joe gives her a little swat and tells me to squeeze her middle with my legs to keep myself on.

“Why’d you change your horse?” Nash asks, when Brown Betty and I catch up.

I'm breathing heavily since I barely stayed in the saddle, but I manage to speak. "I guess Pearl wasn't up to riding or something." My inner voice scolds me for lying again but I ignore it and give Nash a flirty smile. Still a bit breathless, I say, "You won the race, I guess I'm the rotten egg. Is there a prize?" He scrutinizes me, and nervousness bubbles inside me. Can he tell I've never done this before?

I suck in my bottom lip and nibble it a moment to distract him. And it works. He seems absolutely mesmerized. "What about a slow, deep kiss?" I ask. We've kissed on our dates, but they've always been sweet pecks, not real kisses.

His eyes on my lips, he makes a 'mmm' sound. "I like the sound of that."

"Mind if we walk the horses and talk?" he asks. "Unless you want to try for the title?"

I shake my head. "No, I'm good with walking." Breathing out in relief, I ease my grip slightly. "And talking. Being the rotten egg isn't so bad."

Walking is much easier especially when I take in how Nash's body moves on his horse. Brown Betty is wide, so it's a little like riding a couch now that I've got her rhythm.

"So, we've covered hopes, dreams, how many kids we want in our futures. How much we like a power exchange dynamic and spanking." He winks. "But I haven't heard about your adventures yet. You've obviously read all about mine."

It's another opportunity to fess up and this time I don't completely brush away my urging conscience. Instead, I decide to tell him a little about my mom.

"I don't have a lot of opportunity to do all the things I'd like to. My mom is..." I gather a breath considering my words

carefully, “ill, so I spend a lot of time with her at home.”

“That must be difficult.” His eyes soften and I swallow hard. He probably assumes she has cancer or something physically chronic.

“It is, but she’s my only family.”

“No siblings? No father? Grandparents?”

“Nope. Just the two of us.” I don’t give him a chance to ask more. “So, what about you? You have family?”

“Lots. Six siblings. Both parents and both sets of grandparents. I grew up with all of them on a farm in Calgary.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah, I spent a lot of time outdoors working. It was less crowded.” He laughs and I do as well.

He tells me about his family as we walk the horses through the beautiful trail. There are a few times I grip Betty for dear life when the terrain is uneven but if Nash notices my fear, he doesn’t say anything. I do note him watching me a little closer when the trail leads us down a steep embankment. I’ve also caught him watching me when I’m worrying my lip trying to think of how on earth I’m going to get off and back on the horse without Joe and his stool.

“You all right?” he asks, as I’m once again trying to imagine myself getting off Betty. I stop chewing my lip immediately and smile at him.

“Yes, of course. Just thinking about stuff.”

“Stuff?”

I shrug but the movement unsteadies me, and I grip my legs tighter on the horse. Only I sort of mess that up and end up kicking her sides, which makes her take off at a run. I scream. My heart beats faster than her galloping hooves pound the earth and I'm sure this is how it all ends. I'm going to die, or worse be maimed and paralyzed and my mother will keep me locked in our condo forever, crying over me and scolding me for not heeding her warnings about how dangerous the world is.

“No, stop! No, no, no. I didn't mean it. I was just trying to stay on!” I start to slide sideways in the saddle and shriek, “Nash!”

Nash whistles and Betty stops short, shooting me forward. I cling to her neck but it's not enough to keep me on her and I fly over her head.

The ground rushes up at me, and when I land on it and roll, the air in my lungs whooshes out. I gasp for breath and when I find it, I wiggle, moving fingers, toes, and limbs. Finally, I sit up. I'm okay. I didn't die. Relief pours out of me in the form of laughter.

“Shit! Pam, are you okay?” Nash throws himself off Max before the horse has even stopped and he slides on his knees to my side. I laugh harder.

“I'm good,” I gasp through my laughter. “All good.” I stand and dust myself off to prove it, but Nash still checks me all over.

“You're probably going to feel it tomorrow, but nothing's broken.”

“That was a rush.”

“A rush!” Nash crosses his arms, his jaw tight before he speaks. “I thought you broke your bloody neck! Why the hell did she do that? Did she see a snake?”

“I’m okay, Nash. Just a little tumble.” His last sentence sinks in, and I shiver. That’s probably the only fear I have that’s my own and not cultivated by my mother. And it’s a doozy.

“I don’t think there was a snake.” I reply, my voice a little shaky as I scan the ground for anything snake-like. “Are there a lot of snakes around here?”

He gathers a breath, relaxing his shoulders. “Nothing venomous.” His words are casual as if snakes are no more worrisome than mosquitoes. “Come on, the picnic spot is just a two-minute walk up there.” He points and I nod.

Grabbing Betty’s reins, he hands them to me. He grabs Max’s and we start walking along the river beside our horses. My eyes dart everywhere. Instead of taking the opportunity to check out Nash’s fabulous ass, and the beautiful surroundings, I’m busy watching for snakes.

“What about the strangler kind?”

Nash looks at me, his brows drawn in confusion. “Hm? Strangler kind?”

“Snakes.”

“Oh.” He chuckles. “Pythons?”

I nod.

“Nope, not unless someone released their pet.”

I swallow hard. “Does that happen?”

“I read they recently found a ball python at the Royal Botanical Gardens, but I think it’s a rare occurrence. I’ve never seen one out here or anywhere I’ve been, have you?”

I shake my head. I have no words. Mostly because I’m trying to control my breathing as my mother’s online therapist coaches her to do when she has a panic attack, but also because it’s more deceit. Betty pushes her head against me and I’m not sure if she’s pushing me to tell him the truth or nuzzling me because I’m so afraid.

“Are you afraid of snakes?” He looks at me and those brown eyes send scatters of butterflies through me.

Have I ever liked anyone as much as Nash? I think back and the answer is a resounding no. I don’t want another lie between us, so I answer honestly. “Yes.” Then quickly add, “But I know it’s an irrational fear.”

“No need to qualify that statement, honey. Lots of people are afraid of snakes.”

I nod and continue to look around the ground until his warm hand touches my shoulder, and he turns me to face him. When I look up, our eyes meet. His hand moves from my shoulder to my neck and he strokes my jaw with his thumb. With the warmth of Brown Betty’s solid body behind me and Nash’s in front of me I feel calmer.

“I’ll keep an eye out for snakes and make sure you’re safe, okay?”

I nod, then jokingly add, “Not too safe, I hope.”

Nash flashes me his crooked grin and pulls me to his chest. Enveloping me in his strong arms, he holds me tightly and even though we’re in a remote area, surrounded by scary nature, I have never felt safer.

Chapter 3

Pam

When we arrive at the picnic spot, I take in the view as Nash pulls a blanket out of the saddle bag and spreads it on the ground under a weeping willow tree. The water swirls in the river from the force of falling water but the actual waterfall is far enough away to be nothing more than a hush and a pretty view. Tying Betty's reins next to Max's on a branch near a grassy knoll by the water, I watch the two horses graze on the long grass.

A crashing in the brush pulls my attention. But it's only Nash walking around the long grass surrounding the picnic spot, stomping, and whacking at the flora with a stick.

"What on earth are you doing?" I ask with a huff of a laugh.

"I'm scaring the snakes away for my girl." His flash of a smile warms me right to my toes.

"I bet you take all the girls here and protect them from all the dangerous beasts waiting in the bush to pounce," I tease and look back at the river. A little fear ripples through my gut and this time not because I'm afraid of the snakes or the

horses. No, I'm afraid that Nash is perfect and I'm going to lose him when he finds out who I really am.

"Hey." Nash comes up behind me. I don't know if I feel him or smell his woody scent first. Either way my insides swirl at his proximity.

"Look at me." His tone is bossy, so I turn to face him. "I've never brought anyone here. This place has been mine alone for years." There's sincerity in his warm brown gaze.

"Oh." Our eyes latch together for a moment before I break the connection and look down to his full lips. By the time I rise onto my toes to reach his mouth with mine, he's wrapped his arms around me and pulled me to his chest. With my hands flat to his solid pecs and my feet hovering just above the ground, he kisses me.

My lids flutter closed, and I'm swept away to a place where there's nothing but the two of us. No cicadas or birds, no rush of the waterfall, or whisper of wind through the willow branches; there's nothing but his lips, softly and sweetly, teasing mine to relax and open. Lowering me, he cradles my face, the kiss turning into a demand. When his left hand lowers to squeeze my ass and his right grips the back of my neck possessively, I completely melt into him with a moan.

As he kneads my bottom, my nipples tighten, and I shamelessly flatten my breasts against his chest. When he lifts me again, I wrap my legs around his waist. Walking us backwards, his demanding kisses traveling down my jaw to my neck. I open my eyes as I reach to run my hands through his hair.

Canopied beneath the giant willow, I feel like I'm in a fairytale. And he's my dirty Prince Charming.

When he finally parts us, my lids are weighted, my nipples diamond hard, and my abdomen heavy with need.

“That was incredible,” I say breathily.

He sets me down on wobbly legs and takes my chin in his hand. “Waited a long time for that.” With a small, soft peck to my well-kissed lips, he adds, “Worth it.”

I nod stupidly, since I’m still in a haze. Taking off his backpack, he sets it on the blanket and tugs me down.

“I wasn’t planning on kissing you today,” he says as we sit cross-legged. He pulls a bottle out of the bag.

“I’m glad you did. It was a perfect first kiss in the perfect place.” I watch his lips curve into a smile as he pours the bubbly liquid into two tin cups. “But why didn’t you want to kiss me today?”

His eyes find mine. “Because you’ve been worth the wait and I don’t want to rush this, or you.”

I’m stunned, so I reach out and touch his knee. “You, too. I mean you’re worth the wait.”

He winks at me, holding out a cup. “Bubbling cider?”

“Yes, please.” I take the cup from his hand, not removing my eyes from his. The intensity between us is palpable. “You know, you may have won the race, but I did get second place.” Lifting my chin to lighten the moment, I add, “Second place is better than third or fourth. In fact, it’s a silver medal at the Olympics, so I reject the title Rotten Egg.”

The intensity in his eyes is replaced by a spark of playfulness. “Second place, huh?” He presses his lips to keep from smiling then hums. Leaning closer, he pushes a chunk of hair back from my face. “I guess you also deserve a prize.”

His lips find mine and he kisses me again, faster, and more passionately. And when he pulls back, I'm lightheaded. "Is there alcohol in this?"

He shakes his head. "Nope. Maybe you're love drunk?" He takes a sip of his cider and I follow his lead. It's sweet and the effervescent bubbles tickle my nose.

I'm definitely love drunk. For him I might be a love alcoholic.

"That was a nice second prize."

"It was." He stretches out his legs, leaning back on his arms.

"But we can't get the same prize."

"No?"

"Nope. We need to level you up somehow." I run my fingers up his thigh. "What do you want?"

His mouth curves into a slow grin, the crooked right side crinkling in a way that tickles my belly as effortlessly as the cider tickles my nose.

"Call me Daddy." It doesn't sound like a request, which takes my breath away even more than the heat in his eyes.

"Daddy." I mean to say the word with sexy confidence, but it comes out breathy and submissive. Setting aside my cup, I climb across the blanket on all fours to straddle his outstretched legs. I fiddle with the button of his flannel shirt, shyly staring at the hair peeking out of the V.

"I really like calling you that." My eyes rise to his, my heart fluttering like the wings of a dragonfly at the lava-like heat in his stare.

“But what kind of daddy are you?” I ask, thinking of what Joe said about the consequences of lying on his form and how it made me tingle inside and out. “A daddy who’s going to reward me when I’m a good girl, and punish me when I’m naughty?”

Nash moves so fast I’m underneath him before I can even comprehend it. His thick thigh pushes between mine, brushing against my aroused center. He looks down at me, the intensity palpable in his stare.

“Have you been naughty, Pam? Do you need Daddy to punish you?”

I swallow hard. Yes, yes, yes! “You going to spank me, Daddy?” My gut dips and flutters at the word, but I press my lips into a coy smile. “Because I’m not sure that would be a punishment.” I bite my lip, a little embarrassed despite the fact I know he likes this.

His finger brushes over my cheek and settles on the divot beneath my lower lip. “Roll over, honey. Daddy needs to show you how he takes care of his girl.”

My breath sticks in my lungs at the way he calls me his girl, but then I lick my dry lips and obey his stern command. His warm hand settles on my backside and moves in circles. I almost purr aloud as he strokes me.

“Mm, you have a gorgeous ass, Pam. And I can’t wait to make it mine.” He pats and my bottom jiggles. “Next time you’ll be bare and squirming across my knees. But why you’re squirming will depend on you, honey.”

I nod, my belly dancing and my pussy throbbing as if it has its own heartbeat.

His pats turn firm then, sending vibrations through my center and within a minute or two I'm unbearably aroused. "Daddy?" The word comes out breathy again and surprisingly not awkward at all. It's as if it's completely normal to be calling this man, the one I've been crushing on for over a year, Daddy. No, it feels better than normal. It feels perfect.

"Hm?" he asks.

"I'm so hot, I think I might die."

His raspy chuckle hits me straight in the clit and I whimper.

"Please touch me." I roll over and instead of scolding me, he lowers himself on top of me, kissing my lips, neck, and shoulder. I squirm beneath him, trying to position myself so his cock presses against my pussy but instead, his thigh goes between my legs again, holding me in place but also giving me what I need.

"You're so sweet, Pam. So, fucking sweet. You have no idea how badly I've wanted to make you mine."

"Me too. I mean... I've wanted to be yours for so long." As I tip my head back to give him better access to my neck, his hand slides between us. I gasp when he flicks the button of my jeans open. Ripping the zipper down with another tug, his fingers slide down my pants and play lazily over the silk of my panties. I want to scream for him to tear them off. Instead, I shift and move, chasing his touch.

"Patience," he chastises, the rasp in his voice telling me he's not all that patient either.

"Please, touch me," I repeat, this time on a needy gasp. And he does. His finger slides beneath the leg band of my panties, brushing my intimate curls softly with his knuckle. He

nibbles and licks my neck, but his finger doesn't go where I want it. I open my legs further and he stops kissing my neck to look at me; embarrassed, I look away.

“Look at me.”

I shake my head.

“Pam, never be embarrassed to ask me for what you need. Daddy is your safe place, okay? That's rule number one in our relationship. Besides...” I look at him, and as soon as I do, he gives me a wickedly dirty wink and his knuckle spreads my lips as his thumb strokes up through my slickness and over my engorged clit. I gasp.

“Daddy wants to see your face when you come.” He moves his thumb in circles with varying pressures and my lids drop closed and stars dance behind them.

Panting, I clamp my lip between my teeth to keep from demanding more.

“Open your eyes, little girl. Always obey Daddy. That's rule number two.”

“Rule two. Obey. Yes,” I repeat, almost mindlessly and open my eyes. “Please... just don't... stop,” I beg.

He doesn't speak again; instead he rolls to my side, lowering my jeans further. Continuing to work my clit with his thumb, he slides two fingers inside me. Throwing my head back, I pant harder and cry with each stroke, the delicious friction sweeping me away. I even move my hips to his rhythm.

When I come, I howl, and it resonates through the surrounding trees. I might be embarrassed by my reactivity if I weren't so consumed by pleasure.

He rolls me to my side and tucks in behind me on the blanket. The view of the falls is not nearly as breathtaking as what he just did to me.

I reach behind me to palm his bulge. “That wasn’t enough. I want to feel your cock,” I say. He swats the fleshy part of my hip.

“Greedy girl. That’s a prize for another time. Rest. Trust me, Pam, you’re going to need it.”

“Is that an order, Daddy?” I ask sleepily.

“Damn right.” He brushes my hair back, gathers it in his fist and whispers in my ear, “I love you calling me Daddy. You’re going to call me that from now on. And you’ll be mine, yeah? To take care of, protect, and set straight when you need it. For real?”

My insides tremble with need at his growly verbalization.

“Yes, for real, Daddy. I’ve always wanted this kind of dynamic. Let me be yours.” I mean it too, despite my heart squeezing uncomfortably, knowing he won’t want me once he knows the truth. I thought I’d have more time to become his kind of girl. But it’s too late now, and I can’t let go. It’ll tear me to shreds when he leaves me too. Because he’s everything I’ve ever wanted in a man.

All I can do is carry on my charade and enjoy my temporary Adventure Daddy while I can.

Chapter 4

Nash

Despite the orgasm, catnap, and food, she's anxious as I help her back onto her horse. I know she lied about her equestrian experience; even a child could see she's clueless on a horse. As we start back, her eyes are fearful but then they widen for another reason. She looks at me and I nod. "Yup. That's why I wanted you to rest. It's going to be an interesting ride back for you."

She swallows, her hips rocking in the saddle and with each frontward motion she intakes a sharp, shaky breath. Her swollen, well-worked clit is sensitive and the pommel of the saddle hits it every time she rocks forward.

"This is... oh, god, Daddy," she gasps again, gripping the saddle.

I smile at the torture of her pleasure and the way the word Daddy comes off her mouth so desperately. "Mm hm."

My cock is rock hard at the sight of her squirming on the horse. She's so aroused, she's barely hanging on, which means she's not focused on her lack of skill.

When we're in sight of the barn I hear her breathing amp up. "Hold on, baby, we're almost there."

"Jesus." The oath comes out on a groan.

"Don't you dare come. If you do, I'll spank you hard on the bare bottom. Such a dirty girl getting off riding a horse," I tsk. My firm words have her eyes widening again, but there's a heat in them she no longer cares to hide.

"That's mean!" My threat has the opposite effect as I knew it would, and she grips the horn harder, her knuckles whitening. Using her thighs to tighten her grip on the horse, she rises herself higher off the seat. "This is all your fault!"

"Pardon me?" Both my face and words are stern. "Did you not beg me to touch you?"

Her shoulders sag, but she doesn't release the grip she has with her thighs. "Yes, but I didn't know!"

"And why's that, honey? Why didn't you know?"

Her eyes drop from mine, landing on the saddle pommel ahead of her.

"Caught now, aren't you?"

Her head snaps to look at me. Her arousal-flushed face doesn't hide her shame. I know she lied, and she knows I know it.

"Pam." My tone holds a warning, and she swallows hard. I stop my horse, and Brown Betty, being a good pack horse, stops too.

She growls in frustration. "Fine. I didn't know because I've never ridden a horse, happy?"

“Thank you for trusting me with the truth but lose the attitude. I’m your safe place. You shouldn’t have lied. The trail we were going to take is dangerous for a novice rider. The embankments are steep and narrow, and I don’t even want to think about you attempting it on Pearl. If Joe and I hadn’t figured you out before we started the trail, this day could’ve gone very differently.” I point a finger at her, shaking my head in disappointment.

“You deserve a real spanking for that alone.”

She holds her breath at that, and my face softens. “But I want you to trust me. To feel safe and not worry about consequences, so I’m going to give you a warning this time. But this is your one and only warning.”

She looks suitably chastised, and I feel a little badly about it, but everything I said is the truth.

“You’re right, Nash. I’m sorry.”

“I’d never think badly of you for not having done something before. Okay?”

She looks a bit weepy, but nods.

“Let’s get back.” I give my horse a little nudge and we start moving again. It’s not long before her breathing kicks up again.

“Daddy…” It comes out on a gasp. “I… I can’t.”

Just as we trot up to the barn, she throws her leg over and jumps off the horse like a far more proficient and confident rider. No stool, no help, nothing. I press my lips, so I don’t smile. It’s hard to be scared when you’re trying not to orgasm in a saddle the whole ride back.

I lean to her, grabbing Betty's reins. "I can't wait to take that orgasm for myself," I whisper.

Her eyes fly to mine. Humiliation mars her pretty face as she looks around, but no one's nearby. I swing off Max and walk the two horses into the barn where Cameron takes them.

Pam's petting the nose of one of the horses in the pasture as I return.

"You okay now?" I ask, so I don't startle her.

"Yes. But I've been thinking."

"Thinking is good, honey."

"Maybe you could pull over, bend me over the back of your truck tailgate, and take that orgasm on the way back to the city. I'm pretty sure if you don't, I'll combust before we make it to the highway, especially with all the jiggling of your truck on the bumpy roads."

"God damn, woman." There's no way my ride's taking that away from me, so I reach out and tug her to the truck.

We only make it three side roads away before I yank the wheel, put the vehicle in park, and yank her across my lap for five damn hard swats. She yelps but I ignore it. Sliding out of the seat, I lift her out of the truck. I wonder if she might protest the rough mini spanking, but she doesn't. Instead, she frantically tugs at me. We're rabid for each other, kissing, biting, licking, and moaning.

"This private enough?" she asks hoarsely as I devour her neck.

I answer in some sort of affirmative grunt between wet kisses and pull the handle of the tailgate. It drops with a resounding thud and birds from the nearby trees scatter.

“Let me help.” She shoves her hands between us, cupping my junk and gives it a dirty squeeze. “Condom?”

I nod. “Wallet, yes.” Cursing an oath through the tangling of our lips at her heated touch, my hand joins hers between us. I pop the button of her jeans for the second time today and growl, my cock lurching behind my zipper. Grabbing my flannel shirt, I yank it over my head, laying it out over the tailgate.

“Over. Now.” I cup her neck with my hand, spinning her, and then, shoving her down, I pin her against the shirt-covered truck bed.

“Oh, Daddy. I love it when you’re rough and bossy.” The word ‘Daddy’ off her lips makes me groan through my teeth and she whimpers in need. I feel like a bull moose in rutting season as I grind my hard cock against her ass.

Releasing her neck, I tear down her jeans. Her panties come with them, saving me a step. Then I give her ass a couple of hard slaps, painting it in a pink blush as I pull out my wallet, find the condom, and tear it open with my teeth. “Spread for me, honey. Daddy’s going to fuck you hard like you deserve.”

“God, yes. Please!” But before she can widen her stance, I do it, nudging her knees apart with mine. Her moan of pleasure doesn’t surprise me, but it pleases me. God, this woman loves my dominance.

Ripping open my own button and zipper, I shove my pants down low enough to release my cock and slide on the condom. The scent of her arousal mixes with latex and eggs me on. Reaching around her hip, I cup her mound.

“Mine,” I growl and slip my fingers through her sopping slit, to gently pinch her clit.

She’s tight as I slide inside her soaking wet pussy and even with the condom separating us, I can barely hold back. She feels so fucking good clamped tight around my cock.

We both groan at the sweet, sweet friction as I start to pump inside her.

“Oh, baby, this isn’t going to last, not with you so hot and tight.” But after three or four slow strokes, I can’t help but speed up. It’s a cacophony of flesh on flesh as I pound into her. Her little gasps and yips of pleasure are rhythmic and when I roll her clit between my finger and thumb, she wails loud enough to startle the birds again.

“I’m going to come. Daddy. So. So. Hard.”

“Not without permission.” As soon as the words are out of my mouth, her pussy releases more hot juice, showing me just how much she loves my command.

I lift my right leg, angling my cock head downward changing the point of friction. She starts begging, guttural sounds and nonsensical words only understood in the raw moments of primal sex.

Grabbing her neck again with my left hand, I hold her down tightly and growl, “Come now. Give it to Daddy.”

As she releases, her rush of sweet wetness pours over my cock and down my thighs. I slow down, letting her feel the orgasm. My release follows closely behind and with a tingle at the base of my spine, I ride over the edge myself. I press my body forward onto hers, grunting and growling in her ear as I do.

“Fuck, baby. You’re so hot.” I smack her ass again as I deal with the condom.

“When can we do that again?” she asks and I can’t help but laugh.

“Any fucking time you want.”

On the drive back to the city she dozes, exhausted. I cast glances at her whenever I can, appreciating the sun-kissed glow on her normally pale face and the slight curve of satisfaction on her lips. How long have I wanted to make this girl mine? So bloody long. And now that she’s called me Daddy, fuck, there’s nothing I wouldn’t do to keep her.

Placing my hand on her knee, I give it a squeeze. “Almost home, sweetheart.”

She shoots up in the seat. “Home? As in my home?”

“No, my place. When you fell asleep, I called Jeanie to ask where you lived so I could drop you off. She made a fuss and refused to give me your address. I even threatened to take my business elsewhere.” I chuckle. “The woman still wouldn’t give it to me.” I pat her thigh. “But I’m glad she’s a stickler for her employee’s privacy and safety.”

“Me too, because you are not taking me home.” She crosses her arms.

I give her the side eye. “Pardon me?”

She checks her tone and gathers a breath. “I live with my mom. And I’m not ready for you to meet her.”

“That’s better,” I say, giving her knee another squeeze. “I’ll gladly spank the attitude out of you, but it’s been a long day and you’re a very tired girl, yeah?”

She nods, biting the inside corner of her lip while looking up through her lashes at me.

“And I know that you live with your mom, honey. I wasn’t planning on barging into your apartment and introducing myself.” I give her a crooked smile. “Hey, Ms. Shore, I’m your daughter’s new Daddy, pleased to meet you. I’ve already spanked and fucked her hard so don’t be surprised if she sleeps like the dead.”

She huffs a laugh but worries her lip.

I reach up and put my hand around the back of her neck, rubbing it. “Address.”

As she twists her hands in her lap and tells me her address, I wonder if she might’ve lied about more than her skills on horseback.

Chapter 5

Pam

“Cliff jumping?” I smile widely, hoping it helps my voice sound excited because inside I’m quaking.

“Well, it’s not just that. There’s a hike through Bruce Peninsula National Park first, and then when we get to The Grotto, there’s swimming, and sure, the cliffs are fun, but it’s a beautiful place, one of my favorites and I want to share it with you.” He pauses and I hear the turn indicator click. “I also know you’ve wanted to do this since you read about it in my blog.”

In my head I’m screaming, *hell, no, I don’t. Never have and never will*, but instead I smile harder and exclaim, “This is going to be amazing!”

Wondering if I can fake a headache, I look out the window, distracting myself with the traffic passing by ten stories below.

I’ve barely recovered from horseback riding; my legs hurt for days after, and I still have little yellow bruises all over from being launched off the horse. Thankfully the few that are visible were easily explained away when my mother noticed. *I slipped on the floor while I was mopping, Mom. No big deal.*

Only she knows the statistics for how many people die from slips and falls each year and spouts the numbers off like a savant while wringing her hands and rocking in her chair. I wonder what would happen if she found out how I really got them.

But there's a sense of accomplishment that swells inside me when I think of that day; along with all the deliciousness of calling Nash Daddy, the two orgasms, and how safe he was to be around, I rode a horse. Yes, I fell, but I laughed and learned it wasn't the end of the world. I rode a horse!

“Okay, it's quite a drive to the peninsula, so go get ready. Wear your bathing suit under your clothes, bring a towel, sunscreen, and those hiking boots, we'll grab breakfast on the way. I'll meet you in the lobby in twenty.”

“Okay.” Lowering my voice so my mom won't hear, I add, “Can't wait to see you, Daddy.” And despite my nerves about our plans, I'm excited too.

No matter what we're doing, being with Nash is the best feeling in the world. The long drive, with him next to me, his warm hand on my knee, is worth the trip alone.

“I love hearing that.” Although he doesn't specify which thing he likes hearing, I'm sure it's both.

Nash grabs my hand, pulling me close, plopping a ball cap on my head. It has his brand on it, but it's pink.

“You got me a hat from your merch store?” I run my hand across the white embroidered emblem as he packs our towels and bottles of water into his backpack. “Thank you!”

“Ordered the pink especially for you.” He winks, handing me an extra bottle of water. “Keep hydrated, baby.”

“I love it, Daddy.” He points at his cheek and I rise onto my toes to kiss his chin. He turns his face and lowers at the last second though, and catches my mouth with his. Releasing my hand, he wraps his arm around my waist, tugging me even closer.

“Sunscreen?” he whispers when he releases my lips.

I nod and he gives my bottom a clap. “Good girl.”

As we walk to the trailhead, he takes my hand possessively again.

“I want to warn you, there are rattlesnakes here.” He looks at me and I freeze, blocking the path of a group behind me.

“Excuse us,” he asks, tugging me to the side to let the others go. My chest feels tight.

“Breathe, baby.” His hands cup my face, and his eyes demand attention. “You’re wearing hiking boots, we’re sticking to the path, and there’s a lot of foot traffic through here. Snakes avoid humans, especially the Massasauga rattler. Like most wild animals, we’re more dangerous to them than they are to us.” He runs both thumbs across the apples of my cheeks. “Besides, they rattle their tail to warn you when you’re too close.”

“They do?” I say, a tremor in my voice I wish wasn’t there.

“In all the years I’ve been coming here, I’ve only had one encounter. And it was when I strayed from the path. I heard the rattle, saw the snake, went the opposite direction and it did too. They’re a shy species.”

I nod, my throat too thick to speak.

“You can trust me to keep you safe.” His voice, so firm and sure, leaves no room for doubt.

I swallow hard but nod again, feeling the warmth from his hands spread throughout me. “I do trust you, Daddy.”

Gathering a breath, I smile. “So, are we going to stand here all day? Or go find The Grotto?” My gut flips a little, thinking of what happens when we get there, but I ignore it, especially when his mouth curves up crookedly at my words.

“That’s my girl.” He releases my face and I instantly miss his touch. I’m still anxious, but when his big hand envelops mine and he squeezes reassuringly, the anxiety eases.

Besides, he said *my girl*. Swoon.

On the trail the deep robust aroma of the trees, flora, and damp earth mingles with Nash’s natural woodsy scent. We walk on a mix of rocky and rooted earth and wooden boardwalks along the clearly marked path. Streams cross under the boardwalks and when the forest thins there’s a pond covered with green stuff and lily pads.

I head toward it, releasing his hand. “There must be frogs with all those lily pads.”

Nash pulls me back, and deliberately places my smaller hand in his. “Stay on the path, remember? And with me.”

“Right,” I reply sheepishly, but again, he gives my hand a squeeze.

“Water break?” He pulls a water bottle out for each of us and takes a swig of his own before grabbing a branch from the path and swishing it through the grass at the path’s edge. “If you want to get a closer look, it’s clear.”

I step carefully through the grass and check the lily pads for frogs.

“They always show frogs on lily pads, but I’ve never seen one. I wanted to.” I laugh at my silliness because there are no frogs to be seen.

“It’s a bit hot for them today, they’re likely underwater now.” He gives me a few more minutes to drink and stare at the pond. “We can come back in the fall if you’d like.”

I shoot him a smile. “I’d like that.”

“Okay then, ready? We’re almost there. You’re going to love the view.”

When we reach The Grotto, my eyes widen. The pictures from his blog didn’t do it justice.

“Wow.” It’s all I can say. Below the path, the clearest emerald water shimmers in the sunlight. People sit or lie on large, flat, limestone rocks, some just above the water, others in it. Some of them are sunning themselves, others munching on lunch, and more still swim in the water.

He tugs me a little further up the cliff. “This is The Grotto here.” Nash points and my mouth drops slightly. The outcropping of rock has a hole, and beneath is huge cave area with the same aqua water inside. There are several kayakers exploring inside, so I wave.

“This is stunning.” When he doesn’t speak, I turn to look at him. He’s staring at me, his expression soft.

“I agree.”

Taking a step closer, I grip his shirt and pulling him down to me. “Thank you for showing me such an amazing place and

introducing me to horseback riding.” When he starts to speak, I kiss him.

His hand swats my bottom before he tugs me close and takes over the kiss.

We break our kiss as a middle-aged couple, holding hands, walks by speaking quietly to each other. I think I hear her say, *remember when we couldn't keep our hands off each other like that?* Her husband's reply is something like *I still can't keep my hands off you.* And they giggle like teenagers. Now that's a couple goal.

A shriek breaks the moment though and we all look toward the sound. A woman is plummeting from the cliff farther ahead. I draw in a breath, watching in horror. Guessing the drop is at least sixty feet, I'm terrified for her. The splash from the clear, green water seconds later has everyone, including Nash, erupting into cheers and hoots. It confuses me for a second until the girl's head pops up and she waves. That's when I finally release the breath I'm holding.

“That's a long way,” I stammer, my stomach rolling.

“It is, but it's so quick you barely notice. It's just this second of a rush and then splash.”

“You've jumped from that high?”

“I have, yes.” Nash puts his arm over my shoulder and squeezes. “You going to try it today?”

The question hovers between us for a moment as another jumper plunges into the crystal-clear water. I'm hot and sticky and the water looks refreshing, but I can't swim. And this isn't like the beach where you can touch the bottom, so I can't fake it. It's just huge limestone rocks near the cliff then deep blue water.

“I don’t know,” I say, lying once again—even though it’s a small lie. I know damn well I won’t be jumping.

“Let’s get set up on that rock over there.” He points to a large flat rock down where the people sunbathe. “We’ll cool off, have some lunch, and then, if you want, we can line up for a jump. If not, that’s okay too. There’s still lots to explore in Tobermory.”

I nod and Nash helps me down the big limestone rocks to get to the spot he picked. It’s a bit less crowded, maybe because the stones aren’t as level. Our stone is large and flat enough for both of us to lie down, but while our upper bodies will be out of the water, our thighs, calves, and feet will be submerged in the cool, clear lake.

I strip down to my bikini and Nash whistles as he tugs his shirt over his head with one hand.

He grabs my elbow and pulls me against him. “Daddy likes.”

My eyes dart to the couple beside us on another rock. Nash chuckles and releases me to lay out our towels. He tugs me down to sit.

“It’s not as taboo as you think these days. At least, not saying things like that.” He presses a peck to my mouth. “Now, if I were to toss you over my knee and spank you, that would be something else entirely.” He laughs. And I can’t help but giggle myself at the mental image forming in my mind.

“Have I told you how much I love your swim trunks?”

“Why, no, you have not.” He unpacks his bag and like before, he has food, which I’m happy about since the trek here gave me an appetite.

“Well, they’re awesome. And while I wouldn’t want to meet a real shark in the water, I might like to meet one of the ones on your shorts.” I lean my shoulder against his, kissing his warm arm, not caring a bit that it leaves a salty taste on my lips. I boldly point to the shark that’s right over his cock. “That one in particular looks friendly.”

His brows rise, but his smile is super flirty. “He’s a whale shark.” He winks. “Biggest shark in the ocean.”

“Oh? I might need a closer look.” He hands me a sandwich, giving my thigh a light swat.

“Careful or you might get that spanking after all.”

“Thank you for the lunch, Daddy.”

“You’re more than welcome, honey.” He nudges me with his thigh. “That’s what Daddies do.”

My middle squirms and I take a bite of the delicious sandwich so no one will see me grinning like a love-sick idiot.

After we eat our sandwiches and fruit, we lie on the rock, our lower halves in the cool water, the warm air a delightful contrast. Nash’s fingers entwine with mine, and I relax. I could just sun myself right here and not go anywhere, right? I could tell Nash that I’m not into jumping or even swimming because I’m just so relaxed. And really, the hike was a good one, so it would be kind of true. Only with every new holler, squeal, or peal of laughter ending in a splash, I wonder how amazing it would feel to just jump—to be free of fear and leap off the edge. The thought of that freedom sort of excites me, at least from my safe spot on the rock.

I decide right then that when I get home, I’m booking myself in for swimming lessons. I’d already called Joe and signed up for riding lessons a few days ago. I’m going to have

fun and enjoy all the amazing things the world, and Nash, has to offer.

“Hey, you’re off in your own little world. What are you thinking about?” Nash pulls himself up to sit and looks down at me.

“Nothing.” My eyes roam down Nash’s body. “But now I’m thinking that you’re kind of hot.” I grin at him.

“I am, am I?”

“And maybe I’m thinking about our last date, and how it ended.”

Nash chuckles darkly, leaning down onto his elbow so his mouth is close to my ear. “Maybe we can do that again.” His tongue tickles the shell of my ear. “If you’re a good girl.” My belly bubbles as his fingers dance over the sensitive skin by my hipbone.

“And if I’m bad, Daddy?”

“Then it’ll be a while before you can wear bikini bottoms this tiny in public again.” He plucks at the string, letting it snap back, and I break out in goosebumps. He gives me a crooked grin and I visibly shiver.

“At least not without letting everyone see what happens to naughty girls who have Daddies.”

“God, that’s hot,” I say, through a beaming smile. His grin widens, and my heart thumps happily.

“Baby, you’re perfect for me.”

“Because I love being dominated by my Daddy?” I ask coyly.

“That, and because you love the same things I do.” He looks around. “You appreciate this.”

I swallow, guilt dousing the lightheartedness of our playful conversation. But I do appreciate it, and being here away from my small apartment is wonderful, but that’s not what he means. He means that we both love adventures. A lump forms in my throat but I swallow again to rid myself of the emotion it represents and instead, continue to flirt.

“Mm, it’s definitely easy to appreciate the view around here.” My lids lower as my eyes peruse his perfect chest, abs, and the bulge starting to grow in his pink and blue shark swim trunks. I reach out to touch his bronze skin and he takes my hand, kissing the palm.

“Is that frisky shark in your shorts coming out on a backroad again?”

“Careful, little girl, get me too hot and I won’t be able to control my shark.” He looks around. “And this rock isn’t exactly private.”

“Really? You’re the only person I see. And I’ve never kissed a shark before.” I use my free hand to finger walk down his chest, following his happy trail to the band of his trunks, which look even tighter now. “Besides, I’m already hot enough for the both of us.”

The next few seconds happen too swiftly for my brain to keep up. He springs up, scooping me up with him, and jumps.

His words, “Then we better cool off” don’t register until the cold water hits and we’re both plunged beneath the water.

I’m stunned—too shocked to realize what just happened. I gasp and sputter as we come up.

“I bet there’s a private spot somewhere around that outcropping,” Nash says, letting me go and swimming off.

He’s three strokes away when I start to sink.

“Come on.” He waves me to follow, not looking back, and it’s the last thing I see before I go under again. My feet grapple for the bottom, but it isn’t there and there are no rocks nearby. Realizing that I’m going to drown, I start slapping at the surface. When the motion pulls me a bit higher in the water, I gasp for air, hope blossoming, but I go down again almost instantly. Panic hits and I’m frantic. What will this do to my mom? And what will happen to her when I die? She’ll be all alone. Who’ll take care of her? And what about Nash? He’ll blame himself and maybe even become like my mom, or worse. But even in my panic, I know that’s a dumb thought. Nash gets himself and his clients out of dangerous situations all the time. He’s a fighter.

And dammit, so am I! I’m not my mom. And I’m not slipping away so easily.

I thrash my arms and kick my legs like hell. This time I stay above water with the movements, but it’s exhausting, and water is splashing in my face so I can’t help but get mouthfuls of it. As I cough, I’m yanked up and out of the water.

I sputter and cough some more as I’m dumped onto the rock by a stranger, and then Nash is there, pulling himself up out of the water effortlessly. He rushes to me, scooping me into his arms. My face is squished against his chest, but he wraps a warm towel around me, and I start to sob in relief.

“Hey, hey, you’re okay,” he soothes. “I’m so sorry, baby.” He’s on his knees, holding me tightly and rubbing my back. His calming words are just whispers. He thanks the man that saved me, guilt in his tone.

“Why the hell did you throw her in the water if she couldn’t swim?”

“I didn’t know,” he says, the shock in his voice as evident as the sky above us.

I pull back from Nash, looking up at the man standing above us. His expression is both worried and annoyed.

“I had a cramp and panicked. I can swim. I just... my leg...” Lie, lie, lie. But right now, I’d tell a million lies to keep the judgment for Nash off this man’s face. And when doubt shows in the wrinkles around the man’s mouth and brow, I rise to my wobbling legs, and almost believing my own lie, ready myself to jump back in and prove it.

Nash, now standing too, grabs me, tugging me back.

“No, you don’t. You’ve had an ordeal and we’re done swimming for today.” He scoops up the towel I let fall in my haste prove myself and wraps it around me. “Again, I can’t thank you enough for rescuing my girl.”

The guy grunts, looks me over one more time, and says, “Yeah, no problem.” And then he’s gone, and Nash is packing up our stuff.

“I’m fine. We don’t have to go.” I notice his knees then, bleeding and scraped from his rush to get by my side. “We should clean up your knees.”

“You scared the hell out of me. My knees are fine.” His eyes flick up to mine with the word ‘fine’ and I roll my eyes.

“Fine. Yes, I get it. And I’m sorry.”

“Don’t apologize. I dumped you in. This is my fault, not yours.” His words are clipped and tight as he puts my t-shirt

over my head and scoops my shorts off the rock where they lie in a wet clump.

“Step in.” When I obey, he pulls them up and I feel like a child being dressed by an impatient parent. There’s tension between us and it makes my stomach ache. He won’t look at me either and that crushes my chest like a boulder’s been set on it.

Is this it? Is this where he finds out I’m a liar and a fake? My eyes well. Am I losing my Daddy already?

Chapter 6

Pam

Still not looking at me, Nash takes my hand and helps me climb the rocks up to the path. I look at the cliff jumpers over my shoulder and frown, pulling my hand from his. “You didn’t get to jump.”

It’s a pretty desperate attempt to stop him from taking me back to the car and driving me home in silence, but I *am* desperate. I can’t lose him.

He pauses, taking a second to look at the cliffs, and then finally at me. “You think I care about that?” He points to the jumpers lining up along the path. “What I care about is you, Pam.” He points a finger at me. Right at my heart, which glugs slowly awaiting more words before deciding whether to stop.

“Then why are you so angry with me?” I speak a little too loudly and his mouth tightens.

“Check your tone, little girl.” His stern voice sends shivers through me. “And I’m not mad at you. I’m upset.”

My heart speeds up. “Please, I’m sorry. Can we continue our day and at least hike some more? Can we go up and see

the people jump? Will you let me clean up your knees? I have some antiseptic wipes, bandages, and ointment.” I pull a snack-sized baggie out of my back pocket and show him. It’s something I always carry with me. Thanks to my mother.

I also have period products to staunch deep wounds, Steri-Strips to close them. And one of those cooling packs that you break to start the cooling process, for bumps and bruises, but they’re all in my purse, which is tucked under the passenger seat of his truck.

He sets his hands on his hips and tips his head back, releasing a breath. “Fine. But first tell me why you’re sorry.” He deadpans me.

My mouth gapes as my mind whirls. There is something to be sorry for, but he doesn’t know what that is yet. At least I don’t think so.

He points at me, looks down his nose at me sternly. “And little girly, just know if I don’t hear what I want to hear, we’re leaving, finding somewhere quiet, and discussing this like only a Daddy and his babygirl can.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I ask with a hard swallow to buy time.

“It means you over my lap getting your sexy ass smacked until the truth falls out of your mouth.”

I swallow hard again, the lump from before returning to my throat. Anxiety rises in me, but my body is a battle ground for another sensation too—a conflicting one. An electric jolt of need strikes between my thighs.

“Okay,” I say, covering my face with my hands. “Let’s talk, but we better find a quiet spot now, because I’m pretty sure you aren’t going to like what I have to say.” I also know

there's no chance he'll spank me. Once he learns the truth (that I'm not the adventurous woman I led him to believe), he'll be gone. Our relationship, including the Daddy Dom part I love so much, will be nonexistent.

I start to fidget as we walk back. I don't want us to be over. I love him and it's not just infatuation. It's real. As real as the cliff we're walking along. It might seem fast, but it happened so easily. Maybe because I've known him so long, or because the dynamic we've formed made me more vulnerable and open to love. I don't know, but it's there. I love Nash McAllister.

“Hey, stop for a sec.”

I pause at his words, turning to face him. It's like facing the executioner before he puts the hood and noose over my head. Shifting my jaw, I put my shaking hands in my pockets.

“Here.” He pulls a hoodie out of his pack and puts it over my head. I feed my arms through and it falls low to my thighs. It smells like him. Breathing in his scent brings tears to my eyes. He's not getting this sweatshirt back when he dumps me, because the thought of never smelling him again is like an endless black hole where my heart should be.

“It's been a helluva day, sweetheart.” He tugs me against him, and I cuddle up, wrapping my arms, covered in floppy too-long sleeves, around him as tight as I can. He holds me just as tight, and loss starts to grow in me. It's big and overwhelming, blocking my lungs from expanding and making my eyes sting.

This is it. He's going to let me down easy, but he's letting me go.

Desperate, words begin to pour from me. “I’m sorry, I’m not the woman you think I am.” My voice is wet and shaky, but I can’t lie anymore. I just can’t. The longer this goes on, the deeper I fall, and the more it’s going to tear me apart when it ends.”

“What are you talking about? Of course you are. You think I don’t know you after spending the kind of time I have interacting with you, and watching you interacting with others? We’ve known each other over a year, and yeah, only a month of that’s been dating, but trust me, I know you.”

Hope keeps the despair at bay for a moment. I lean back, loosening his hold on me, but not separating us. “You do?”

He nods. “Yes, and ya know what else?” He does release me now, but his hands instantly come up to cup my face. “I love you.”

The hope in me blooms further, but then my thoughts, like a herbicide, kill it. He can love me, he can even know me, but not the real me, thus making that love a lie. He doesn’t know the me that stays home day after day, week after week, year after year, never setting foot outdoors except to go to work, do groceries, or occasionally shop for clothes (even though my mom says we can order everything we need online).

He’s Mr. Adventure. And I’m Miss *Adventureless*.

Stepping back, I tug myself out of his hands. “I love you too, which is why I need to tell you the truth...” Just as I’m about to confess, a rattle steals the air from my chest.

“Is that—” Another rattle answers my question before I can even finish asking it.

“Pam, look at me and don’t move.” His voice is full of authority, but I can’t listen, I need to locate the snake. He said

the rattle was to warn that I'm too close, so I need to move away. I need to move away. God, I need to move away.

“Pam! Listen to me!”

I hear Nash's sharp voice, but the words don't register, because I spot the snake. It's between us partially hidden by a patch of old leaves. It's light brown with darker brown spots, short with a thick middle that tapers and thins at each end. It turns its arrow-shaped head at me, coiling tight into itself with its rattle up and shaking. Trembling, I take another step back. It flicks its tongue out, tasting the air.

“Stop!” Nash's voice is even louder and more demanding, so I sneak a glance at him. His brow is furrowed and his jaw tight. When his eyes latch onto mine, he starts talking calmly but I can tell by his hard stare, he's about to lose his patience. I rip my eyes from his. I can't take my eyes off the snake. Fear buzzes in my ears and my heart thumps so hard I think it might explode. I find the creature again and focus, ignoring everything else.

“I have to move away,” I mutter to myself, or maybe to Nash, or hell, maybe I'm talking to the snake. I shuffle back another step. My ankle buckles but I catch myself.

“Listen to Daddy, right now!”

I look up at him. I can't help it. His voice is beyond authoritative now. He sounds dangerous and my base instincts force me to focus on him since he's the bigger threat.

“You damn well better be listening to me, little girl. You do not want a spanking from Daddy when I'm this upset, so pay attention to me.”

I nod, a tear slipping down my cheek. “Yes, Daddy.” My eyes dart quickly to the snake and back.

“Good girl,” he soothes, his words only slightly less crisp than before. “The cliff is right behind you. If you take another step back, you’re going to go over it. It’s a hundred-foot drop at least, and the water is filled with a lot of rocks. You can’t move back any further. Do you understand?”

I take in a shaky breath, my chin wobbling as I peek behind me. I swallow a sob. “I’m scared.”

“I know, honey, but Daddy’s here. I won’t let anything happen to you, but you need to listen to me. I see the whole picture, but because of your fear, your only focus is the snake.”

I nod, his words making sense, but then the snake moves and I squeal, stepping back again.

Nash growls. “Pam, stop moving! God dammit!”

“I’m... sorry.” I’m full-on shivering now. Every part of me is shaking uncontrollably, even my teeth are chattering. “I should never have come. I should never have let you believe I was outdoorsy.” I throw my hand up, pressing my palm to my forehead. “I’ve never ridden a horse. I can’t swim. I haven’t been out of the city since... *ever!* I’m so stupid. *Stupid, stupid, stupid.* I just wanted to be with you. I wanted to be adventurous and do things, not be trapped in the apartment with my mother.”

“Pamela, you are in so much trouble. You hear me? Daddy is very upset with you. Never mind the snake, because its bite can’t even compare to the spanking you’re getting; do you hear me?”

Shocked, I look at him, cocking my head in confusion. “You still want to be my Daddy? After I lied? After finding out I don’t have an adventurous bone in my body?”

“I’m your Daddy, period. Now listen to me, or so help me I will strip you naked, take off my belt, and whip your ass raw in front of that damn snake and anyone else who happens to walk by.”

If I were a dog my ears would be pricked up at attention. “Okay, Daddy. Okay. I’m listening.”

“You’re safe. That snake doesn’t want to tangle with you any more than you want to tangle with it. It feels just as trapped and threatened as you do.”

“Well, I’m not threatening to venomize it!”

“Venomize?”

“Shut up! I’m terrified.”

“That’s no way to talk to your Daddy, is it?” He’s slowly moving to the side, making me, the snake, and himself corners of a triangle.

The snake shifts swiftly, focusing in on Nash, his rattle warning again. This time he shoots out taking a strike, but Nash is too far away for his short body to reach. I scream. He curses. The snake recoils itself.

“When I tell you to, I want you to step sideways, not back, okay? Sideways. And do it slowly. I’m going to distract the snake.”

He looks around and starts walking backwards. I cry out.

“Don’t leave me!”

Stopping in his tracks, his expression softens. “Okay, baby. I’m not leaving. Just giving this guy his space. I’m staying, but you need to get ready to move. I’m going to use my boot to give him a target.”

“No! It’ll bite you!” I start sobbing. “Please, no. I can’t lose you.”

“Pam. Honey. We’re going to get out of this without injury.”

He takes his backpack off, moves closer to the reptile, holding the bag in between them. It steadies its sights on the bag. “He needs a name, yeah?”

“Don’t hurt it!” I say, starting to shuffle sideways. “We’re the one that invaded its home.”

“I’m not going to hurt it. I just hope it’s thinking the same thing about me.” He chuckles, probably trying to relieve the tension. “See what a sweet girl you are? You’re worried about the thing you’re most terrified of. Think of a name, honey.”

The snake rattles again, rising, mouth opening, and I shriek, stomping my feet to get its full attention. “If one of us is going to get bit, it should be me. This is my fault.”

The snake strikes, hitting hard against the toe of my boot. I’m shocked by the power of the hit and stumble back. My foot lands on a loose rock and I slip, the crumbling edge leaving my foot unsupported. I fight to get my balance, dropping to my knee, and just when I think I’m going over, Nash reaches for me.

I’m sure he’s going to miss, but then his big hand grabs the sweatshirt’s kangaroo pocket and he yanks me forward on top of him. The solid landing whooshes all the air from my lungs.

“You okay?” he asks through his panting breaths.

I nod, still unable to fully catch my breath and then we both look over to the snake.

Chapter 7

Nash

The tail end of the snake slithers into a crevice between a clump of rocks and I slump onto my back, letting out a big breath. And just like when Pam fell off the horse, she starts laughing. Annoyance mixing with leftover adrenaline, I sit up and twist so I can get her haphazardly across my lap.

“You’re laughing? What the hell is funny about this? You almost died, *again!*” My hand lands on her ass, sharp enough for her to hiss, and it’s the most satisfying sound I’ve heard all bloody day, so I keep swatting. She gasps and squirms as a few well-placed spanks hit the bare skin beneath her shorts. I pull them up higher by the loop, giving her a wedgie so I can reach more of the bare skin where her bottom cheeks peek out.

“Don’t you dare ever disobey me in a dangerous situation like this ever again!” I swat her hand away as she tries to cover her backside, and spank harder. “What do you have to say for yourself?”

“Ow!” she yelps as my hand lands a little lower onto her thigh. “I’m sorry! I was out of my mind with fear.”

I stop smacking her ass and pull her up to hug her tight. “I was too. I love you, but damn, I’m so mad at you right now,” I grumble while I rock her. “I can’t decide whether to make love to you, spank you some more, or punishment fuck you.”

“Daddy? Did you just say you love me?”

I loosen my grip and look down at her. “Yes, I did, dammit.”

She swallows thickly and her eyes well. “I love you so much and I thought you were going to break up with me.”

My eyes soften but it’s only for a moment before they’re stern again. “You might wish I did though, because your ass is mine, little lady.”

“Okay, I understand, but can we get off the ground before another snake comes?”

I huff to hide my amusement at her question. “Good idea.” My brow goes up as I look at her. “Just stay away from the edge. And know this, no matter how much you beg or cry, you’re getting the spanking of your life later.”

“Yes, sir.” She salutes me and I swat her saucy ass again as she rises. Her adorable yelp has me smiling. God, I meant what I said. I love her so fucking much.

“Let’s get out of here before any more catastrophes happen. They seem to follow you around.”

Despite Pam’s protests I get us a cabin for the night.

“If we leave now, we can make it back in time,” she argues as I start a fire in the wood stove.

“Pam, I’m not fighting with you. This is what’s happening.” I hand her my phone since hers got lost at some point during the day. She takes it but instantly sets it on the coffee table. Picking it up, I slap it into her palm. “Phone your mom so she doesn’t worry and call in for tomorrow’s shift.”

“I can’t! My mom will freak, and Jeanie has no one else! We need to go back.” She crosses her arms, tapping her foot in annoyance. My jaw ticks.

Hands on hips, my eyes pin hers. “You’re going to have a hot bath and sit by this fire while I grab us some takeout from one of the restaurants in Little Tub Harbor. Then, you and I are going to eat, discuss the day’s events, and proceed with your punishment. End of discussion.”

She visibly shivers but despite my threat there’s something about the ways her pupils dilate that tells me her shivers are not just trepidation. She’s excited by my promise of punishment.

When she opens her mouth to argue again, I prop my foot on the coffee table, yank her forward, up and over my knee and start swatting her ass with vigor.

“I. Said. End. Of. Discussion.” The swat, swat, swat echoes in the room, as do her yips and growls of frustration.

It’s only when she tosses the phone that things get serious though. I suck air in through my teeth, attempting to stay calm. “You’re going to be a brat then? Is this how it’s going to go?”

“Yes! Because you’re not listening to me.”

“I’ve been listening to you since day one, young lady. And apparently most of what you said was bullshit.”

That shuts her up. Her mouth makes a clacking sound as she closes it and I breathe to calm myself. In my most

reasonable tone, I ask, “Are you going to make those phone calls, and do as you’re told, or do we need to continue this?” I give her bottom a good five swats before she answers on a wowl.

“Ow ‘kay! Fine! Jesus!”

Shaking my head at her insincere response, I set her on her feet, pop the button on her jean shorts and tip her back over my leg. Tugging her tight against my abdomen, I yank away the barrier between my hand and her bare ass. “I guess the attitude needs some adjustment first.”

Spanking her without mercy, I proceed to redden her ass. With her squeals, yelps, and begging for me to stop, I’m thankful for the privacy. Her legs kick and she grips my calf for dear life, but she’s not done. I only stop when her ass is a bright shade of tomato, and she’s limp and sobbing.

“Are you done bratting me?”

She sniffs loudly, nods, and wipes her hand across her face. “Yes. I’m sorry.”

“I understand. It’s been a hard day.” My burning palm circles her bottom, rubbing the sting as she calms herself. “You feel better now? More yourself? More reasonable?”

“Yes, Daddy, yes. I’m so sorry.” Her words, wet and sloppy, hit me straight in the heart, but her well-punished, supple ass in my palm makes my cock lengthen, so I help her up. This isn’t the time. Although her bratty attitude and the change after taking her in hand amps me up like nothing else can, this isn’t about me. It’s about Pam and what’s been going on in her head.

“Leave the shorts and bikini bottoms off,” I say as she struggles to pull them up.

“Why?”

Folding my arms, one of my brows shoots up.

“Yes, Daddy.”

My girl’s face is flushed, her eyes rimmed red from crying, but her expression is contrite. Her lips curve into a pout, and honestly she’s never looked more adorable.

“Come here,” I demand, reaching out to tug her against me. As soon as she’s in my arms tucked tightly against me, she starts to cry again. Her little breathy sobs make my heart feel swollen and tender. Petting her hair, I soothe her.

“Baby, you took your first real spanking so well. Daddy is so proud of you.” She only cries harder when I speak though. We have a lot to talk about, but I need to get food into her. “You’re forgiven for your attitude, okay?”

She sniffs and nods her head against me, and I lower my head to kiss her crown. “We’ll talk about the rest later. For now, let’s get our physical needs met.”

Her head tips back and she blinks up at me. “Thank god, I’m so hot for you right now.”

I can’t help it, it may be wrong, but I laugh, and hard. My poor girl, all punished and sappy sweet, is horny. “I meant our other physical needs, honey. Cleaned up, warmed up, food in our bellies. That sort of thing.”

Pam rolls her lips between her teeth a moment before smirking. “Oops.”

I kiss her mouth then, because dammit, I can’t help myself. “Don’t worry, my girl, Daddy wants you just as much.”

I run her a bath, helping her out of my sweater, her tee and bikini top when the water is ready. When Pam sinks down, her eyes widen, and she yowls. Her punished ass must sting like hell in the hot water.

“Oh, my god, that hurt!” She breathes in, sinking lower. “But it feels good now.”

I chuckle, kissing her head. “Would you like me to wash you?”

“Mm, I would love that, but...” She looks down. “I’m starving.”

I huff a laugh. “Stomach wins then.” Reaching out to take her chin, I tip her face back up. Her eyes find mine immediately. “No touching yourself, yeah?” My free hand plunges into the water and cups her mons. “This is Daddy’s. No touching it without permission.”

Her eyes widen, giving her an innocent look until she smirks. “Am I allowed to wash it?”

I shake my head but there’s no hiding my smile. The firm side of me has melted away. I release her mound but as I do I let my finger slip between her slit and rub over her swollen clit. She gasps and my smile widens.

“Stand up.”

She does as she’s told without hesitation, standing fully naked before me. Her nipples tighten from the cold, and the water cascading into the bath sounds loud in the silence. Looking in her eyes, I see bravery. It’s not easy to stand bare

before another fully dressed person. Grabbing the soap, I lather it between my hands.

“Spread your legs, little girl.” She obeys immediately and I use my soapy hand to wash between her legs. When I get to her still hot bottom she moans until my hand slips between her cheeks. She jolts as my fingers wash her bottom hole.

“Daddy wants you clean.” A fingertip slips into her tight pucker, and she squeezes her ass cheeks, her teeth clamping over her lip. “This is mine too, baby. Better get used to me touching you there.”

She whimpers but nods. I give her bottom a soapy smack and rinse off my hand. “Back in and finish up. I want you naked in front of the wood stove when I get back. You’ll have no barriers when we talk.”

I pinch her hard nipple and bend to kiss her mouth. “Food, milady, that is my mission.”

Sitting across from her, food eaten and containers cleaned up, I stare at her naked form in front of the glowing wood stove. Her skin looks like silk, as does her hair falling over her shoulders and across her bare breasts. Everything about her urges me to touch her, run my fingers through, over, across, and inside her. My cock throbs for me to do just that, but we have things to discuss.

“My mom freaked out.” She looks down to hide the guilt on her face but it’s too late, I’ve already seen it. “I didn’t even tell her what happened, just that I went hiking with my boyfriend and we’re staying the night at a cabin.” Fiddling with the rug in front of the wood stove, she adds, “My mom

has agoraphobia with a panic disorder and it's severe. Among other issues, like PTSD and intrusive thoughts." Pam's eyes flick to mine, watching for a reaction maybe. I don't give her one, but I do squeeze her hand, encouraging her to continue.

"She's likely imagined hundreds of scenarios of me dying just since I've called her."

It makes sense why she fought me so hard to go home and I almost feel bad for pushing her, but there's more to this than she thinks.

"And you feel responsible for all her suffering now?"

She nods. "She's going to be awake all night and likely had to call her therapist to help her through her panic attack because I'm not there to help." She swallows hard and when she continues, emotion strains her voice. "I should be there to give her lorazepam and chamomile tea—to turn on YouTube and find a meditation for her and breathe through it with her. That's why I still live at home. She needs me."

"I know you love her and don't want her hurting or upset but you're not the reason for her freaking out."

"How can you say that? Of course I am. She'd be fine if I were there."

Ignoring her snippy tone, I continue to explain. "But we might not be okay. Pam, we had a hell of a day. You almost drowned and nearly fell off a cliff. We tangled with your biggest fear and mine—which is losing you! We couldn't drive back like this. Not safely." I gather a breath. "We're both exhausted."

She nods.

"And baby, it's her illness that's responsible for her freaking out—not you." I wait for that to sink in. And I know

when it does because her eyes widen ever so slightly.

“You shouldn’t feel guilty for living. You can reassure her, help her through her upset but ultimately, you’re not the reason for her illness *or* the cure for it. You taking responsibility for what her brain does to her is just as irrational as the illness itself.”

“My god, you’re right.” Her eyes are clear and focused on mine. Squinting, she shakes her head. “My mom’s fears shouldn’t be mine. I shouldn’t take that on. She hates her illness and I know she wouldn’t want that for me. But I still need to take care of her.”

“And you do, baby. And you’ll continue to, but you need to set boundaries for your own mental health and happiness.”

She gathers a breath. “And I will.”

“Now let’s talk about us.”

Her lip catches between her teeth and she lowers her face. I let her collect her thoughts.

“About me pretending to be adventurous and outdoorsy?”

I nod. “Start from the beginning.”

Her sigh isn’t defiant. And when she looks up at me, her eyes are shiny. This isn’t easy for her, so I reach for her hand. “You can trust me, honey. Nothing you say will make me leave you. Remember, I love you.”

A hiccupy sob escapes her mouth and a tear slips down her cheek as she nods.

“I’ve been crazy about you for a long time. Probably since the first time you walked up to those guys harassing me and put them in their place, but I also hero worshiped you.”

I frown. “What do you mean? I’m no hero.” I look behind me in exaggeration. “Nope, no cape.” My goofiness makes her smile, and I see her shoulders lower as she relaxes a bit.

“I mean you were always so full of energy and excitement about being outdoors, doing daring things, exploring nature and the world. You had fun just being alive. It’s who I wanted to be.” She looks down, rubbing her forehead. “I want to be fearless too.”

“So why can’t you?”

“I told you my mom’s agoraphobic.”

“Your *mom* is agoraphobic, not you, remember?”

“Yeah, but I’ve never done anything. Mom never let me out of her sight as a kid. I wasn’t allowed to play at the park or go on school trips. She’d set up playdates and even sleepovers, but they were always at our house, and we were never allowed outside to play. When I was in the third grade, a kid fell off the monkey bars at school and broke his arm. She pulled me from school the next day. I was homeschooled after that.” She visibly trembles. “I had a sister. She died a few months before I was born. My mom has her reasons for being the way she is.”

I pat the spot between my open legs then. “Come, let me hold you while you talk.” She crawls across the rug to me and curls into my lap like a cat, resting her head on my thigh.

Touching the area around my scraped knee, she continues. “I thought the world was a monster and it was going to eat me up.”

“That’s not true anymore, is it?” I stroke her hair, running my fingers through it, massaging her scalp. “I will never judge you for being afraid of something, okay?”

Pam twists so she can see my face, her eyes brimming with tears. “You won’t judge me, but I do. I judge myself and my mom all the time. And you not judging me doesn’t change the fact that I lied to you. That I pretended to be something I’m not to trick you into dating me. I’ve never done anything in my life. I just really liked you and I was tired of being me.” Turning her head away, she draws in a shaky breath. “I’m a bad person.”

I chuckle and her head swiftly snaps back to face me, her eyes wide.

“Don’t make fun of me.”

“I’m not, baby. I’m laughing because you’re nothing of the sort. You’re an amazing person and yes, you lied, which put your life at significant risk, but I’ve told you how we’re dealing with that already.”

She nods, heat flaring in her eyes despite the emotion playing on her features. “Punished for it or not, it doesn’t change the fact that I’m not your type. You’re daring and brave. I’m none of that.”

“Come here.” She sits up and I take her face between my palms, wiping the tears sliding down her cheeks with my thumbs. “Not my type? You are very much my type. And do you even see yourself? Do you even know what bravery is?”

“Well, it’s not someone who’s scared of everything. And hides in her apartment so she doesn’t get hurt.”

“Brave is doing something despite being afraid of it. That makes you one of the bravest people I know.” My eyes fall from her glassy gaze to her lips, and I kiss her. Her soft mouth opens for me, and her willingness causes an inferno inside me.

She reaches up and grabs my hands, pulling them from her face. “I did it for you. I was brave to win you. It’s false bravery. I’m a coward.”

“Oh, really?”

Her face, pinched like a stubborn toddler, is adorable, but I hold back my grin.

“Yes.”

“It sounds like you’re trying to get out of this relationship.”

“No, I’m not!”

“Well, then you’re trying to argue with me for another reason because you tackled your biggest fear by putting yourself at risk with a venomous snake, all to protect me without a second thought, Pam. That’s bravery—that’s selflessness—that’s the kind of love people only wish for. And if all that doesn’t prove anything, then hear this. A coward wouldn’t have booked riding lessons after falling off a horse like you did.” I rise from the floor, tugging her up with me. “So, you damn well must be arguing to get another spanking.”

When we’re both up, she yanks out of my grip, backing up, covering her ass.

“How’d you know about that?”

“Joe mentioned it.” I take a step toward her, and she takes another step back, widening the gap between us.

“I’m *definitely* not trying to get another spanking, Nash. Please, my bum is plenty sore.” She presses her lips, rolling them, and shakes her head with vigor. But I pounce, yanking her toward the loveseat and pulling her across my lap as we fall onto the warm buttery leather.

“Spread your legs,” I demand, grabbing her throat gently. Sliding my hand up to cup her chin, I tug her head back, exposing her beautiful neck. She obeys instantly, opening her legs, making me smile.

“I have a confession to make too,” I whisper as I let my hand explore her silky skin, rubbing from her shoulders to her still-warm ass.

“You do?” Her voice squeaks.

“I do.” My hand slowly dips between her thighs. She whimpers and my finger traces the junction of her thighs with a feathery touch.

“Do I get to spank you then?” she asks lightly.

Laughing, I shake my head even though she can’t see me. “Nope. I’m the Daddy.”

She huffs playfully. “No fair.”

My brow rises and I take my hand from between her legs and slap her ass.

She gasps, shouting, “God, that stings!” And then quickly amends her statement. “But I love you being in control.”

I growl, gripping her chin a bit tighter. “Good answer.”

“So, your confession?” Her voice rises as she spreads her legs wider, physically begging me to touch her.

“I’m a very observant man, Pam. I knew you weren’t the outdoorsy type you claimed to be. I also knew you were curious. What I didn’t know was that you couldn’t do the things you claimed to do, and I feel terrible about that. I would never have tossed you in the water—”

She cuts me off. “So why did you date me if you knew?” She shivers as my hand reaches between her legs again. I don’t answer right away, instead I part her slit to explore her wetness. She mewls and moans and my cock, painfully hard, lurches beneath her.

“Baby, your curiosity was enough for me. Because I wanted to get to know *you* better. That’s also why our dates started out as dinners. I didn’t want to rush you.” I slide a finger inside her.

She sucks in a breath and asks, “So you still want me?”

“You wouldn’t be naked across my lap with my fingers inside you if I didn’t, honey. The real question is, do you still want me, now that you’ve fallen off a horse, almost drowned, nearly toppled off a cliff, and wrestled a snake?”

“That depends...”

I pause. “On what?”

“Will you teach me to swim? Cliff jump, mountain bike, swim, scuba dive, and all the other things I want to try?”

“It would be my pleasure.”

“Will you punish me now so we can make love?”

“You sure you can handle that? Your ass is already raw.”

She nods. “I can handle anything with you.”

I smile. God, she’s sweet, exciting, and so, so brave. “Okay then, yes.”

“Then there is just one other thing.”

“Hm?”

She gets up off my lap and sits on it instead. “You’ll have to meet my mother.”

Chapter 8

Pam

“I’d love to, sweetheart.”

Nash’s words fill me up with hope, love, and an unbelievable sense of joy. But when he shifts me off his lap, nervousness starts to bubble inside me. I need to get through a punishment first. Then we can start fresh, with no mistruths between us, and no fear, just adventure. Whether that be the adventure of getting to know everything about each other, and our bodies, engaging in our power exchange dynamic, or exploring the world around us.

“Okay, baby, up you get.”

I clamp my lip between my teeth and rise, my stomach flipping and my pussy throbbing. I don’t know why I get so turned on by something so painful, but I do. “I’m nervous, Daddy.”

“As you should be, young lady. You kept some very important information from me—information that put you in danger.”

I nod, swallowing hard. “I know and I’m very sorry.”

“I know you are, honey. Let’s get this over with.”

“What are you going to do?” I ask. The nerves in my body ignite with trepidation and tingles of excitement scatter from my belly to my bottom.

“Well, because you’ve had a pretty good spanking already, I’m going to do something that will burn the message home while not damaging your booty too badly.” He walks over to the kitchenette, grabbing a reusable grocery bag from the counter.

“I stopped at the market on the way back to pick up some items for breakfast in the morning.” He pulls a brown root out of the bag.

“Ginger?”

He nods. “We’re going to place this in your bottom, let it burn a while, and then, I’m going to give you some swats with this.” He pulls out a wooden cutting board. It’s long but not too thick. “This will sting, and ignite the burn of the ginger too, making the impact twice as effective. You’ll feel well punished without receiving an excessive number of swats.”

“The ginger’s going in my bum hole?” I ask, disbelief making my voice crack. He nods slowly, a dark look shadowing his face.

I release a shaky breath. “Okay. How many swats?”

“Well, you told me you loved the outdoors and adventure and that seems to be true enough now, but it was your first lie so you’re getting two swats for that.” He opens one of the drawers in the kitchen, pulling out a knife and peeling the little brown root onto a finger-like shape. Then he fills a glass of water and drops the peeled ginger into it. I just watch wide-eyed and nervous, my heart galloping in my chest.

“Can you ride a horse?”

I look skyward to think, and when I look back down his brow is arced high, so I shake my head. “No.”

“That’s a third.” He crosses his arms. “Can you ride a mountain bike?”

I close my eyes, shaking my head. “No. I can’t ride any bike.”

“That’s a fourth.” I hear the paddle-like cutting board smack against his palm and my stomach goes wild with butterflies. I squeeze my eyes tighter.

“And we know you can’t swim, so the cliff jumping lie makes it five strokes.”

I feel his proximity, although I’m not sure how. I open my eyes to check and sure enough he’s standing right in front of me.

“Eyes on me, baby.” He reaches out, tipping my chin up. “First, you’re going to bend over, spread your bottom cheeks and I’m going to put the ginger in, yeah?”

“Yes, sir.” He softly pecks my lips with his.

“Good girl. Then you’re going to go stand in that corner for ten minutes.” He points but I don’t look, since his finger is still under my chin.

I swallow, feeling like a bad little girl. “Yes, Daddy.”

“And finally, I’m going to call you over and you’ll lean across the back of the couch for your swats. And I’m going to lay them on hard, because this is serious, and I care. But I’m also going to give you time to breathe away the sting in between spanks, yeah? We’re new at this, so if you get

overwhelmed, can't handle something, or just need a minute to think, you'll tell me, okay?"

I nod, having lost all ability to speak, my mouth as dry as a desert.

"You're going to count strokes and tell me what each one is for, so you won't forget why we're here."

Again, I nod.

"And when those swats are done, I'm going to remove the ginger and hold you. Make sure you feel how much you're loved, yeah?" He lets go of my chin and uses the same finger to make a twirling motion. "Around."

I turn my back to him.

"Bend over, spread your cheeks open."

I've never been so humiliated in my life. My face feels as hot as a third degree burn thinking of him staring at my puckered hole.

"Brace yourself."

When I'm in position, he places his hand in the small of my back. "Take a breath, baby."

I suck air in and as I do, he uses his finger to play with my bottom hole. I squeeze my eyes shut, further embarrassed, but I don't squirm. Not until the sliver of root is inside. At first everything feels fine, albeit awkward, but then the burn starts. Slowly at first but within seconds I'm squirming. Only, shit, that makes it worse.

"Corner now. When you're there, I'll set a timer."

I rise, and each step to the corner is agony. As is the wait. All I can think of is the long piece of wood in his hands. And

it doesn't help that I can hear him tapping it against his hand. I feel faint with nerves by the time his phone timer goes off.

“Okay, honey, over the back of the couch.”

I whimper but obey, walking to the couch hissing all the way. I feel as if I'm on hot coals, or rather, scooting across them.

I gather the throw pillows and hug them to me as soon as I lean over, jumping when I feel Nash's hand on my bum. He leans over me, whispering in my ear.

“Are you ready for the rest of your punishment?”

I swallow hard and nod. “Yes, please, Daddy. Hurry.” I tell him to hurry not just because I want the pain over quickly, but because I need to be in his arms.

“Count.”

The first swat lands and I scream at the unexpected harshness of it. The burn in and on my bottom is unbelievable. I take a minute to choke through a breath and while I do, I feel Nash's supportive hand on my lower back.

“Good girl. Don't forget to count and tell me what that swat was for.”

I release a little sob as I nod. “One. That's for lying about loving the outdoors and adventure before I knew I did.” I grit my teeth when his hand lifts from my back, knowing the next swat is coming and dreading it with every cell in my body. And when I hits, holy shit, I yell even louder. I shoot up and bounce, cursing the extra burn inside that it causes.

“Easy, honey. Easy,” he says, soothing my tender rear with his palm. “Back in position.”

I do as I'm told and let a sob escape as I hear him shift behind me. "Two. For lying about loving the outdoors and adventure." I cut the sentence short because my brain can't focus on the words knowing the sting on my ass, which is just starting to ease a little, is about to be reignited with a vengeance.

I listen for his movements and then unable to help myself, move to dodge his swing. "I can't!" I choke out.

"Baby, you can. I have faith in your strength. And if you move like that again, I'm going to have to tie you down so I don't swat you somewhere less padded. Understand?"

A sob escapes again but I nod and bravely get back into position. This time he doesn't give me time to get worked up and the swat hits fast.

"Three," I shout, bolting upright and grabbing my ass. I know that moving makes it worse, but I can't help but dance at the burn. "That's for lying about being able to ride a horse."

"Uh huh, and tell me, baby, how did that work out?"

I hate that I have to speak when it seems like I've forgotten how, but I know he's offering me the chance to rest my bottom before the next swat, so I mumble an answer, hoping it's coherent.

"That's right, you fell off. Could've broken your neck, too."

The next swat hits and I break down, tears and heavy sobs tumbling out of me. He takes a moment to soothe, petting my hair as I blubber into the pillows. "I'm so sorry, Daddy," I wail. "Four. For lying about being able to mountain bike."

"That's right." He rubs my shoulder. "Shh, shh, I know, and we're almost done. One more, baby. One more and you're

done. You've got this, yeah?"

I nod, still squishing my face into the pillows. His words give me the courage to take the last stroke because I know he's with me, not against me. Also, this is our thing. I love it and him no matter how much it hurts. Also, my pussy is so wet right now. I've never felt so powerful and sexy.

"Okay, baby, you ready? Last one."

"I'm ready, Daddy."

The next swat lands and I handle it like a champ, breathing through the intense burn both in and on my bottom like a yogi. My ass feels swollen, raw and throbs like it has its own heartbeat, but I did it. And I will never lie about being able to do something again. "Five. That's for lying about being able to cliff jump or swim."

I break down again, soaking the pillow further, a catharsis of all the fear of the day, but he doesn't give me a soothing touch. Instead, he spreads my bottom cheeks. I hiss and cry harder, even bouncing igniting the burn in my ass.

"You're making it worse, honey. Stay still and take a deep breath." When I still and breathe in, he pulls the ginger out. I squeal and stamp my feet as soon as it's out, but he pulls me against him, holding me tight.

"All done. All done. Shh, you're my good girl now," he says in a soothing whisper as he scoops me up and walks us to the cozy queen-size bed. "I can't believe how well you took that punishment, baby. My girl is so brave and strong." He kisses the tears on my face.

Lying me on the bed, he drops the ginger in the waste bin and climbs in behind me. Wrapping us both in the quilt, he rocks us in the warm cocoon.

I don't know how much time passes as we lie snuggled together, his hard cock rubbing against my ass and pussy, but when I look out the window, the moon is a sliver high in the sky. I've never felt lighter, happier, or more aroused than I do right now. When I turn over, there's so much wetness between my thighs that they slip against each other. Reaching down, I touch myself and I'm sopping wet.

“Daddy?”

“Hm?”

“My pussy is hotter than my ass and I'm pretty sure I've soaked the front of your pants.”

He doesn't speak, his eyes don't open, making me wonder if he's even awake. At least until I feel his erection poking into my side. I reach for him beneath the cover, rubbing his cock through his wet pants.

“Yep, I did. My pussy juices are all over you.”

He groans, deep and feral sounding. “Even asleep, I can't resist you. My cock's been rock hard for hours.” He rolls over on top of me, bracing himself up with one arm and grabbing my face with his free hand. Kissing me slowly, before turning my head and nipping at my earlobe.

“It's time I taste you.” His growly words zing right through me, hitting every one of my erogenous zones before landing right at my center.

Rising up from the bed, he keeps his eyes latched onto mine as he undresses. His Adonis body calls for me to look at every ripple and carved edge, but his heated brown eyes hold mine too fiercely.

“Hands behind your head, sweet one.”

Obedying him, I put my arms up, hands behind my head. It gives me better leverage to see him moving at the end of the bed. Grabbing my ankles, he yanks me down. I yelp but he stops as my ass is on the edge.

“Put these over here,” he says, placing my legs over his shoulders.

“I’ve never,” I gasp as he starts to kiss my inner thighs. Biting, he looks up.

“Just another adventure with Daddy, baby.” As soon as his purring words are out of his mouth, he finds *the spot*. *That perfect spot*. *Oh, my*. Yup, the part of me that’s been begging for him for hours.

As his tongue explores, and I squirm with the wow-worthy feelings of it, heat from my cheeks, bottom hole, and pussy all mingle and I call out in need. His tongue flicks over my clit again and again, before he sucks and pinches it with his lips. I feel crazy, pulling my own hair as I keep my arms behind my head. My hips twist and tilt forward. I even use his shoulders as leverage to pull my bottom up off the bed and get closer to his mouth. The building of intensity growing in my belly is surreal. It’s as if I’m teetering on the edge of a mountain ledge, about to fall and yet still hanging on, but this time I don’t want rescue. When his finger slides inside me, I let go, falling straight over the pulsing edge.

“That’s my girl, ride it.” Nash flips me over as I fall apart from the orgasm, and somewhere in my bliss I hear the tearing of a wrapper, and then he’s there, sliding inside me before I can fully come down. His cooler skin bounces off my hot ass, making each pounding stroke even more intense.

“It’s so good,” I say, joining in by shoving my ass back to meet each of his thrusts. “God, yes!”

“You’re mine, yeah? All mine. This wet pussy and tight little asshole are all mine, yeah? Tell me, baby. Tell me you’re mine.” His growling words make me hotter, needier, and more vulnerable.

“Yes! Daddy, I’m completely yours.” I throw my head back as his right arm wraps around me, his fingers playing between my folds, his left hand fondling my bouncing breast, plucking at my nipple. It’s too much pleasure, so intense, and I howl, and free fall again. Nash groans.

“Fuck.” The drawn-out curse mingles with my own calls and then we’re nothing but a tangle of body parts, hot and slick with sweat and bliss.

“I love you, Daddy,” I say as our panting breaths slow.

“I love you more.”

On the drive back, I call my mom. She sounds better than I expect but there’s still underlying worry in her tone. She insists Nash come for dinner that night so she can meet him and although I want to keep him to myself a little longer, I agree.

Before Nash arrives, Mom and I have a long talk. She had no idea what her illness was doing to me and the regret on her face almost breaks my heart.

“I’m sorry, Pammie. I promise I won’t let my disease trap you anymore.” Her words make us both cry, and soon we’re wrapped up and clinging to each other like life preservers. When Nash arrives, we’re still a bit of a wet mess of tears and

love but we manage to untangle ourselves so I can answer the door.

If Nash notices my crying face when I answer the door, he doesn't say anything. Instead he hands me some flowers. He has something for my mom as well, and I let him give it to her. While they get to know each other I set the table and finish cooking.

Dinner is perfect—a delicious taco-chicken mac and cheese with plenty of conversation. Mom even shares some stories about her life before agoraphobia. Things I've never heard. Nash has us laughing when he tells stories about his weirder clients, but keeps the focus off the actual adventures, which keeps Mom relaxed and enjoying herself.

But we haven't had company in years and Mom looks exhausted as soon as I've cleared the dessert.

“We'll clean up, you can go rest, Mom.”

“Thank you, I am a bit tired.” I know she's more than a bit tired, but I just smile. She likely didn't sleep at all last night, but I don't feel a rush of guilt at the thought. Instead, I feel empathetic.

After we clean up, I show Nash my room, and tell him all about the talk I had with Mom before he arrived.

“See, she wants you to live life. She didn't realize her illness was affecting you so much. She just needed to see your side.”

“Yeah, yeah, and she loves you.” I roll my eyes. “You cheated by bringing her those Sony noise-cancelling headphones.”

“No such thing as cheating. They'll help.” He gives me the crooked smile that both melts my heart and my panties.

“With meditation and with blocking out the sound of—”

His words fall away as I tug my dress over my head and toss it on the floor. “Have I ever told you how smart you are?”

He closes the distance between us and wraps both his arms around me. “Tell me anyway.”

“You’re so incredibly brilliant.” I kiss him as the last word falls from my lips. “Now make love to me, Daddy.”

“Bossy pants.” He swats my ass, and then buries his fingers into my hair, tugging my head back to kiss my neck. “My bossy girl needs to be put in her place with a proper fucking, yeah?”

I shiver and thank the creator for noise-cancelling headphones.

“Yes, please, Daddy. Give me a proper fucking.”

The End

About Kara Kelley

Kara Kelley is a naughty Canuck (that's a Canadian for those of you that don't know), who loves spansks, a little bondage, tantalizing creative sex (trust me, honey this sh*t is gonna rock our world) and TIM HORTON'S. She's full of playful mischief, loyalty and maybe some stubbornness, but she'll never admit it. And she believes living in a secluded cabin in the woods (including good WIFI, a stocked Kindle, and plenty of chocolate) with her husband would be absolute bliss.

Kara Kelley is a USA Today and #1 international Bestselling Author. Kara writes dominant heroes (mostly daddies) that are equal parts sweet and stern, and her novels incorporate enough steam and suspense to keep you wiggling on the edge of your seat and begging for more.

How to Find Kara Kelley:

<https://www.karakelleyauthor.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/karakelleyauthor>

<https://twitter.com/KaraKauthor>

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Figuring Out Forever
(with her dad's best
friend) by Chloe Maine

A MF story by Chloe Maine

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Chapter 1

Eden

Waking up in the sex-warmed bed of my dad's best friend is better than I ever imagined. And I spent four long years imagining just how good it might be.

"Please tell me I'm not dreaming," I whisper as Nolan sweeps his hand up my belly to squeeze my breast.

The night before flashes through my mind. And his low laugh tells me he's woken up replaying it all, too. "Feels like a dream, doesn't it?"

"You're okay?" I try to twist around, but he's got me banded tight against his body, one hand across my chest, the other buried between my legs.

He bites down on my shoulder, stilling me. "You're the one who lost her virginity last night. That should be my line."

"Yeah, but you were full of... reluctant feelings."

"Was. Past tense. I'm more than okay." He drags in a deep breath, then turns me around inside the circle of his arms. "Eden, I love you. I am *in love* with you. I have been longer

than I wanted to admit, but that's done. I am yours. You are in this bed for life."

That leads to sex. Of course it does. We're both full of the most ridiculously perfect feelings that need to be expressed with our bodies just as much as our words.

But then.

After the sex, after the orgasms and the joyous mostly naked late brunch, and more sex (because we have four years to make up for), then comes the serious talk.

We're in the shower. Nolan exhales roughly against my shoulder, his head bowed, his whole body heaving from the way I just made his body explode.

I'm feeling so confident for a girl—woman, twenty-two years old, fully capable—who was a virgin just yesterday.

And then he says, "We need to tell your parents about this."

A lump forms in my throat, so I play it as a joke. I lean into where we are, what I just did, and I repeat the one word I can handle. "This?"

He won't be tricked. "Not this," he says gently, using his podcast voice. Interrogation Daddy, teaching the world about how to keep an interview subject focused on the point. "Us."

"I know." But my voice sounds small.

"Not this weekend."

"Good." I step back into the spray of the shower and lean my head back, knowing it puts my tits on display.

My off-limits tits. The tits of his best friend's daughter.

Let him look at me and crave me and want me to be his secret, just for a little bit longer.

I'm not ready.

I'm not a fool. I know that loving Nolan means having hard conversations with my family about what my future will look like. And worse, maybe some very awkward conversations about the past. Did he ever...? No. Did I want him to? ... Yes.

That's a secret I'll keep from my parents forever.

But the conversation itself? Not sure I can avoid that. Not when Nolan is already bringing it up on day two of our forever.

Chapter 2

Nolan

The next day—the third day I get to call Eden my lover—I need to go in to work at Ridge College. I’m a professor of criminology. That’s my day job. The true crime podcast I host is a side gig, although it’s exploded in popularity and turned into a somewhat unexpected second career for me in my late forties.

Eden comes with me, because we’ve got New Relationship Energy zinging like we’re at the center of a lightning storm. I’m her Daddy, she’s my little one, and if I could somehow attend the meeting with my cock inside her (and not violate any rules of academia), I would.

I’m also hoping that being open about our relationship to my colleagues will help her see that it’s okay for us to tell her parents that we’re dating.

Dating.

Such a simple word for what this really feels like.

And that intensity is part of the problem. I know it’s too soon to push Eden. I’m not going to see her parents until the

holidays, probably.

God damn it, I want to claim her already.

She showed up on my doorstep with a plan to make me see her, really see her, as a woman, and I did. I do. I'm never going to deny the tug between us ever again.

I should have acted on it way sooner.

Could have had her panting *Daddy, Daddy, Daddy* beneath me sooner...

Which is not a thought I need to have as I usher her into the criminology department hallway.

I greet the department administrator. "This is my girlfriend, Eden."

Eden blushes as she holds out her hand. "Nice to meet you."

"And you." There's a pause.

"I'm not a student here," she blurts out.

The admin's eyebrows go up. They pause. Then they grin. "Well, I'm glad I didn't have to ask."

I grunt, but otherwise stand in the moment, being soft to the reality of that question. It won't be the last time we have to answer it.

"You could be a student," I tell Eden softly after two more introductions, once we're safely behind the heavy door of my office at the end of the hall. "There's a family discount on tuition."

"I'm not family, either," she points out.

"You will be soon." I tug her against me. "Mrs. Nolan Adler."

She snorts. “That’s so old-fashioned.”

“I’m practically a dinosaur, it comes naturally to me. But I know what kids these days like. I’ll be Mr. Eden—”

She cuts me off with the soft press of her mouth against mine. “I want to be Mrs. Adler,” she whispers once she pulls back, her lips swollen and wet. “And have little Adler babies.”

Now my grunt is entirely different.

We make out against the back of my office door, until I’m hard and aching.

“I should make you suck Daddy’s cock for that tease,” I growl.

“Okay,” she gasps breathlessly against my mouth.

Fuck me. “I don’t actually have time for that.”

“But it was a hot idea.” She licks her lips. *Licks* her beautiful *lips*.

I kiss her again, harder this time, then point her toward my desk. “Go. Sit. Poke through my stuff and be bratty.”

She smirks. “Is that what you’re going to think about while you’re in your meeting? Wondering if I’m doodling dicks on your papers?”

“You can doodle whatever you want on anything podcast related. Keep it PG-13 on the academic stuff.”

“Okay, Daddy.” She slides away from me, batting her eyelashes.

I pause, something twiggling at the back of my mind, but then it’s gone, replaced by the very real, very mundane reality of a meeting that starts in five minutes.

I scoop up the folder I need for that, then stop and give her a serious look. “Was that all right? Meeting people?”

She nods. “I like seeing where you work.”

“You can come and go from here as much as you want.”

She chews on her bottom lip. “Maybe I’ll try to find a job on campus? I like that idea more than going back to school.”

She finished a degree a year ago, then went to work on sailboats and yachts in the Caribbean.

If nothing else reassured me that what we have is real, even though it’s happening really quickly, the fact that she would trade the Caribbean for the dreary rain of the Pacific Northwest is a sure sign.

“Whatever makes you happy. If you want to just laze around my house and make it your own, that’s okay, too.”

She sticks out her tongue at me, and I force myself to go to my meeting before I do something better with that mouth.

When I return an hour later, need still humming in my veins, she’s still in the big chair behind my desk. One of my legal notepads is in front of her. Her head is down, and she’s intently scribbling. Her auburn waves spill over her shoulder, curtaining her work.

I knock on the door I’ve just pushed open. She makes an acknowledging sound but doesn’t lift her head. I smile to myself as I round the desk and sweep her hair up in my hands. The way she goes still, a blush creeping up the back of her neck, is perfect.

My Eden is perfect.

Everything I’ve always wanted in a partner. Bratty but obedient. Eager, willful, curious.

I drop a kiss on the back of her neck. Her skin is warm where the blush is rising. “What are you working on?”

“A letter to my parents. It’s not good.” She shivers beneath my questing lips. “Did you lock the door? Feel free to distract me.”

“Can’t do that. Not when you’re being such a good, brave girl. Can I look at what you’ve written?”

She squirms, but nods.

I replace my lips with my hand, cupping the nape of her neck so I can squeeze her there while I read.

“It’s not really a letter,” she adds. “More of a set of talking points.”

This might take you by surprise, but I’ve fallen in love with someone you know. Someone unexpected... to you. Not me. Someone who shares these feelings.

Then there are a few blank lines, and it looks like she’s started over again.

I want to tell you something very important, but before I do, I want you to know it’s not up for debate. It’s about me, and my feelings. My grown-up, well-thought-out feelings.

Grown-up is crossed out, but it’s low enough that it could be underlined, and that makes my cock twitch.

The page is covered in similar thoughts.

“Any of these would work,” I tell her honestly. “Do you want to tell them starting with this framework?”

She turns her head a little to look at me. “I like it when you say smart, sexy things like framework.”

“Brat,” I growl.

“What else were you thinking?” she asks.

“I thought I might do more of the talking. I’ve spent a lot of time imagining this conversation.”

Her eyes flare wide in surprise. “Really?”

I clear my throat. “I should warn you, most of the iterations in my head end with your dad punching me.”

She gasps. “He won’t.”

He might. It’s fine. I’ll survive. And it would be worth it. “I’m not afraid of standing in the fire for you.”

She twists all the way around, pushing herself up out of my chair and throws her arms around my neck. “I don’t want you to get burned,” she protests. “Maybe we shouldn’t tell them.”

“We’re telling them.” I squeeze her tight and look down at her notes. Below the pad of paper is my podcasting schedule, and sure enough, there’s a dick doodled in the margins.

But there are also flowers and a little house and a lot of hearts. It looks like she used every different color of highlighter that I have in my big mug of pens.

I reach out and nudge her pad out of the way so I can see the full extent of her art.

She twists to look at what has caught my attention. “Sorry, I got carried away.”

I squeeze her hips. “It’s okay. I like to see you play. I’m glad you weren’t worried the whole time I was gone. Is that a sailboat?”

She giggles. “Because you...” She leans over, too, and now both of our fingers are tracing her drawings. “Right here. It says, *kinky boat trip / can you murder someone at sea*, and I had to illustrate that, even if it didn’t make any sense to me. What a good hook for an episode. I mean, it’ll give your fans more ammunition to call you Interrogation Daddy, and I thought we agreed that was just for me, but...”

I laugh, hard, and sit down in my chair, tugging her into my lap. “Come here, you minx. It’s not an episode for me. And I’m not going to be—” I take her face in my free hand and draw her in for a long, deep kiss. “It’s someone else’s podcast. I’m just a guest and only there to answer the murder question.”

“Okay,” she whispers, before kissing me back.

Chapter 3

Eden

A week goes by. We make incremental plans on telling my parents—definitely before Christmas. Probably before Thanksgiving. We'll drive out to see them, but book a hotel so we aren't stuck staying at their place if it doesn't go well.

But when Nolan wants to pick a weekend, I hedge on asking them if it's a good time for a visit.

He asks me if I need him to threaten to do it himself. (He doesn't, I'll find out if they're home, I swear it.)

I distract him with kisses, which he tells me isn't going to work forever, but he'll let it work today. Tomorrow. A week of kisses, and it's working, it's working, we'll put that off—

Until he comes out of his soundproof recording studio with a very... bossy look on his face.

“What?” I ask, scrambling to my feet.

His expression says he's going to fuck me, and growl in my ear, and call me his good little girl, and I can't wait.

I'm practically panting.

He grins, and it's feral. "I think I've found the right incentive for you to pick a date for us to talk to your parents."

My stomach goes into free fall. "Oh?"

"I just recorded a guest spot on a kink-positive podcast. To celebrate hitting a subscriber milestone—and the host turning forty—they've chartered a yacht for a week. They've been talking about it for months, with different guests. I was invited on to talk about the laws of the high seas."

"Is that something you're an expert on?" I tease.

"I'm an expert on how you're a brat," he growls. "Come here."

I leap into his arms and he carries me into the living room.

"After we finished recording, they happened to mention that one of their guests had to cancel on the charter. So they have an extra stateroom."

A tremor of excitement ripples through me. "Oh?"

"How would you like to show me a bit of your yacht life?"

"I've never been a guest," I breathe. "Only crew."

"Would that motivate you to let me tell your father how much I love you?"

I nod. It's nervous, and my palms are sweating, but yes. That would motivate me. The truth is, I *want* Nolan to talk to my parents. I'm just not sure *I* want to, and I'm embarrassed by that. It feels... childish.

"Eden..."

"I just wish we didn't have to tell them at all," I blurt out.

He raises one eyebrow. "Say more about that."

“No.” And I pout for good measure.

He waits.

I slump in his arms. “Sorry.”

“For what?”

“Being bratty.”

“I don’t mind bratty. Especially if it’s a productive kind of pout that gets you through your feelings to where we need to be on the other side.”

“Which is telling my parents?”

“It’ll be quite the shock to them to show up at your wedding and discover I’m the groom,” he points out.

“I love that you’re so logical,” I mutter under my breath.

“I can tell from your tone.”

“When is the yacht charter?”

“In two weeks.”

“So soon.”

“No time like the present.” His eyes glitter as his gaze doesn’t waver. “You’re tough, Eden. Be strong with me.”

“I don’t want to be tough.”

“I know.” But he says it with a firmness that promises he’s going to ask me to be strong, anyway.

I change the conversation to the carrot he’s dangling. “Just how kinky is this charter going to be?”

His gaze turns to pure fire. “The host is a Daddy Dom. His wife has been his Little one for more than a decade. The other guests are kinky podcasters or content creators.”

An unexpected flair of jealousy spikes inside me. “How do you know them?”

“Through podcasting.” One eyebrow quirks higher than the other. “Do you have another question there?”

“Have you ever... Are any of the people on this trip an ex?”

“No. I wouldn’t do that to you.”

“I know the kink community can be a little... familiar.”

He growls. “And how would you know that?”

“These aren’t the first kinky people to charter a yacht. I’ve seen some things. Things that made me dream of you wanting to spank me and be in charge of me.” I blush, but I hold his gaze.

His growl deepens into a lusty rumble. “I want to know everything.”

I lean in and kiss him. “Right back at you, Daddy.”

“After we call your parents.”

I squeak and nod. “Okay. You call them.”

He keeps me in his lap as he dials my parents’ home number. When someone—it sounds like my mom—answers, his face breaks into an easy smile. “Hey, it’s Nolan. Is this a good time?”

A murmur.

The smile widens, and he winks at me. “I was thinking of driving out to see you guys this weekend. Will you be around? Eden said she was thinking of coming for a visit, hmm?” His eyebrows curve high in surprise. Yeah, I started to make a plan, I just didn’t follow through completely. But I tried, and

he likes that, I can tell from the look on his face. “Maybe she wants to drive with me. We’ll see you in a few days.”

Chapter 4

Nolan

The good news is, Eden's father doesn't punch me.

The bad news is, it might be easier if he did.

He knows what's going on from the second she hops out of the passenger seat of my vehicle. He's doing yard work when we pull up, and maybe it's the way I help Eden out of the vehicle, or how she looks at me and her gaze lingers for a long beat before she turns fully to greet him. But whatever tips him off, his expression goes from a flare of surprised recognition to stunned, wary concern in the blink of an eye.

"Dad," she says softly.

"I'll get your mother," he says sharply.

It goes downhill from there.

Once we're all sitting in their living room, it's Eden's mother who starts the real conversation. "I don't understand. When was the last time you two even saw each other?"

The night before Eden's eighteenth birthday is the answer. But it's the wrong answer to say out loud. Pointing out that

nothing happened wouldn't help. It would reveal that something could have happened.

That there was a reason for four long years of carefully not seeing each other, until she showed up on my doorstep.

“The internet is a magical thing,” Eden says sarcastically. “You might be aware that Nolan has a podcast.”

“He's never been one for commitment,” her father rumbles, not looking at me.

He's not wrong.

I never was—until now. Until her. Almost as if I were waiting my whole life for this woman to reveal herself, to show me she'd been hiding in plain sight.

Eden starts to protest. But she shouldn't have to defend me. That wouldn't make me worthy of her. I take her hand in mine, ignoring the sizzle of tension that sparks through the room at the tight, claiming squeeze of fingers.

“We don't expect you to understand today or tomorrow. But you know your daughter. You know how strong-willed and clear-headed she is. So lean on that while I show you over time just how much I love her and how committed I am to her happiness.”

“Our happiness,” Eden says firmly. “I love Nolan. And honestly? If it were up to me, we wouldn't have told you yet. We're here because this is important to him.”

Her mother snaps her gaze to me, then. She doesn't say anything. Just looks at me with that searing, assessing stare.

I don't blink. We've known each other for a long time. She's fussed over my dating life, and the long periods of being

single. I know she never wanted me to land on her daughter as my soulmate.

“That’s right,” I say. “This *is* important to me. Even if you need time, we don’t. Nothing has ever felt as right as Eden showing up on my doorstep and making me see her as a woman who knows her own mind. I hope that in time, you’ll come to see this as the same kind of thing. I love your daughter—”

“You were her uncle,” my best friend of twenty-nine years spits out. “We trusted you—”

“I never violated that trust. I swear to you. But she’s not a child anymore, and I don’t see her as a child. I am going to put her first for the rest of my life. I’m going to make her my wife. That’s already how I feel about her, and it doesn’t matter if it’s new to you. In time, it won’t be.”

“We should go.” Eden tugs my hand and together we stand up.

Her mother frowns. “No. Wait.” Her father mutters something under his breath, but her mother shakes her head. “You drove all this way. You’ll stay for dinner. And we will talk about football and the weather. Nothing else, understood?”

I’d rather be punched in the face. But I nod, and Eden nods, and finally, her father nods.

It’s not the best outcome, and it’s not the worst. It’s somewhere in the middle, and it’s hard for Eden. By the time we leave, she’s exhausted. I drive just far enough away to know we aren’t being watched, then I pull over on the side of the road and haul her into my lap. “You were a very brave girl today,” I reassure her. “And you’ve earned that reward trip.”

She makes a small, wounded sound and wraps her arms tight around my neck.

Fuck.

The trip wasn't the carrot she wanted, after all. She'd dragged her feet in reluctance because she wanted this to go better, and she knew it wouldn't, and there's no reward in that.

I kiss her temple, then her nose, then her lips. Softly. Gently. "They'll come around," I promise her. "They'll see. In time."

And maybe the trip can be a distraction, then, if not a reward.

Chapter 5

Eden

A week later, we fly to Los Angeles to meet Nolan's podcasting friends. On the flight, Nolan goes over the dizzying array of rules for the charter one more time. Safewords and nudity guidelines. How I don't have to do or see anything I don't want, but I also need to be careful not to accidentally yuck someone else's yum.

"I know, I know, boundaries are for me to maintain about myself and my own behavior," I repeat.

He smiles and kisses my mouth softly. "And me. You can ask me to stay inside your boundaries this week, too."

"And vice versa," I whisper back. "But I'm excited about all of it."

Once we land, a town car takes us to a marina where we are greeted by the captain of the yacht they have chartered.

I was expecting a small boat with a captain and a chef as the only crew.

This is... bigger than that.

This is a super yacht, bigger than any I worked on in the Caribbean, and stepping aboard it with Nolan's hand firmly in the small of my back feels fancy.

It feels like a fantasy, like something out of a dream.

The captain introduces us to the purser and the chief stewardess.

"Welcome aboard, sir," the purser says to Nolan. "You're the second guests to arrive. Come this way."

She leads us up a set of stairs to the next deck, and I recognize the couple who rise to greet us from a sprawling sun lounger. This is the podcast host and his wife.

"Nolan, it's so good to see you again. And this must be Eden," he says. "I'm Vince, and this is my Little one, Kaydie."

Vince, who is a young and fit-looking forty, is wearing shorts and an open birthday-themed Hawaiian shirt. "Nice to meet you," I say, shaking his hand. "Happy birthday."

Kaydie holds out her hand, too. "It's not until Monday," she says with a warm smile. "So I'm still older than him for a few days."

He wraps his arm around her, his hand curving possessively on her hip, and nuzzles her temple. "Or until you put on your favorite tutu for dinner tonight, mmm?"

She giggles and nods. "Touché."

Nolan shakes her hand, too. "Nice to meet you in person, Kaydie."

She leans in toward me. "They've met at podcasting conferences before, but I always stay home with our kids."

"No kids this week, though," Vince says, his eyes bright.

“Until I put on my tutu,” Kaydie finishes the joke, both of them laughing. She gives me an appraising look. “Do you like a playroom? I brought a lot of toys.”

“Sex toys?” I burst out.

They all laugh.

I look at Nolan in confusion, and he stops laughing immediately. “I think she means literal toys. But I imagine Vince has some sex toys, too.”

“Oh.”

Kaydie takes my hand and leads me down an interior corridor away from the outside lounge area.

“This is my first time doing anything like this,” I tell her.

She smiles and nods. “Vince said that. Don’t worry, we won’t be too weird.”

“I like weird.”

Her smile widens. “You know there’s no pressure here, right? This is a trip where we can all be ourselves. What happens on the cruise, stays on the cruise.”

“Right.”

She pushes open a door, and we step into a cabin with two twin beds, clearly designed for children. “Since everyone on this trip wanted cabins with larger beds, Daddy gave me this room as a playroom. Because one of the joys of this week is being able to be as little as I want to be, whenever I want to be.”

I think about what Nolan has told me about who else will be on this cruise. Vince and Kaydie have a Daddy/Little dynamic. Their friend Grace is a Domme, and she’s bringing

“one of her pets”, but Nolan doesn’t know who that is. Then there will be Aaron and Dylan, who have a Daddy/Little Boy dynamic, and Sean and Rayna, who Nolan doesn’t know, but he thinks they are a classic Dom/sub relationship.

I can’t wait to meet them all, even though I’m pretty sure I’m going to keep making newbie blunders like the sex toys question.

Kaydie’s voice softens as she shows me what she’s brought with her. “Stuffies, of course, and some coloring supplies. A couple of my favorite movies. And a pile of fidget toys. But also, check this out.” She throws open a cabinet. “They have so many games!”

Having worked onboard yachts—although none this big—this doesn’t surprise me. This whole industry pivots on top-tier customer service.

Stocking cabins with everything the guests might want, for example. And giving guests space to be as kinky as they want.

My gaze is pulled back to the art supplies. Escaping to this space to doodle might be a good plan to have in my back pocket. “Thank you for showing me this space,” I say to Kaydie.

“Of course.” She tilts her head back in the direction we came from. “Do you think we’ve lost them to podcasting talk? Do you want to see your cabin?”

I laugh and nod. “I’d love to.”

But when she leads me down the hall, we find Vince and Nolan on the same mission.

I slide up against Nolan, and he wraps his arm around my waist. “Find anything you like in the playroom?”

“Art supplies.”

“Sounds fun.”

Vince opens our cabin door. “This is where you two will stay for the week, unless you make other arrangements.”

Nolan’s hold on me tightens, and he growls, “There won’t be any sharing this week.”

Vince holds up his hands. “Got it.”

From the back of the boat, there’s a call of greeting.

“Ah, more guests.” Vince and Kaydie leave us to get settled on our own.

As soon as we’re through our cabin door, Nolan tumbles me onto the bed. “How are you doing?” His grin flashes at me before he buries his face in my neck and inhales. “You don’t smell nervous.”

I laugh and push at him.

He lifts up, just a little, and his gaze softens as it locks on my face. “Seriously... I want you to check in with me frequently. If anything gets too intense, we can retreat.”

“Or I can go to the playroom,” I say.

A little spark of recognition flares in his eyes. “You like that?”

“I dunno. Maybe. Having a safe space is always good.”

“One filled with art supplies...” He traces his fingers over my collarbone, to the edge of my shirt. “Good to know.”

I shiver under his touch. “Daddy...”

He growls and his fingers tighten against my skin. “Yes, little one?”

“Do we need to go meet people?”

“Not immediately.” His thumb rubs down onto my chest, under my loose t-shirt. “Do you—”

There’s a quiet knock at the door. “Your bags, sir,” someone says on the other side, their voice muffled.

Nolan leaps off the bed. For all the years between us, he has the energy of a much younger man. His body is lean and tightly muscled, and watching him move always stirs something hot and needy inside me.

He opens the door, accepts our bags from the deckhand, then snaps the cabin door closed again.

The look he gives me when he turns back makes me shiver.

“Do you think you can be a quiet girl for me?”

My breath catches in my throat, and I nod eagerly. This is one of my fantasies that I’ve told him about, but in our short relationship, we haven’t been in the same space as anyone else when we fuck. The closest we’ve come is making out in his office.

He locks the cabin door and comes to join me on the bed.

His eyes glitter as he presses a finger to my lips and leans in, bringing his lips to my ear. “I want you full of my seed when we meet the rest of the guests.”

My breath catches in my throat and I nod, suddenly hot and achy, needing that, too.

“Let me see you...” He tugs off my t-shirt. I didn’t bother to wear a bra under it, and my little bumps jiggle into view as he lays me down again once I’m bare.

He cups them both in his strong hands, his tan flesh dark against my pale freckled skin. His lips part and his eyelids hood his lusty gaze. “Let Daddy feast on you, baby. Let me love your little breasts. That’s it. You’re such a good girl, holding still for me.”

I am. I’m holding very, very still and wondering if Daddy can feel how fast my heart is beating.

He licks up the bottom of my breast to my nipple, his tongue warm and soft and wet, and then he closes his mouth around my peaked tip and tugs. A long, hard suck that makes me squeal, making me a liar—just for a second—before I remember to be quiet.

I clamp my hand over my mouth as my back arches, and he does it again, and again. And then the other side. Hot, wet licks. Heavy pulls. My little tits throbbing as he gives them attention, so much attention.

And then his hand falls between my legs.

Even through my shorts, that’s the pressure I need. His big, strong hand cupping my pussy and pressing against my piercing. I go wild, grinding against him, my body pulling like a bow, like he’s an archer, and he knows exactly how to pull me taut.

To make an arrow fly.

I start begging, quietly, so quietly. “Daddy, Daddy, Daddy...”

His hand shoves down the front of my shorts, into my panties.

He swears under his breath when he finds out how slick I am, my arousal coating my pussy lips already.

A messy little girl.

“Eden.” My name is a groan and a prayer. “How long have you been this wet?”

I shake my head. I don’t know. I just need him.

He strips me bare and pushes his own shorts down enough to free his cock, then he’s on top of me and inside me.

Thick, hard. Rough.

Now I’m quiet because he’s stolen my breath, because he’s so deep inside me it feels like he’s pushing up into my lungs, but in a good way. Such a good way.

I’m so full it makes my brain go fuzzy, and then there’s the *no, no, noooo* feeling when he drags himself out of me, but then he snaps his hips forward and *yessss* I’m full again. The drag of his heavy cock through my sensitive folds is still a revelation, like *of course* people like sex, this is *amazing*, and I can’t believe I waited this long, but also, I’m so glad I did.

I’m so glad I’m his.

He drives into me again, his breath hitching, then his growl sliding out of him again.

I love that he’s affected just as much as I am. Both of us covered in a sheen of sweat, both of us altered by this hard-and-fast coming together.

He covers my mouth with his hand and sinks his weight onto my body more heavily, his mouth dropping to my ear. “Shhh,” he manages to get out between heavy breaths. “You’re going to make Daddy come, Eden.”

My brain flatlines, all my body’s energy shooting to the center of me where he is thick and hard and throbbing now, on

the edge. My clit pulses, too, and I wiggle my hand between us.

“Yeah?” He snarls the word in my ear. “You want to come, too, don’t you? Horny little girl, aching to get off on Daddy’s cock, hmm?”

I whimper behind his hand and nod as much as the heavy press allows me.

“Yeah, good. Come for me. Milk my cock.” He pushes my thighs up and out, stretching me again. The archer at work.

And this time, my fingers are the arrow, maybe, because all it takes is one perfectly timed rub and I’m gone, I’m flying, and he thunders into me with a growly, animalistic rutting that goes on and on and only ends when his cock slides out of me.

So. Messy.

I drag in a happy breath as he pushes off me. His gaze drops to between my legs and I blush, my thighs trying to fold up.

He stops them.

“Look at this well-bred cunt,” he says, his voice ragged but proud. “All swollen and pink.”

And then he brings his hand down on my flesh with a wet slap.

I gasp, my hips snapping up off the bed.

His eyes glitter. “You weren’t quiet at all.”

“Oh my god.” I laugh.

He smirks. “God didn’t make you come like that.”

I scamper off the bed before I leave a mess. I stop in the doorway to our attached bathroom and glance back at him.

“Nope. My Daddy did.”

“Start the shower.” He flops backward on the bed again. “I’ll be there after I catch my breath.”

It doesn’t take him long. I’ve just soaped up when he steps in behind me and wraps his arms around my waist. “We’re going to have so much fun this week,” he murmurs, his voice fully recovered now. He kisses my wet shoulder. “And nobody needs to know that Daddy filled you up, mmm?”

I take his fingers in mine and squeeze. “Our secret.”

“Good girl.” He lazily smacks my ass. “Now hurry up. We have new friends to meet.”

Chapter 6

Nolan

By the time we're both dressed in swimsuits and head back to the outside deck, everyone else has arrived.

I start to make the introductions. "Everyone, this is Eden. We've known each other for a long time—"

"He's my dad's best friend," she interjects. Then she winks at me. "They were going to find out sooner or later, Daddy."

The name rolls off her tongue, even though it's the first time she's called me that in front of anyone else.

I forget where I was going with the introductions, and gather her in my arms. "You little minx."

She smiles, but twists her face away from my kiss at the very last second. "Wait, I didn't get their names."

"They'll wait." I catch her chin with my fingers and pull her back so I can kiss her sweet, sassy mouth.

Everyone cheers, which earns them all proper introductions once I'm done.

“This is Eden’s first kink-oriented event, but she’s an eager girl, so don’t feel like you need to hold back. Not that any of you would. Eden, these are my friends Grace...”

The elegant San Diego-based Domme—who I know from her excellent YouTube channel—curves an eyebrow in acknowledgement, then tugs on the leash around the neck of the younger man beside her. “A pleasure, Eden. This is my new pet, Jaden. His pronouns are he/him, and as soon as we’re away from the marina, he’ll be naked for most of the trip. You are welcome to stare at his cock. I’m very proud of it.”

“I bet,” Eden breathes.

I yank her into my side, and she giggles.

“And this is Sean.”

The younger-than-me, New-York-based Dom introduces his submissive, Rayna, who looks about Eden’s age.

“Last but not least, our third Daddy on board, Aaron.”

He gives Eden a big, broad grin. “So you’re the girl who finally dragged Nolan out of the Daddy Dom closet, hmmm?”

She bites her lip and glances sideways at me. I nod, telling her to say whatever she wants. “I guess so,” she breathes. “It just feels natural for us.”

He wraps his arm around his Boy. “I get that. This is Dylan.”

Eden looks almost shy as she gives Dylan a smile. “Nice to meet you.”

The captain comes down the stairs from the bridge deck and tells us we’re about to depart. A stewardess appears behind him with a tray of champagne flutes, and the trip is officially underway.

By the time we're cruising up the coast toward Malibu, where we'll anchor for the night, everyone has changed into swimwear—except Grace's new pet, Jaden, who is wearing nothing at all.

Well, he's still wearing his collar.

But as promised, nothing covers his erect cock, and Eden can't help but look at it every few minutes.

Her sneaky glances amuse both me and Grace.

She's not the only one. Kaydie is openly impressed, too.

The other two couples are more laissez-faire about the nudity, for whatever reason. Perhaps by later in the week, Rayna and Dylan will be naked, too. Their swimsuits are small enough.

I slide my gaze over Eden's black bikini. More conservative in comparison, but still very, very tempting.

When Grace breaks out a bottle of sunscreen, Eden's eyes go even wider. I let her watch breathlessly as every inch of Jaden's skin is carefully protected from the sun.

But when she leans over and snags the bottle herself, I snatch it from her hands.

"Sunscreen is a Daddy job," I growl.

I take my time rubbing it in, starting with her back and arms, then her tits. Cleavage. Side boob. Under boob. My fingers snake under the triangles of her bikini top in all directions, and then finally skim down to her belly.

She leans back against me as I make sure every inch of her front is covered, then I tip her over my lap, ass in the air, and do her bottom and the backs of her legs as she giggles.

Only once I'm sure it's all absorbed in do I let her go play.

Aaron waves at me from the bar. "Beer?"

"Sounds good."

He grabs two, then sits next to me. "Here you go, man."

"Cheers." We clink glasses.

"It's good to see you happy."

I smile as I take a good, long sip. "Mmhmm."

"It's even better to be happy, hmm?"

I chuckle. "Indeed."

"I'm getting serious vibes. With your best friend's daughter? Brave man."

"She's worth it. And I resisted. For four years. I told her to let herself grow up and live her life. Forget about me. She did all but the last instruction, and finally came to find me."

"God damn, that's something."

"Yeah." My chest tightens up at the thought of it going any other way. Of her finding someone out there, and choosing a path that never included showing up on my doorstep. "It feels like a near miss in some ways. So... yeah. It's serious."

"And your kinks align, that's great." His gaze drifts to where she's sprawled next to Dylan and Kaydie. "How Little is she?"

I don't want to tell him that I don't know if she even is, exactly. Two days ago, I'd have laughed at the question. What we have is something more like... I dunno. Nolan and Eden kink. Not some externally defined Daddy/Little age thing.

But watching her curl up with two very sure-of-their-littleness Littles, and be drawn to them over anyone else on the boat (except me, of course) ... I'm not sure at all.

“Ah,” Aaron says quietly. “Still early days?”

“She’s new to kink,” I finally say. “And new to me. We’ll figure it out.”

And new to sex, although she’s a fucking natural at it. A virgin until twenty-two, she never wanted to be that intimate with anyone else.

Could that have been another possible flag that she has a Little side, too? Not a question I’m going to ask anyone other than Eden.

“There’s no rush. I was just making conversation.” He leans back and tips his face up to the sky, to the sun. “This is the good life.”

When we gather at the table for dinner—after anchoring and swimming, and a whole afternoon of the good life—I tug Eden into my lap. She winds her arms around my neck and brings her cheek to mine.

“Hi,” she whispers.

“You good?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“You look good in my lap.”

She giggles.

“I’m serious. You want to eat dinner like this?”

She glances around.

Jaden will eat dinner on a pillow at Grace's feet. Kaydie has a sippy cup and a unicorn plate instead of the china settings the rest of us have. The social rules are clearly different on this trip, if she needs any convincing.

Eden nods quickly. "Is that okay?"

My heartbeat slows down and my grip on her tightens. "It's more than okay. I want to hold you."

When the stewardess brings the first course, a chilled gazpacho that is very easily shared by two people with only one of us using the spoon, Eden relaxes all the way into my lap and lets me feed her.

Then come oysters, and I'm not sure what's hotter—watching them slide over her lips or kissing her throat and feeling her swallow.

She slides over to her own chair for the main course, steak and lobster that really does require both arms.

But she crawls back onto my lap for dessert, and stays there until she starts yawning, and I have the absolute honor of telling everyone that my little girl needs to be tucked into bed.

Chapter 7

Eden

I wake up at dawn, because I practically passed out in Nolan's arms after dinner last night. He's still asleep, so I creep out of bed and go in search of coffee.

There's a quiet crackle of a radio ahead as I pad down the corridor, then a stewardess appears and says a cheery but quiet, "Good morning!"

Since it's just the two of us, I tell her I was working on yachts myself until a little over a month ago. "You can shove a cup of coffee in my hand and then get back to what you were doing."

"You're not the first one up," she says. "Aaron and Dylan are doing yoga on the upper deck. And I think Kaydie is in her playroom."

"I will go find her, then."

The stew smiles. "I'll bring you some coffee there."

I reverse direction and head to the playroom. The door is propped open, and when I push it open, Kaydie looks up from where she's reading on a tablet.

“Morning,” she says softly.

“I thought I might be the first one awake.”

She shook her head. “I’m up at six every day with the kids. Daddy can sleep in like a champ, but I cannot. Do you want a first breakfast? They’ll bring us snacks here.”

“I ran into someone in the hallway. She’s bringing me coffee.” I glance at the pile of art supplies. “Do you mind if I draw?”

A smile spreads across her face. “Not at all. I sort of hoped someone would. I like art. I don’t love to make it.”

I grab some markers. “What are you reading?”

“A monster romance.” Her eyes sparkle.

“Demon? Minotaur?”

“Orc.”

“Oooh.” That needs a green marker. “Tall?”

“Of course. And he has tusks.”

I giggle. “Of course.”

I draw a giant, muscle-bound green dude, then a tiny Kaydie hanging from his biceps. Curves and wild blonde hair, and the rainbow t-shirt she’s wearing this morning.

Just panties on the bottom, which I’m sure the orc will make short work of.

“What do you think?” I show her, and she shrieks.

“Oh my *god*, you are *good!*”

“Thanks.”

She asks me to add glasses like Vince wears, which I do with a black marker, and then she takes it and races down the

hall to show him.

She doesn't come back before the breakfast tray is delivered.

I keep drawing, and then there's a knock at the door, and Nolan pokes his head in.

My breath catches in my throat as he steps inside, and his gaze slides over me in this space. "Here you are," he says softly. "You snuck out of bed."

"I didn't know if you stayed up late last night after I passed out."

He shakes his head. "I was tired, too." His gaze drops to the notebook I'm drawing in. "What's that?"

"Monsters." I show him another Vince and Kaydie sketch, and in this one, Kaydie is holding a sippy cup.

"That's cute." He sits beside me, all big and warm and muscular in this decidedly girly space. "How come I didn't know you could really draw?"

"We've been busy learning other things about each other," I manage to get out, but my voice is shaking.

His hand has settled on my back, and it's all I can feel.

Oh, and his leg. His thigh shifts sideways, and now it's pressed against mine, and I can feel *that*, too.

His hand skates up to the nape of my neck, and his thumb teases a circle there before he squeezes.

I shiver.

"What is it?" he murmurs.

I close my eyes and let myself remember, for a second, another time, a long time ago, when I first became aware of

his body in a similar position. He had no idea, and I kept my crush on him a secret for years.

Then there's a sound in the hallway, and Kaydie bounds back in, her cheeks flushed.

She's wearing a different outfit. She's put on a swimsuit and a pair of jean shorts.

"People are waking up so we're going to have second breakfast," she says. "Or first breakfast for you," she adds for Nolan's benefit.

He nods. "We'll be there soon."

I jump up, hand her the notepad, then escape to our cabin, where I see that Nolan has laid out a swimsuit for me. It's a bright pink-and-red-floral bikini with tiny, cheeky bottoms.

"Oh, that one is my..." I blush. "Smallest suit."

"How do you feel about wearing something skimpier today?" He asks it like he doesn't care one way or another, like he's really just checking.

But I still pause. "Do you want me to wear this one?"

"I picked it because it's girly." He pauses. "But I like that it's tiny."

I bite my lower lip and quickly change.

He growls as soon as I turn around and wiggle my bum at him. They are extra cheeky bottoms.

Nolan growls. "Mmhmm. We're going to need a safeword today."

I squeak. "Why?"

He circles around me, his eyes flashing. "How do you feel about Daddy getting you off in front of the others?"

“Mmm...a little shy.” Heat swirls low in my belly.

“Do you not want me to?” His voice is dangerously silky. I’m pretty sure he knows my answer.

I suck in a quick breath. “No. I want you to.” Let it out. *Whoosh.*

He makes a satisfied sound I feel right to my core. “Do you want to be shy about it?”

Yes. That’s it.

“Then we need a safeword.” Everyone on board has been asked to respect the universal color system of *green* means go, *yellow* is caution, and *red* is stop. Personalized safewords are optional.

“I thought we agreed we didn’t need one?”

“That was yesterday.” He takes me by the shoulders and I shiver. “But maybe things have changed since yesterday.”

Has it only been one day since we arrived?

A lot has changed.

I’ve changed. And Nolan sees that. Of course he does, but... still. “I’m still me,” I whisper.

“I know. And a safeword makes sure that no matter what we explore, we always come back to us.”

“Correspondence,” I say.

The night before my eighteenth birthday, I tried to kiss Nolan and he stopped me. Then he wrote me a letter, that I’ve kept this whole time, telling me to live my life to the fullest, but also learn more about the world, basically.

I never wrote him back.

If I had, maybe we'd have found our way together sooner.

Chapter 8

Nolan

Our first full day at sea is a fucking delight. Sunscreen application, safeword practice usage, and a sizzling energy that just feels *right*.

And late in the afternoon, Eden, Dylan, and Kaydie disappear to the playroom when Sean and Grace take their submissives to their respective rooms for naps.

Aaron, Vince, and I play a few hands of poker, but after some time loud giggles and shrieks interrupt us.

Vince sighs. “They’re going to wake the others up.”

As one, we all rise, but I’m closest to the corridor, so I lead the way.

The shrieking stops as soon as I push open the door to the playroom and see Dylan lying flat on his back on the floor, Kaydie jumping on the furthest twin bed, and Eden sitting on the other, a beach ball in her hands—like she’s about to toss it over Dylan to Kaydie.

The silence only lasts for a beat, then they all take one look at me and dissolve into giggles.

“What is this, three little monkeys jumping on the bed?” I ask, my eyebrows raised.

Behind me, Vince laughs. “Oh, are they doing that?”

Kaydie squeaks and slides off the bed.

Eden freezes, her eyes big. “Uh...”

“Come on, monkey,” I growl, crossing to her as she scrambles up to her feet. Not sure where she’s going. There are three big Daddies blocking her exit path and we’re out on the open ocean.

She squeaks as I flip her over my shoulder.

“Kaydie...” she calls out, pleading. “Help me!”

Vince chuckles darkly. “She can’t help you, little girl. She’s going to be busy getting a paddling in three, two, one...”

I leave him to discipline his Little the way he sees fit. Aaron steps out of my way as I carry Eden down the corridor to our cabin, and the last thing I hear before I set her down and nudge her through the door is him sighing and saying, “Dylan, you know better.”

They all do, which makes me wonder if they were deliberately trying to get a certain kind of attention.

“Having fun with your friends?” I ask Eden dryly.

“Yes?”

“Is that a question?”

“Depends.” Her eyes sparkle. “How much trouble am I in?”

“How much trouble do you want to be in?”

“I don’t know.” She laughs. “Oh my god. I might want to be in trouble? I just got carried away, but...”

I advance on her.

Her eyes get big and wide, her pupils dilating. Her lips flush and part. She’s never been prettier than in this moment, I think, in a distant kind of way that I’m only partially aware of over the pounding of my pulse.

Nerves look good on her.

Panic looks good, too...

Adorable, adorable panic.

I pounce and pin her down. “We need to be good guests on this trip.” The stern bark comes naturally. Too fucking naturally. “We can’t be having such a good time that we forget our manners.”

“But Kaydie—”

“Right now, Kaydie is getting her ass turned neon red. And probably loving every second. Did you want her to make that choice for you, too?”

Eden’s eyes have never been this wide. “Uhh...”

“Who gets spanked, Eden?”

“Bad girls?”

“Little girls,” I say with silky menace. “Kaydie is a very Little girl sometimes, who craves correction from her Daddy. Are you that Little?”

“No...” Eden’s protest is a thin whisper.

“What kind of punishment would be more appropriate for you, then?” I release her wrists just long enough to bare her tits, then I pin her again and rock down her body, sucking at

her nipples with enough aggression that this could be it. A hard, fast tease of my mouth, working her into a lather that I will do nothing about.

Let her sit in a squirmy haze of arousal and think about what she's done—which is, most importantly, fib to me about being Little.

But I'm going to work my way up to calling her on that.

Give her time to get comfortable with all the possibilities.

Beneath me, Eden squirms. “You should punish me with your cock. Be rough and just use me.”

The first rule of doling out Daddy punishment is probably, don't give the eager brat what she suggests. But we'll be saving that one for another time. Like tonight, maybe. Fuck. “Why do you suggest that?”

“It feels like a good Big-girl punishment.”

I nip her rib cage just below her breast. “Mmm. Sounds more like a Big-girl reward, and you weren't acting like a Big girl in the playroom with your friends.”

She goes still.

I wait.

When she doesn't say anything, I ask, “Correspondence?”

“No,” she whispers.

“Hey...” I surge back up, covering her body with mine. She kisses me, and I let her.

Nothing is more important than this.

And then she's stripping my clothes off, and I'm helping.

Because getting inside her is as natural as breathing now. As essential, too.

She trembles beneath me when I stroke between her legs and find her swollen and slick.

Her tight little cunt takes my cock with ease, and her cheeks are pink by the time I bottom out. She tips her head back, crying out.

Fuck.

Yes.

I cover her soft mouth, muffling her beautiful sounds. She writhes beneath me and my fingers slip over her lips, into her mouth.

“Suck,” I demand.

And she does.

I groan at how good the pull of her tongue is. Wet, eager, perfect.

I brace my other arm on the bed and start to move.

As I drag my length out of her, inch by inch, she sucks harder on my thumb. Her gaze turns liquid, needy, until I snap my hips and thrust deep again.

Her lips part in a silent gasp.

“Suck,” I growl, and her lips close again around my glistening thumb.

I reward her with another drag and thrust.

Glancing down between our bodies, I purr with satisfaction at the glistening skin where my hips are pressed into her. “You take me so well, Eden. Hungry little cunt.”

She whimpers and nods, her mouth pulling hard on my hand. Hungry little mouth, too.

All I want to do is fill her up with come, over and over again.

Maybe later tonight we'll talk about whether she really needs sterner boundaries or corrective instruction.

Maybe tonight I'll be more of a Daddy. Right now, she's got Nolan, the man, wrapped around her little finger—or, more accurately, she's wrapped herself around *my* finger, and my cock, and she's going to drain me of my entire soul.

But not before she comes first. A few times. Maybe more than a few times.

“Your punishment,” I decide, “is an orgasm every hour between now and bedtime.”

“What?”

“You heard me.” I pull my thumb from the lovely cradle of her mouth and shove it between our bodies, finding the beads on either side of her throbbing clit. “You're going to come now. And in one hour, you're going to excuse yourself from whatever you're doing and say you need to find Daddy for a punishment.”

A low, whining groan starts deep inside her. She pants, trying to regain control, but that's not what we're doing this week.

She has her safeword.

She can use it any time she wants.

“Come for me, Eden,” I whisper as I thunder toward my own climax. “Come on Daddy's cock, and then start the

countdown until you get to do it again instead of playing with your friends.”

Chapter 9

Eden

By the time we get back to the group, I only have forty-five minutes. First I crawl onto the extra-wide sunbed next to where Vince has Kaydie wrapped in a towel on his lap. “I’m sorry for being loud while others were sleeping,” I say to him.

He smiles. “Thank you. Maybe you can be a better example for this naughty Little girl later today, mmm?”

I swallow hard. “Maybe. But I might need to excuse myself often.”

His eyebrows curve up in interest. “Oh?”

I blush.

From the bar, Nolan chuckles. “Don’t make her explain, Vince. Just trust that it’s a good one.” Then he crosses the deck and hands me a large glass of water. “Stay hydrated, baby.”

My blush deepens.

Thirty-five minutes.

I down the glass of water, then Nolan tells me it’s time for more sunscreen. I sit in front of him.

“Did you see that Kaylie’s naked under that towel?” he asks quietly in my ear.

I did. “Not completely naked,” I whisper back. “She’s wearing bikini bottoms.”

“Maybe her Daddy said that Little girls don’t need to wear swim tops.” Nolan murmurs. And he tugs on the strings of my own bikini, loosening the top.

I squeak and press my hands to my breasts, keeping the fabric against me. “I’m not that Little yet.”

“Yet?”

“Maybe?”

“Okay.” He gives me a kiss on my temple, then carefully applies sunscreen all over my back and around to the sides of my breasts before he reties my top. “Scoot back and I’ll do your front.”

I relax into his chest and he smooths the sunscreen down my tummy, to the waistband of my bottoms.

I hold my breath, but he just rubs his fingers there for a bit before carrying on to my hips.

“We’ll do your legs after,” he says quietly.

After.

Right.

Because it’s almost that time. “Since you’re right here, do I have to say that I’m going to find you?”

He laughs. Low and happy. “You can just say you need a punishment.”

Oh god.

My pulse is racing when I push to my feet and clear my voice.

Nolan is looking at me with ridiculous pride on his face, which I love, even as I feel silly. “Excuse me,” I say, a little louder than is strictly necessary. “I need to excuse myself because I need a punishment.”

Everyone nods like this is normal, and then Nolan follows me down the corridor to our cabin.

Once we’re inside, he presses me against the door and slides his hand into my bottoms, his fingers going straight to my folds. He pulls some slick arousal to my clit and sets his fingers in a position he’s already learned I like a lot. Love, in fact. Two of his fingers, one on either side of my clit piercing. A hard press, and then slow circles.

“Thank you for being prompt for your hourly punishment,” he says, a smile in his voice—and when I hear it, that’s when I realize I’ve closed my eyes and thumped my head back against the door.

“Uh huh.”

“It’s up to you how long it takes to come. If you take a half hour, though, you’ll only have thirty minutes to recover before we do it again. And in an hour or two, you’ll need to manage dinner around these orgasms.”

He says *orgasms*, plural, with a sharp kind of joy that makes it very clear why this will feel like a punishment by the end of the day, but right now, it feels amazing.

Good news for me, I’m already pretty close.

His fingers push lower than my clit, picking up more slick, then slide back to where I’m most sensitive.

“I want to tell you something,” he murmurs.

“Yes?” My voice shakes.

His fingers press harder, making that shaky feeling worse (which is better, in a way, oh my god). “I love it when you’re Little. It makes the part of me that just wants to take care of you very, very happy.”

I shatter, jerking off the door and into his hard chest. His other arm scoops around me, a steel band holding me up as I hump his fingers shamelessly.

“Good girl,” he says. “You came so fast. You have fifty minutes until the next one.”

The next orgasm happens as he changes me for dinner. He takes off my bikini, pinching my nipples and softly stroking my pussy, but he doesn’t give me anything that’s enough to make me come until I’m dressed—so to speak.

“No panties?” I squeak.

He smooths his hands down my short sundress to my bare thighs. “No. I want you to feel like the messy girl you are. God, you’re pretty like this.” He crouches in front of me and looks up. “Hold your skirt up for Daddy.”

Hands trembling, I lift my skirt, and he dives into my pussy face-first.

This time, there’s no door to lean back against, I’m in the middle of the cabin, so I hold on to his head and his hands come around my thighs.

Maybe that will keep me from collapsing when I come on his tongue in three, two, one...

Dinner is actually served when we return.

Everyone looks innocent about this fact, cheerily agreeing that it's fine if we wait another hour, but that feels like a specific length of time for a delay.

Nolan gives me another glass of water, because—

“Stay hydrated,” I say numbly.

My legs are sticky, and we're not even sitting at the table yet. One stiff breeze off the ocean and my dress will fly up, showing everyone my glistening shame.

Nolan's hand curves around my waist, coming to rest low on my hip, as if he can read my mind and will be on skirt duty.

And punishment duty, too, in less than forty minutes.

Thirty.

Twenty.

Ten minutes.

When it's time, my head feels like it's detached from my body. Such an alien feeling as I rise on unsteady feet.

“Excuse me, I need another punishment,” I say breathlessly.

The stewardesses arrive at exactly that moment with the first course, and mortification races through me, even though everyone looks understanding.

I run down the corridor, and by the time Nolan calmly walks into our cabin, I'm on the bed, on all fours, my hand between my legs. Waiting.

"Please, can I help?" I choke out.

He smooths his hands over my hips. "Of course. You're beautiful like this, you know." One hand trails over the wetness on the inside of my thighs, and then higher, where it's coming from. "Fuck, I need to be inside you."

I nod feverishly.

He unzips, and then he's at my entrance, his cock thick as he pushes into my cunt without any preparation other than the orgasms I've already had and the anticipation over the last hour.

I sob and my fingertips find my clit. I'm coming by his third thrust. The orgasm wrenches through me, a tighter, more complicated sensation than the earlier ones, and it doesn't stop, it keeps rippling through me as he tightens his grip on my hips and fucks me harder.

But just when I think he's going to unload in me, he comes to an abrupt stop.

I twist my head around in shock. "Daddy, please come in me."

"No." His chest is heaving. He pulls out and puts his cock away. "You're making us late for dinner."

Fuck.

I scramble to my feet, but I can't stand. I plunk my butt back down on the bed.

He disappears into the bathroom and washes his hands, then returns and goes straight to the cabin door. Holds it open.

And I force myself up on my feet.

We don't even make it back to the cabin the next hour. He finger-fucks me in the corridor while everyone finishes up their main course, and I'm still catching my breath when the stewardesses appear with dessert.

"Nolan," I gasp. "We almost—"

He braces one forearm on the wall beside my head and ducks his mouth next to my ear. "You can always safeword."

"I don't want to, but—"

"Then trust that it's my job to know what's appropriate and not." He sighs happily. "Or we can continue this tomorrow, too?"

"I trust you," I say immediately. And then I laugh.

He chuckles, too, and then kisses me, his mouth soft and warm and hungry.

Someone shouts from the table that our dessert is melting, and we race back to our seats.

Rayna, who is sitting next to me, leans over and whispers, "You look radiant, you know."

We haven't spoken much, although I like her quiet presence, and this blows me away.

Tears prick at my eyelids, and I nod. "Thank you. I, uh, feel radiant."

A sudden smile blooms across her face. "Good. I'm sure that makes your Daddy very happy."

Nolan wraps his arm around my shoulders and squeezes,
as if to say, *yes, it does*.

Chapter 10

Nolan

The next day, Eden sleeps in until almost noon, a well-deserved rest after a long night of being tortured by me.

And when she wakes up, she's on her best behavior, listening very carefully to Aaron and Vince so she knows the rules for their Littles. All afternoon, she's like a little mother in the playroom and down on the beach deck when we're at anchor, making sure they behave.

I reward her with orgasms, which looks a lot like the punishment routine, but she gets to set the schedule—and when she begs me to come inside her, I do.

That's how the next few days go, too. It's fucking heaven. And we find our own brand of Daddy kink that works for us, but there's still something that sits at the back of my mind when she's drawing. It's in the way she says *Little*, with a bit of wistfulness, even as she clearly sets herself apart from Kaydie and Dylan. Each time I hear it, I pick up on it, and add it to the tally. I feel like there have been moments in the past, opportunities that I missed by not taking control and being the strong Daddy that she needs. I won't make that mistake again.

It comes on the second last day of our cruise, once we've turned around at Monterey and we're heading south again.

She's filled a whole notebook with drawings, with a lot of sketches of the coastline and sunsets. But when she thinks I'm not watching, she flips to a blank page and draws something more childish, with thick black lines that she colors in.

Everyone is somewhere else on the yacht. It's just the two of us up on a forward deck, so I put down the book I was reading and cross to where she's sprawled out against a table, her chin in her hand, her notebook closed beside her.

I tap it. "Show me what you've been drawing."

She jumps. "Oh!"

"Were you daydreaming?"

"I guess." She gives me a warm smile. "I thought you were reading."

"I was. And watching you draw." I lean in, trapping her in her chair. "I want to see your drawings."

"I show them to you."

"You mostly show me the sunsets."

"And the coastlines."

"I want to see the unicorn."

She blushes.

"Am I right? Is that what it was?"

"It's a narwhal," she mutters. "Unicorns of the sea."

"Show Daddy."

There's enough of a pause that I wonder if she might safeword over showing me inside her notebook—which would

be fine, if not perplexing—but then she flips it open and finds the page I saw her drawing a little earlier.

It's a narwhal with attitude, and it's adorable. "I love it," I tell her honestly. "What else have you done?"

She turns the pages, slowing down before she gets to the next page that feels more private. Here there's a little girl octopus on a boat, alone on a sea, and below the water is a big old octopus with eyes that look a lot like mine—if I'm reading cartoons properly.

"What's her story?"

Eden shrugs. Then she stops herself. "She's a girl who was forced to go on an adventure by herself," she says softly.

Oh.

Fuck.

"Did the grizzly old octopus tell her to go off on her own?"

"I guess so."

"And she felt pretty Little having to do that." I drop my forehead down to gently bump against hers. "I see you."

"It's okay," she whispers. "It's in the past now."

"But we're out on the ocean together, and it's okay if that brings up some resentment about me rejecting you."

Her hands come up and cup my face. "As much as I might fantasize about it going differently, I know I was too young for you then."

"You want to tell me about those fantasies?"

She giggles.

"I'm serious."

She sucks in a sharp breath and her hands drop back to her lap. “Yeah. Okay. Maybe.”

“I’m just going to say something that might need to be stated clearly between us, okay?”

She nods.

“Little girls who like to color can also be Big girls who like to ride Daddy’s cock.”

She worries her bottom lip before saying, “Those two things don’t feel the same to me.”

“Fair enough.”

“Do they to you?”

How do I explain that she can be whoever she wants to be, and I’ll still want to be inside her? Still have a hard, thuddy pulse of desperate need driving me in a way I’ve never experienced before? “It’s never not *you*, Eden. So if you’re very Little, like Dylan, or sometimes Little, like Kaydie... I don’t think that would be strange to me. If you got something out of sitting on my lap, sucking your thumb, and being a Baby? I’d still get hard for you because you are you.”

“Do you want me to do that?”

I sink down to squat in front of her. It’s important that I not loom over her as I say this. “I want you to be the most raw and authentic you. What turns me on is the vulnerability. The idea that nobody else gets to see the soft underbelly of tough Eden. There’s no age I want you to be. Only a depth of realness nobody else has ever seen.”

She leans over and kisses me, and then she pushes me gently and I tumble to my back, and she sprawls on top of me.

“I love you,” she says against my mouth.

I kiss her back, then tell her I love her, too.

We make out on the deck, and hold each other, and I don't push her any further.

I've said what needed to be said as the Daddy. The next step is up to her.

“Can I make a toast?” Eden grabs a bottle of champagne—the third the crew has opened for us tonight, I think—and hoists it in the air.

“Can you use a glass?” I ask dryly.

She squeaks and hands it over. I top up her glass, then make sure everyone else has what they want, too, before she continues.

“First of all, I want to say thank you for including me on this trip,” she says. “You made this baby kinkster feel very welcome.”

“I already miss you,” Kaydie says wistfully.

“We'll visit again,” I promise.

Eden smiles. “But my toast is actually to... love. To vulnerable, honest love.” She holds my gaze as she takes a sip of bubbly.

I tip my glass in her direction, too, then drink as well.

We've finished dinner, and we're under the stars with friends. It was already a perfect night, but now my girl is toasting honest vulnerability.

A month ago, I had none of this. I was a tightly wound, lonely bachelor professor.

“Come here,” I growl, and she flies across the deck to me, to give me a champagne-flavored kiss. “I love you.”

She nods. “I know. But I’ve loved you longer.”

I go still.

Her smile is fearless and sweet at the same time. “It’s true.” She shrugs one shoulder. “Like, way too long.”

“Baby...”

She twirls out of my arms. “More champagne!”

Most of the trip, we’ve been some of the earliest to bed, but tonight we stay up with everyone—until Eden reaches the zenith of beautifully drunk, perfectly horny, and zero filter.

“Nolan...” she slurs as she spins into my arms sometime on the far side of midnight. “I used to think about your cock. I think you should know how often—”

I grin. “All right, time for bed.”

“I wanted to give you a blow—”

I cover her mouth with my hand, and she licks me. I deserve a medal for directing her inside instead of unleashing my erection and ordering her to her knees.

She pouts at me over her shoulder. “Can’t unzip my dress.”

“I’ll get it once we’re in the cabin.”

“Here, Daddy...”

“Not here. Sober Eden doesn’t want people to see her tits.”

“Drunk Eden *doesn’t care.*”

“I’m aware.” I catch her in my arms and kiss her. “Come on. Your tits are for Daddy and Daddy alone.”

“Ooookay.” She twirls around, and her skirt lifts up around her hips, showing almost the entire length of her bare legs. That’s fine. She has spectacular legs and everyone has seen them all week already.

I get her in our cabin and close the door. “You used to think about my cock?”

“I still do.”

“I’m a lucky man.”

“Mmmm.” She sighs happily. “I dream of you undressing me, Daddy.”

“I dream of you, too. I did before, too.”

She smiles softly. “Undressing me?”

My own grin is more wicked. “In my dreams, you’re already naked.”

Her eyes go wide. “Oh.”

“I follow you to bed and find you already touching yourself.” I close the gap between us and put my hands on her shoulders. “Do you touch yourself, baby?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl.” I grasp the zipper gently and draw it down, revealing the long, smooth stretch of her back. My finger trails down her spine, too, following the parting zipper.

All the way down to the small of her back, and then a little lower. To where her hips flared, and now the dress is fully loose.

It catches between her body and her arms for a second, then falls to her feet.

All she's wearing under it is a skimpy pair of black panties.

I put them on her before dinner.

And now I take them off her with a nudge, letting them fall to the ground, too.

“On the bed, kitten. Show Daddy how you touch yourself.”

She crawls onto her back, her legs falling apart, and my cock throbs at the sight in front of me.

Beautiful.

Her gaze tangles with mine as she starts to circle her clit, but it doesn't take long for her attention to drop to my cock, stretching my fly obscenely.

“I want to see it.” And in her breathy request, I hear an echo of a younger Eden, who I once denied.

Tonight, she gets whatever she wants.

I unzip.

My cock bulges against the soft cotton of my boxer-briefs, wanting to be free. Wanting her young, innocent, curious gaze.

I don't pull it out yet. I cup myself through the cotton, knowing that once he's bare, it won't be long before I fall on her and get inside her.

It's our way right now. We're still full of *can't quite believe this is real*, new-relationship energy.

After a week of seeing my friends in their longer-term relationships, I know we'll find a different balance down the road. More patience with kink. More history we can lean on.

Right now, the only history we have together is one of painful denial, so the present is charged with a desperate need

to not deny ourselves anything.

Fuck.

I shove my briefs down, freeing my cock. No more denial.

Her eyes light up and her fingers fly faster on her clit.

“Love watching you love yourself,” I growl as I strip off my clothes.

Then I’m on the bed and shoving my way between her legs. My fingers press into her thighs, probably leaving marks, but I can’t let go of her.

My cock is leaking already, wet at the tip. I ignore it and work my fingers into her first. Her fingers on her clit, mine in her tight, clutching pussy.

Her ripe, lush body quivering beneath me.

I take hold of her waist and guide her up, lifting her hips and bringing her sweet wet slit to meet my cock. The warm, soft slick of her body giving way for me is incredible.

She breathes my name. First Nolan, then Daddy.

“I’ve got you.”

“I need you deep...”

With a groan, I thrust my hips, working us together. “You’re tight, baby. Gotta go slow or you’ll make me explode.”

“Yes, Daddy... Want you to explode in me. Fill me up.”

I change the angle, sliding my hand over her mound so I can work her clit with my thumb. “I want to fill you up, too.”

“Want to have your babies.”

“Want that too, beautiful.” I can feel my balls churning, seed desperate to get inside her now.

My hips snap forward, and I hook an arm under hips, holding her up. She moans low and long, a sexy cry, and then her whole body seizes. Out of nowhere, she’s caught by an orgasm, and I can feel it from the inside out.

Now it’s her name on my lips, *Eden, oh fuck, yes, Eden...* and then I explode, my come pouring of me, deep inside her.

I bow my head forward, putting my face between her small breasts, and she puts her hands in my hair, holding me against her as my cock twitches in her belly.

My pulse slowly returns to normal, and still I’m inside her.

“Worth the wait,” she whispers. “And better than my dreams.”

Chapter 11

Eden

Adjusting back to real life is a slight challenge after a week on a luxury yacht. But it's not like my real life isn't still a fantasy dream.

I get a job in Conception Ridge, an assistant production editor position at the town newspaper that doesn't pay much, but does give me an opportunity to do some graphic design and illustration, because all five people who work for the paper each wear at least three different hats.

And I get to come home every day to a man who loves me for just being myself. Who gives me the most spectacular orgasms—sometimes as a punishment—and has infinite patience for me figuring my shit out.

So I shouldn't be nervous about finally wanting to talk about our past. He's expressly asked me to think about it, and share my thoughts with him.

But I'm nervous for my own reasons. Because I'd rather be in the present, where I'm deliriously happy.

There are some thoughts that keep coming up in my art and my dreams, though, that I'm finally ready to say out loud.

When I tell Nolan I want to talk, he wraps me in a blanket on the living room coach, where he took my virginity less than two months ago, and he waits.

On the wall, in a frame, is a letter he gave me for my eighteenth birthday.

It's fitting that we're having this conversation in front of it, I realize.

I point to it. "So... that."

He glances up at it. "Yes. That."

"I didn't want to go out into the world and do all those things." It tears out of me.

He nods slowly. "I'm sorry."

"You aren't. You'd do it again. Tell me I need to go and experience everything."

"I would," he says calmly. "Because I couldn't take advantage of an eighteen-year-old."

"It would have been hot," I chirp back, because I can't resist.

He doesn't take the bait. "Don't be a brat."

"You said you don't mind bratty."

"When it's real. When it's raw. Don't use that to manipulate me, though."

"Or what?" If he's going to make me come every hour on the hour, I'll keep pushing.

“Or I’ll make you write me an ethics essay before you get another orgasm.”

“What?” An essay?

He nods slowly, then leans in and kisses me softly. “Five hundred words on the value of personal boundaries.”

“What?”

“You heard me.”

“I don’t want to do that! Can’t you give me a punishment that is more... climax related?”

“No, the point is that you don’t want to. I can see that you need to. And you will feel better when it’s done. Humor me. If you go away and feel better not doing it, let me know that you have another plan. I’m always open to honest communication with my love.”

“That feels manipulative,” I mutter. “Calling me your love.”

“Damn it,” he says mildly. “I was going for deeply open and vulnerable.”

I throw my arms around his neck and kiss his cheek. “You’re too smart for me. I feel like a stupid kid sometimes.”

“I never ever see you that way. I swear. But I think we’re getting sidetracked already. You really hated all of your solo life experiences before you came back to me?”

“Not all of them,” I whisper. “But I was lonely for those four years. And as the days turn into weeks, and now months for us... don’t get me wrong. I’m so happy with you. But I’m starting to realize just how lonely I was.”

“Like a girl all alone on a boat in the ocean.”

“Yeah.”

He nuzzles his nose into my cheek. “What if we frame that picture you drew? And any others you want to draw. A visual reminder, just like the letter, of what we gave up before? Because baby, I’m never sending you away again. I’m never going to give you up. You are *mine*, you hear?”

I nod hurriedly. I know I am.

“Say it.”

“I’m yours.” But my voice is shaky.

“Say, *Daddy will never send me away.*”

“Daddy will never send me away.”

“That’s right.” He kisses me hard now. “Even if you’re Little. Even if you’re bratty. You’re old enough now that you can be those things *and* be mine.”

“I don’t know how often I want to be Little.”

He smiles.

“But can we go back on the group trip next year?”

“Fuck yes. Unless...” His hand drops to my belly. Two months together, and we’ve never used protection, and my period is about to be late. “That depends on a few external factors.”

“Oh, right.” I blush. “The next available opportunity, then.”

“We can play like that at home sometimes. Just sometimes. Or as often as you want.”

“I’m still a bit in my head about it.”

“Can Daddy help with that?” His hand pushes lower from my belly, into my yoga pants. Into my panties, where I’m already slick.

He groans. “How am I supposed to fucking resist when you’re this fucking wet? This fucking needy?”

He’s not. He’s not supposed to resist. He’s supposed to make me feel good, so good, in secret, over and over again. And he always does.

“Be as Little you want,” he whispers.

“Too Little,” I whisper back.

His hand tightens on my pussy. A shudder ripples through him. And he nods. “Okay.”

My mouth finds his, and I let my kiss be what it would have been the night before eighteenth birthday. Clumsy, horny, confused. Inexperienced.

He groans into my mouth and deepens it, his tongue stroking against mine.

I push his t-shirt up, wanting my hands on his bare skin. I love the hard planes of his chest, the warm skin pulled taut over wiry muscles. I want to be naked with him. I want to itemize all the ways our bodies are different and have him teach me how good they work together, though, to make me feel good.

With one hand, he yanks his shirt off and tosses it to the floor. With the other, he spins me around so I’m flat on my back on the couch.

He peels off my yoga pants and panties. They go flying in the other direction, to the corner of the room. He stares down at my cleft. “Perfect grown-up Little girl pussy.”

I release a desperate gasp, and he shoves my thighs apart.

Yes.

His breath is warm on my hip, then my mound, and finally, *finally*, right up the center of my seam. His tongue teases me open, then slowly makes me bloom, and squirm, and beg.

“Nolan, please...” I’m humping his face, my hands in his hair. “I want you to fuck me.”

He pushes up, his face glistening from me. Tension wars across his face, and then he’s off the couch, off me. His gaze stays locked on my face as he strips his pants off, then he’s looming over me in only his boxer-briefs.

There’s something wicked in his expression that matches the new tension in the air. It’s radiating from him, I realize.

“Please,” I beg again.

He slowly strips off the final piece of clothing between us, then climbs on top of me again.

Slow, slow, slow. Everything is moving like we’re in a dream.

His gaze glitters down at me as he rubs his cock between my legs, then up onto my mound toward my belly.

I squirm against him, my clit straining for better contact against the throbbing length of his cock.

“No, baby,” he finally says, his voice tight. “You’re too Little for Daddy to be inside you.”

I sob. But the steel in his denial also makes my core tighten up.

“Shhh...” he smoothes his hand over my cheek. His thumb drags across my lips, then pushes into my mouth. “Suck.”

I suck, just like I did on the yacht, with hungry, gulping little swallows.

He exhales happily. “Your needy little noises are music to my ears. Good girl. Your mouth knows what it’s doing. Daddy’s going to teach you how to suck his cock just like that.”

I nod and whimper, and he slowly starts working his cock back and forth along the seam of my pussy, so the tip of his erection teases my clit, then the full length of him pushes against it on each thrust.

“Too Little to get fucked, but not too Little to be loved, hmm?” His voice is hypnotic. It’s his podcaster voice, I realize. What I used to listen to while I rubbed myself to sleep. “You’re never going to be lonely again, Eden. I’ve got you. You’re mine. And I’m yours.”

Tears prick at my eyelids and I nod harder.

“Come for Daddy,” he whispers, his hips working faster. “If I feel that sweet pussy flutter against my balls, I’ll come, too. Would you like that?”

So much. Another nod.

His thumb tugs out of my mouth, leaving me panting, searching for it hungrily.

“Say it,” he whispers, his voice catching on a rough note. “Tell Daddy you want him to come on your belly.”

“I want you to come inside me,” I say, because it’s the truth.

He groans. “Can’t do that.”

I tilt my hips up, trying to catch the tip of him. He plants a hand firmly on my hip and stops me with a groan. It’s rough

and deep. I tremble beneath him, my legs spread wide, my pussy aching.

And then, ever so slowly, he fits us together.

Both of us are breathing hard as he breaches me with just the tip. His gaze locks onto mine and the whole world disappears.

He feels big, and he feels right.

He sinks into me, inch by inch, and once he's all the way buried, he gives me his weight, too. His mouth comes to my cheek and I realize I'm crying when he kisses away my tears.

Then he starts moving.

It's slow. It's careful.

It's the opposite of the fast fucks we often have, all eager energy. This is deeply loving, which isn't what younger me wanted. She wanted her off-limits crush to fuck her the way he would fuck a grown-up Eden.

But this is better. This is everything. This is *my* Nolan, loving *me*.

I wrap my legs around him and he cups my breast, both of us moving in unison now.

"Daddy," I breathe.

"Yes..."

I repeat it a dozen times, moaning for him, and then I'm coming, and it's bright and powerful and contagious. He groans on top of me, a drawn-out, ragged grunt that is one of the most satisfying sounds I have ever heard.

And then his whole body curls over mine, and we're kissing again.

When we pull apart, I realize my phone is ringing in the distance. Nolan drags himself off me. “I’ll go find it in a minute.”

“I’m good, I’m getting up...” I swipe his t-shirt off the floor on my way back to the kitchen, where I think I left my phone.

He follows, collecting the rest of our clothes.

Once I find my phone, I see it was a call from my mom. We’ve had some polite, short phone calls, but sometimes I dodge her to avoid the slight awkwardness of it all, and she must think this is one of those times, because she’s followed up with a text message. “It’s a text from my mom.” I read it out loud. “*Your father thinks there should be a ring if he’s serious about wanting to marry you.*” I roll my eyes. “Can you believe him? How deeply old-fashioned.”

Behind me, Nolan says, “I agree with him.”

“What?” I turn, laughing, but the surprise at his reaction drops—and turns to surprise of a completely different sort—when I see him down on one knee. A ring is in his outstretched hand. “Nolan, you don’t need—”

“Oh, I need. Very much. I need to make you promises, and I need to make you mine. I need to show you in every way, on every level, that I adore you. I adore your little side, and I adore your bratty side, and I adore your everyday Eden side.” He pauses, and his voice goes from firmly bossy to silky soft. “I love you. I want you to be my wife. I want you to wear my ring and carry my name and be *mine*. Will you marry me?”

“Where did the ring come from?” He’s wearing boxer-briefs and nothing else. The logistics of him being ready for this moment are impressive.

He chokes out a laugh. “My pants pocket, Eden. Come on, don’t leave me hanging here.”

“Did you coordinate the text—”

“It’s been in my pocket since we got back from the trip, all right?” He gives me an exasperated but adoring look. “I love you so much, you curious little thing. Please fucking marry me.”

“Of course I’ll marry you,” I tease back. “That’s a given. I just wanted to know—”

“It’s not a given.” He takes my hand in his and slides the ring onto my finger. “I will never take what we have for granted. And you can satisfy all of your questions later.”

“Later?”

“After.”

“After...”

“After your punishment for asking too many questions.”

“Is that an essay, or...”

He hauls me down to the floor and rolls on top of me. “It’s *or*, baby. Now be quiet for Daddy.”

The End

There's more!

Eden and Nolan are a couple Chloe can't stop writing about!

If you want a bonus story about them a few years down the road, click here to get *Brunch Date* delivered straight to your inbox: chloemainebooks.myflodesk.com/jdzmog6t0w

About Chloe Maine

If you would like another Daddy-kink-at-sea story, check out the novel, *Stranded With His Dad*, also by Chloe Maine. Ray thinks he's just giving his son's girlfriend a ride from Miami to Bimini, Bahamas, but a storm blows them off-course and now he's stranded with a girl who says she's never been kissed...but she wants him to change that. And when she calls him Daddy in the middle of the chaos, nothing has ever felt that right, even as Jenna remains deeply off-limits.

www.chloemaine.com

Kenzie's Perfect
Daddies by L.G. Knight

A MMF story by L.G. Knight

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Prologue

Kenzie

“You know, eventually you’ll have to get the fuck over it, right?”

To anyone else, the words might have seemed harsh and unnecessary, but Kenzie appreciated her best friend’s bluntness in a way most wouldn’t understand. River was brash, loud and unfiltered, which was exactly what Kenzie needed. She knew she could count on River to never tell her something they didn’t mean, just as she knew they would never hold back something she needed to hear.

Taking a deep breath and setting aside the pink brush she’d been using to get the tangles out of her long brown hair, Kenzie thought about what River had said. “It isn’t that-”

“Bullshit.” River stopped Kenzie from offering an excuse that would have indeed been bullshit.

“No—” Kenzie felt the need to defend herself but should have known better. River always seemed to know.

“Look, I get it. You broke up, you agreed it was amicable and something you both wanted, but you lied.” Okay, maybe

River's bluntness wasn't *always* appreciated. "Now, you're stuck living without a man you love. You haven't been back to the club in like a year and a half because you're scared of running into him. I know exactly what's happening, but, sweetie, you aren't hurting anyone but yourself with that crap. He's moved on. He has a Daddy now, and you're sitting alone at home on a Friday night instead of playing with me and showing him you've got life figured out without him."

"But I really don't—" Kenzie tried to interrupt River's rant.

"But it's time to get over it."

And there was that bluntness Kenzie had known was coming. It wasn't that she wasn't aware of the fact that River was one hundred percent right, it wasn't that she didn't miss her favorite place in the city, it most certainly wasn't that she didn't miss playing with her friends at the club; she just wasn't ready to face Beau.

To the outside world, even to Beau, it looked like an amicable breakup, and honestly it had been. Sort of. As her friend had pointed out, though, Kenzie had lied. Beau had started to tell her that he needed more and Kenzie had immediately jumped in with all sorts of ridiculousness about her needing more too and how she couldn't blame him. Honestly, she wasn't really sure what all lies she had spouted, only that she'd needed to be the one to end things before he did.

"Look, if nothing else, come next Thursday. I heard him and Sebastian, his new Daddy, discussing being out of town then, so you could try stepping back into the scene on a day they'll be gone."

Hmmm... That doesn't sound so bad.

“River, you’re a genius. Let’s plan on that.”

“Yes!”

The shout was loud enough to cause Kenzie to jump but she couldn’t blame them, she was excited too.

Chapter 1

Beau

“I’m sorry to have missed your niece’s birthday, but the wedding sure was fun!” Beau said excitedly, sliding into his Middle mindset as his Daddy drove them toward Little Hearts Club.

“She’s more than happy to be the first to come stay at our house instead. Sure, we missed the chance to see everyone else, but Carly is not at all disappointed. She said this arrangement is even better than us being at her birthday.” Sebastian placed his hand on Beau’s thigh. “Besides, there’s no way we would miss a chance to not only attend Addy and Tobias’ wedding but to get to visit Vegas as well.”

That was very true. Beau had never been to Vegas, and he had been telling Daddy he wanted to go for a long time. He’d finally seen the sights there. Daddy had kept them in Vegas a few extra days so they could explore. It had been so much fun, and Beau was super grateful for the reprieve from the unsettled feeling he’d been having of late.

The last time Beau had felt this kind of restlessness, he ended up losing Kenzie. Now he was feeling that way again,

and it made it hard to concentrate. He hated keeping secrets from Sebastian, but since it hadn't ended well when he'd tried to discuss his feelings with Kenzie, he was terrified that if he tried again, this time he might lose Sebastian. He couldn't—*wouldn't*—lose another person he loved so deeply.

Beau knew that his Daddy understood and accepted that he still had feelings for his ex-girlfriend although Sebastian hadn't met her yet since Kenzie had disappeared from the club before he had joined. They'd talked when they first started exploring their relationship and when Beau had told Sebastian he wasn't sure if he'd be able to love Sebastian the way he deserved because he loved Kenzie so much, Sebastian had told him they'd see how things went.

“It's possible to love more than one person deeply.”

The words Sebastian had used, while they had surprised him at first, echoed in Beau's head for months. He'd never considered that as something he'd want or need but Sebastian's wise words had opened his eyes to what had been missing. It felt right, somehow. He just didn't know how to tell his Daddy.

Letting his wandering thoughts go, Beau settled back to enjoy the drive and slip into the headspace he needed to have the best time he could at the club that night. It was his time to lose his worries and just be. He couldn't wait.

Sebastian

Something was bothering his Little boy and Sebastian was at a loss for how to drag the information out of Beau. He needed to know what had made his boy unhappy. How was he meant to fix it if he didn't know what was broken? Maybe he was simply being daft.

“Stupid”, not “daft”. Almost twenty years since I moved to America, and I still fall back on the British expressions my parents use.

It seemed that no matter how long Sebastian had been away from England, he couldn't seem to completely wipe the British words and phrases from his speech. It had gotten better over the years, but he still reverted back to them occasionally. Especially if his emotions were high.

Sebastian parked the car as close to the club doors as he could and rounded the vehicle to help his boy out of the car. It had taken a bit to get Beau used to waiting for him to come open the door. When Beau was in Daddy mode, it had been his job to open the doors for others, and it had been almost automatic. When he was in his Middle mindset, it was sometimes hard to remember that the different dynamic led to different expectations. Being a switch was hard, and Sebastian didn't envy Beau.

That led to another worry Sebastian had lurking in the back of his mind. How long would it be before his boy needed to take back control and Daddy someone? Sebastian had done quite a bit of research of late. He'd looked into options he hadn't initially thought he'd consider; but he was finding the idea more appealing every day. Sebastian planned to broach the subject with Beau soon, but Beau was still in love with his ex and Sebastian wasn't sure how open to the idea Beau would be at this point. It was probably better to hold off for now.

Taking Beau's hand in his, Sebastian led his boy into the club for a much-needed Thursday night release. It had been longer than they usually went between visits. Beau was perfectly happy going into Middlespace at home, but he also needed time with his friends. He was a social butterfly and thrived on regular interaction with other Littles and Middles. Their membership fee might be considered a luxury to some, but to Sebastian it was a necessity. It did so much for Beau's mental health.

They showed their IDs and member cards at the front desk and entered the public playroom. Sebastian tensed immediately when Beau froze in place and gripped Sebastian's hand so tightly he was afraid he might crush it.

Looking at his him, Sebastian saw the color draining from Beau's face, his eyes as big as saucers and his mouth hanging open. "Kenzie." The whisper was barely audible but Sebastian's complete focus on Beau helped him hear it and that one word sent Sebastian's heart racing.

Shit! So much for a relaxing evening.

Kenzie

"Are you sure you's not cheating?" Kenzie studied the board before her. She was a Candy Land expert. How in the world had she lost three whole games to River?

"I's not a cheater," River said indignantly. "You knows it!"

Kenzie huffed and pinned her friend with a challenging look. "Best four outta seven."

“You’re on!”

Kenzie and River were halfway through the next game and River was winning again, when the air in the club changed and Kenzie stiffened. She’d only ever felt that tingling sensation racing through her body in the presence of her Daddy.

Ex Daddy, Kenzie. Ex.

There was no way this was from him, though; he was supposed to be out of town. Slowly, scared of what she’d find, Kenzie turned her head toward the door where she found the sight she’d been avoiding for more than a year and a half. There stood Beau, his hand gripped tightly in the hand of another ridiculously handsome man.

Shit, shit, shit. Not yet, please!

Kenzie slowly blinked her eyes hoping she’d open them and find it had been a mirage, but when she opened them again, she saw it had indeed been real. Kenzie had to fight the urge to run. She didn’t realize she’d been gripping the card she’d drawn so tightly until River tugged the wrinkled mess from her hand.

“Kenzie, I’m—”

Kenzie held her hand up at her friend, it wasn’t their fault. “No, River.” Her voice was choked and a wave of grief so strong she couldn’t fight the tears went through her. “It’s not your fault but I need to find somewhere else to be.”

Kenzie had barely gotten the words out before she hurriedly stood and rushed from the public room. She needed to get out of there before she embarrassed herself.

Chapter 2

Sebastian

Looking around to find the source of Beau's distress, Sebastian's eye caught a wisp of a Little girl jumping up and running from the room so fast, her brown pigtails were waving behind her like flags in a breeze.

Before Sebastian could think better of it, his hand had gripped Beau's tighter and he'd taken a step to follow the obviously distraught Little. Beau stood firm, keeping Sebastian where he was and preventing him from following his instinct. The growl that came at being held back surprised even him. Why was he so strongly led to help this girl? He'd seen plenty of Littles in distress and while he always wanted to help, he'd never felt this strong of a pull before.

He looked back and forth between his boy and the direction Kenzie had fled several times before determining Beau was right. She wouldn't want comfort from her ex-boyfriend's current man. It was probably better to leave her be and focus on what his own Little boy needed. The problem was, Sebastian had been becoming more certain every day that what his boy needed was more than just him.

Kenzie had fled down the Littles' wing hallway, on one side of the communal play area. Sebastian led Beau to one of the rooms in the Middles' wing on the opposite side of the playroom, well away from where Kenzie had gone. The club wasn't designed that way to keep Littles and Middles separate, since many of them moved freely from one wing to the other, but was simply set up that way to make finding certain themed rooms easier for patrons.

Sebastian hunted down the first room he could find that was empty and would offer privacy. Leading Beau to one of the oversized gaming chairs in the dim arcade room, Sebastian settled Beau on his lap, wrapping his arms around the younger man and drawing Beau's head down to rest on his shoulder.

Sebastian knew trying to initiate a conversation would only lead to resistance from Beau, so he waited patiently, smoothing a hand up and down his back in comfort. Just when Sebastian started to believe Beau might not open up just yet, Beau took a deep breath and began with words that sent a pang through Sebastian's heart.

"I had actually started to believe my feelings for her were beginning to fade. How stupid was that? When I saw her..."

Beau's voice hitched, and Sebastian ached to take away his pain. He hated seeing his sweet boy suffering.

"Anyway," Beau continued, "it all came rushing back. All of it. How can I be so in love with you, Daddy, and still be so in love with *her*?"

Sebastian wasn't ashamed to admit that the declaration of love from Beau in that moment soothed his soul. He'd have been devastated if Beau didn't feel for him what Sebastian felt for Beau. He was also struggling, though, because he was

pretty certain he knew the answer to Beau's question. But he wondered whether or not his boy would be ready for it.

"It's completely possible to love more than one person, and it's also completely possible to be *in* love with more than one person." Sebastian kept his voice gentle and soothing, gauging his boy's reaction to the words.

"Daddy, I know with certainty you are the one for me. But how do I handle being in love with her when I know you're the one for me?"

"Babyboy, have you considered the possibility that we're both the ones for you? That you're meant to be with us both and love us both? Is that something you've thought about before?"

Beau took a deep breath and Sebastian waited anxiously for his answer.

Beau

Beau couldn't believe his ears. Was his Daddy *really* bringing up the possibility of the one thing Beau had been scared to even think about? How was it that this man could possibly want the same thing Beau did?

"I've considered that I might be made to have two loves. I just haven't ever thought that I could."

"Why is that, babyboy?"

"Bringing up the topic hasn't worked well in the past for me. I couldn't stand the thought of losing you like I lost

Kenzie, so I haven't tried to talk about it."

Daddy tightened his grip on Beau, holding him close and breathing him in. It made Beau feel so small and cared for. He loved being held and treasured like this.

"You can tell me *anything*, baby. *Anything*. There isn't a single thing you could do or say that would make me walk away, unless you told me you didn't want me anymore."

"Kind of like you told me."

Both men startled at the sound of Kenzie's voice coming from the doorway.

Beau swung his head toward Kenzie and stared in disbelief. She thought he didn't *want* her? How had he *ever* made her think that?

Kenzie

Kenzie stepped into the room, keeping her eyes focused on Beau. She'd glanced at the other man and had wanted to take a second look, but at the moment, her focus needed to be on her ex-Daddy.

Her heart still raced, her body still heated up at the sight of him, and her entire being still wanted to curl up in his embrace. She wasn't sure how she could still feel so much for the man who'd crushed her, but there hadn't been even the slightest lessening of her love.

How was she going to face him regularly when she still couldn't catch her breath around him? It was going to be an

issue since she'd decided she was done hiding from her favorite place and her favorite people just to avoid Beau Sanderson.

Kenzie Marks was much more badass than that, and it was time she started showing it. She was done being a coward who ran from her problems. It was time to face them head on and have it out with Beau. If they were going to coexist in the club, they needed to clear the air.

She'd almost reached Beau by the time he'd come out of his shock and spoken.

“I have never *not* wanted you, Kenzie; and I have *never once* said so. How could you possibly think that?”

Kenzie's desire for peace was immediately replaced with anger ignited by indignation. “You said you needed more than I could give you. How else was I supposed to interpret that, Beau? I wasn't enough for you and that crushed me.”

Chapter 3

Sebastian

Sebastian was gobsmacked as he looked at the absolute dream coming towards them. He was sure his eyes were bugging out of his head. Could Beau hear his heart pounding in his chest? He could easily see why Beau fancied Kenzie. Her generous hips swayed with every step, inspiring visions of him gripping them tight as he took her fast and rough from behind. Her big green eyes were full of hurt and resentment, though, and Sebastian felt an inexplicable urge to wipe the pain from them. Strands of her thick, long hair had escaped the confinement of the pink and gray bows holding the pigtails atop her head. He wanted to smooth them away from her face and see if they were as soft as they looked.

Beau's voice brought Sebastian from his trance and back to the moment. He probably should have felt like an intruder in their conversation. It was private and concerned only the two of them. He *didn't* feel that way, though. Beau was his and anything that hurt Beau hurt Sebastian as well. But somehow, he was getting the same feelings about the Little beauty in front of them. It was something he didn't understand since he hadn't spoken one word to her, but he was already feeling a

strong protectiveness for Kenzie, similar to what he felt for Beau.

His instinct was so strong that when she repeated Beau's words to her, Sebastian had to bite back a growl. He knew his Little boy was not the best at getting words out the way he intended them and knew there was no way Beau had meant those words the way they'd translated to her. He still felt an itch to tan Beau's hide for hurting Kenzie in any way.

Beau made a move to climb from Sebastian's lap and Sebastian loosened his hold. As Beau took the small step to reach Kenzie, Sebastian held his breath. How things went from here was dependent on what Beau said in this moment. Sebastian hoped he got it right because he was now more convinced than ever that the three of them were meant to be together.

Beau

God, he wanted to touch her. It was the hardest thing he'd ever done to hold himself back from taking Kenzie in his arms. How could he have done this to her? More importantly, how could he fix it?

Beau stared at the woman of his dreams, wishing he could take back all the hurt he'd caused, get back all the time they'd lost, and never have broken her trust. He couldn't do that, but maybe he could start working toward repairing the damage.

"Kenz, Kenz, baby, I never meant it the way you think, and I should have used the word *we*... *We* needed more. Not

just me, not just you, *us together.*”

With every word, Beau’s instinct to touch his girl got stronger, until he finally couldn’t resist and reached for her hand. Breathing a sigh of relief when she didn’t immediately pull away, he continued, hoping to get it all out before she got the wrong idea again. “I wanted you to have everything you deserve. I’m a switch, baby. You need a Daddy who is Daddy all the time, but I need someone to Daddy me sometimes as well. I never meant that I wanted to end things, I meant that I wanted us to find someone who could fill the voids, I wanted us to do it together. I just wanted us both to have all the happiness we deserve.”

It took so long for Kenzie to reply that Beau began to worry he’d fucked up again, but when she finally did speak, he felt hope blossom in his chest.

“You weren’t easing into leaving me?”

The words were barely a whisper, but Beau heard them and squeezed her hand. “No, baby bear, I wasn’t. I’d never walk away from you willingly.”

A tear slipped from her eyes and trailed down her cheek as she shook her head and backed up a step. Beau felt his heart sink. Putting distance between them didn’t exactly bode well for his plan. But when she whispered, “What have I done?” Beau began to understand. There was a good chance he could fix this after all.

Kenzie

All this time, she'd blamed Beau for her misery. Sure, she'd been the one to end things but it was because she'd believed that he'd been about to dump her. Now, she was finding out that she'd jumped to conclusions and put her own self through hell. And now it was completely ruined. He'd moved on.

She looked up at the man Beau had replaced her with. She couldn't blame Beau, really; he was absolutely beautiful in a rugged way. The button-down shirt he wore lent class to his clean-cut jeans. The five-o'clock shadow emphasized the angles of his squared jaw and his dark eyes enhanced his commanding presence. His black hair and dark skin were the opposite of Beau's light hair and pale complexion, making a beautiful contrast when the two were together. Beau had done well, and she couldn't help but be a bit jealous, and more than a bit attracted.

The imposing man stood and came toward her, kneeling in front of her and reaching for her hand. The actions made her feel small and she could feel her Little sneaking to the surface in response.

"It wasn't what you did, little one. It was a misunderstanding. And neither of you have done anything that can't be fixed."

What the hell was he talking about? Of course, it couldn't be fixed. She was no homewrecker, and she could see the love in Daddy's eyes when he looked at this man. She'd lost him.

Beau, Beau, Beau! He is not your Daddy anymore!

Kenzie shook her head again and fought back tears before turning and rushing from the room.

Chapter 4

Sebastian

Sebastian watched as Kenzie once again escaped. Part of him wanted to go after her but it was likely a good thing she'd run off before he overstepped his bounds. He needed to discuss his plan with his boy first.

He turned toward Beau and reached his hand out, encouraging Beau to take it. When he did so without hesitation, Sebastian rose from his kneeling position, leading Beau back to the gaming chair they'd vacated during their impromptu conversation.

He settled on the seat and lifted Beau up to straddle him. He took Beau's face in his hands and prepared to dive into the conversation.

"You're mine. Forever. Do you understand that?" He had to make this clear before he opened up the next part of this conversation. The last thing he wanted to do was make Beau feel like Kenzie had felt.

Beau's face tightened before he eased his features and nodded his head. "Yes, Daddy."

“Good boy.” He stroked Beau’s cheek with his thumb, “But,” he continued, “you’re also hers. I get that now. I could see it as you talked with her. You’re hers and she is yours.”

“But—” Beau began, and Sebastian knew exactly where Beau’s thoughts had gone.

“Here’s the kicker, though,” He took a deep breath before dropping his bomb, “She’s mine too. I felt it the minute she walked in this room.”

Beau’s expression morphed into one of complete confusion and Sebastian knew that the high emotions were causing Beau not to grasp the enormity of his words. Sebastian was going to have to spell it out. “I know with certainty that the both of you are meant to be mine.”

“Really?” There was so much hope in Beau’s voice and Sebastian’s soul soared at knowing he was on the right track and his boy could see it.

“I’m that Daddy you talked to her about thinking you needed in your dynamic. I always have been, we just didn’t know each other yet.”

A smile brighter than Sebastian had ever seen lit Beau’s face and he wiggled in excitement. Sebastian sucked in a deep breath as Beau rubbed against the erection that hadn’t gone away since Kenzie stepped into the room. He grabbed Beau’s hips to still him and asked the big question on his mind. “The question is, how do we convince Kenzie of it?”

He felt ten-feet tall when Beau brushed his hair back and said, “If anyone can figure it out, you can, Daddy.”

Gripping the back of Beau’s neck, Sebastian brought Beau’s face closer until he could capture Beau’s lips with his own. It wasn’t long before he was changing the tone of the soft

kiss, licking the seam of his boy's lips and demanding entry. Beau immediately opened for him and Sebastian explored, allowing Beau to battle him a bit for dominance before completely taking over and devouring him.

He wasn't sure how long the kiss lasted but when he finally pulled away, they were both panting and Beau was grinding his own erection over Sebastian's. He gripped Beau's hips again, pausing his movements.

“Later, baby. Right now, we need to go find our girl.”

Kenzie

Kenzie burst into the coat room and plopped onto one of the colorful cushioned benches. She should gather her things and get out, but she couldn't find the energy for that. She felt wiped and figured her fucks-to-give supply was in the negative at that point. How had this night ended up so jacked?

She was supposed to come here and play and forget all her worries for a while. Instead, her biggest worry had walked in with her. Literally. Not only that, but she'd learned she'd still have the man she loved if she hadn't jumped to conclusions. Why couldn't she have just let him finish speaking that night?

Because you're too scared of being rejected.

That was the crux of the matter. She'd always been told she was either too much or not good enough and she'd panicked at the thought of Beau telling her that. She'd known she wouldn't get over it. So, she'd jumped in to stop the words

that she thought were coming out and had instead ended up pushing him away.

Why was she so fucked up?

The door to the coat room burst open and River made their way in, rushing straight for her. Kenzie wrapped her arms around her friend's waist and let the sobs come. She knew River would gladly let her get it all out, even if she did soak their shirt. They were the kind of friend who stuck by you and Kenzie was grateful to have them there with her during this.

After several minutes, Kenzie's sobs subsided and River reached over, plucking a handful of tissues from a box sitting on a table at the end of the bench. They carefully wiped Kenzie's tears and handed her a tissue to blow her nose.

"I'm so sorry, Kenz-Kenz. I didn't know they'd changed their plans and taken an impromptu trip to Vegas instead." The guilt lacing River's voice tore at Kenzie's heart and she rushed to comfort her friend.

"You couldn't have known. Honestly, this needed to happen sooner or later. I'm tired of hiding and the only way to come out is to work this out with him."

River brushed their thumb over her cheek, catching a stray tear, and reached for Kenzie's hand. "Enough of this. If you're tired of hiding, it's time to come out of hiding and back to the group room."

Just as she made to rise and follow her friend, the door to the coat room opened again, this time more gently, and Beau's Daddy stuck his gorgeous face past the edge of the door. "I was hoping we'd find you, Kenzie."

He opened the door further and entered with Beau coming in close behind him. Their hands were gripped together in an

obvious show of solidarity and that rush of jealousy reared up in Kenzie again, shocking her for the second time because it wasn't the fact that they held hands that ignited it. No, it was inspired by the fact that they weren't holding hers as well. Not Beau. *Them*. The *both* of them. The thought was still so foreign, but it seemed it had taken root and now she was imagining what it would be like to be theirs.

Beau's Daddy looked to River and addressed them in a tone that said it might have been phrased as a question but was in fact an order. "Can we talk to Kenzie a moment?"

Despite the commanding tone, River still directed their questioning gaze at Kenzie, making sure that she was okay with it before leaving her alone with the men.

"It's fine," Kenzie whispered. She might as well get this over with. She wasn't really going to be able to move on until the air was completely cleared and that wasn't going to happen if she kept running when the emotions got too strong. It was time to pull up her big girl panties and handle it, no matter how emotionally taxing it might be.

Chapter 5

Beau

Her eyes were red rimmed, the whites completely pink. Her skin was splotchy and her nose bright red, but she'd never been more beautiful, and Beau had never wanted to hold and comfort Kenzie quite as much as he did in that moment. Knowing he'd been the cause of her current state was eating at him and he vowed to himself that if she gave them a chance, he'd spend the rest of his life making up for it.

Sebastian led him to the bench where their girl was still sitting. They passed River on their way to Kenzie and Beau took note of the fierce glare they aimed his way. He'd have his work cut out for him getting back in their good graces but if Kenzie opted to give them the chance, he didn't mind putting in the work to win over her best friend again.

Daddy helped him onto the bench on one side of Kenzie and settled himself on the other side of their girl. Kenzie's gaze swung back and forth between them until Daddy hooked a finger under her chin and directed her gaze at him. Just seeing this small action brought a rush of desire coursing

through Beau's system. He hadn't considered how hot he would find it if the right person touched his girl.

"Look at me for a moment, little one." Sebastian commanded.

Kenzie's eyes swung to his dark ones and stayed there.

That's a good sign.

Sebastian

She was so fucking gorgeous. Touching her, even in such an innocent way, sent sparks shooting from the point of contact and he couldn't wait to convince her that she was theirs. Her breathing sped up and her pupils dilated at his command and Sebastian soaked in the fact that she found him as desirable as he found her.

"We've talked, Beau and I," he started, "about you. We've actually talked often about you. Did you know that?"

She didn't answer verbally, instead shaking her head the smallest amount, obviously trying not to break the physical contact, and a surge of pride went through him.

"When we first got together, can you guess what Beau told me?" He knew she wouldn't know the answer, but he wanted to keep her focused on what he was saying and asking questions was a good way to ensure he kept her attention.

Again, she shook her head but also whispered, "No, Sir."

Sebastian sucked in a breath at her use of the honorific. She might not be consciously aware yet but her subconscious

recognized who she belonged to and the Daddy in him wanted to beat his chest and shout it to the world.

“He told me that he was deeply in love with you. The kind of love that would never go away.”

He felt her inhale sharply and had to hold her chin in place to keep her from swinging her gaze to Beau’s. Beau would have his chance, but right this moment, Sebastian was talking, and she needed to hear it all. “He warned me that he might not be able to love me the way I deserved due to his feelings for you.”

A tear slipped from her eyes and Sebastian reached his thumb up to catch it before he continued, “Do you know what I told him?”

This question was met with another sharp, silent head shake.

“I told him that it was possible to love two people at once.” Her eyes widened but she remained silent and allowed him to continue. “I didn’t realize at the time how true what I was telling him was. I get it better now.”

Her eyes kept darting to the side like she wanted to look to Beau, so Sebastian nodded to the other man who took hold of Kenzie’s hand, rubbing his thumb back and forth over her knuckles.

“Just another minute, Little one. Look back this way for just another minute.” He knew he was likely overwhelming her, but he wanted to be sure she understood what they wanted before her brain had any chance to twist it into something else. “Do you know why I understand it more now?”

Another small head shake.

Sebastian tilted Kenzie's face higher and brought his closer, testing her receptiveness. When she made no move to object and Sebastian saw a flare of desire in her eyes, he brought his face as close as he could without touching and whispered, "I met you."

Kenzie

What the hell was that supposed to mean? It absolutely could *not* mean what she thought. She'd barely spoken to him... he hadn't even told her his name yet. Not that she didn't know it from talking with River, but still. Who would hint that they loved a woman they'd just seen for the first time such a short time and who they hadn't even properly introduced themselves to?

Seeing movement from the corner of her eye, she turned her head to find Beau kneeling before her, shifting his hand from the light hold he had on hers and placing it on her knee.

"Do you remember when we went on our first date and I told you I'd known the moment I saw you that you were meant to be mine?" Beau spoke for the first time since entering the room.

The memory brought a bittersweet pang to her soul. It was such a sweet moment. "Yes." She managed to get the word around the lump in her throat but wasn't able to expand on it the way she wanted to.

"Sebastian had the same feeling the moment he saw you."

She shot her gaze back to the other man and stared open-mouthed at him. How was that possible?

“We talked and we know. You’re not just meant for one of us, you’re meant for both of us.” Beau cupped her cheek and brought her gaze back to his, “We’re both meant to be your Daddies, Kenz-Kenz. We are hoping you’ll give us the chance to prove it to you.”

Holy. Shit.

Chapter 6

Kenzie

Kenzie rolled over and put a pillow over her head, trying her best to ignore the knocking on her door. Who the hell dared to knock on her door before noon? Everyone knew Kenzie was not a morning person. The knocking continued until finally Kenzie took the pillow off her head, gave one last squeeze to KoKo, her best stuffie friend, and went to answer the door.

Glancing at the time on her microwave as passed the kitchen, she realized it actually *was* after noon. It was no wonder she'd slept late, however, since she'd slept so badly. All night she had been plagued by back-and-forth emotions.

After the shock of not only having her ex come back into her life, but of having both Beau and his new Daddy declare that she was meant to be theirs, Kenzie told them she'd have to think about her decision and went home to do so. Unfortunately, she'd been up until after four waffling over her answer. Then, when she'd finally gone to sleep, her dreams had been plagued by multiple scenarios. She'd dreamed what would happen if she was once again devastated by love, but

she'd also dreamed of the happy future she could have with the two handsome men should things work out.

All of that led to her waking up just as unsure about what her answer should be as when she'd walked out of the club the night before. She hadn't missed the two men following behind her as she left. Watching as she made her way to her car and not turning to head back inside until she was heading out of the lot.

Another knock on her door had her calling out, "Coming!" as she picked up her pace. Kenzie opened the door to find a delivery driver standing there. That was strange considering how long they'd knocked. Usually, drivers didn't stay that long. If no one answered, they considered their job done and left the food or took it back.

"Good morning." Kenzie aimed a confused expression at him. "I think you've got the wrong address."

The driver checked the bag, then the number on her doorframe. Checking the bag again, he asked, "You Kenzie Marks?"

"Yeeehaaaah..." Kenzi drew the word out, confusion overwhelming her, "but I didn't order anything."

The delivery man heaved a heavy sigh and pinned her with an annoyed look. "Listen, I have a delivery for Kenzie Marks with explicit instructions to keep knocking until the door is opened. It's paid for and not my business who ordered it, but if you're Kenzie Marks and this is 4B, then I'm at the right place, and you need to take this food so I can move on with the rest of my deliveries."

Well, she didn't see where the attitude was needed, but she reached out and took the food anyway. Kenzie thanked the

man, despite his huffiness, as she closed the door and glanced in the bag as she carried it to the kitchen.

Her phone—which was charging on the counter—pinged a text notification sound she hadn't heard in a year and a half, and her heart leapt in her chest.

Daddy Beau: *You need to eat, baby bear.*

When she saw the message, a part of her melted. Another ping, this time the generic one, made her glance at the screen again.

Unknown: *Eat every bite, little girl, and don't drink too much caffeine. Remember to drink some water. Beau and I will be by around 3:00 PM.*

Well, that was unexpected. Kenzie pulled the container out of the bag and discovered a delightfully huge pancake shaped like Mickey Mouse and covered in strawberries, with blueberries and whipped cream making a smiley face, and she giggled at the silliness of it.

Unexpected indeed.

Sebastian

It had been quite a while since Sebastian had been so restless. He knew they needed to give her time to think but he also didn't want to give Kenzie so much time that she talked herself out of giving them a shot.

He spent the morning taking care of Beau and trying to keep him in line. Beau's excitement over the possibility of

getting Kenzie back was making him a bit more naughty than he generally was. He hadn't wanted to eat his breakfast and Sebastian had ended up having to hand feed him. Not that he minded. He loved feeding his boy; he just didn't usually get to.

He'd played in his playroom for a bit, but had soon become restless and frustrated with his video game and tossed the controller on the floor. Sebastian had reminded Beau with a firm hand to his bottom that he wasn't to treat his toys with such disrespect.

Now, with a warm, red arse, Beau was currently fidgeting on the couch, watching the clock as the time neared to visit Kenzie. Sebastian couldn't blame Beau for his impatience. He was impatient himself. If they left now however, they'd be too early. He had told Kenzie three o'clock and he was going to make sure it was three. This was the first step in proving he meant what he said.

Once the clock had ticked down and finally reached the time they'd anxiously awaited, Sebastian took Beau's hand and led him out to the car, buckling him in before climbing in himself. He reminded Beau to be patient with Kenzie as they headed out of the driveway and toward her apartment.

Kenzie

Kenzie had rushed all afternoon, trying to get her apartment cleaned before Beau and Sebastian arrived. She didn't know why she was so nervous for them to be pleased with her cleanliness. She'd pretty much decided that she just couldn't take the chance of being crushed again. She already felt an

unnatural attachment to Sebastian and couldn't imagine how devastated she'd be if she went all in with both of them and ended up not only losing Beau again, but also Sebastian now too. She wasn't sure she could handle that.

As she vacuumed, she plotted out how to tell the men that she just couldn't do it, but before she'd finished half of the living room, she'd begun to plot how she'd accept. She was still so confused and the back and forth was making her nuts. She'd never been good at choices and having to make this one was driving her bonkers.

She'd just placed the vacuum back into the cleaning closet when there was a firm knock at the door. It was three o'clock on the dot. Brushing her cartoon t-shirt smooth and making sure her leggings hadn't ridden up, she made her way across the room, pausing at the mirror to make sure her space buns were intact before pulling open the door.

Chapter 7

Beau

How was it possible for her to get more beautiful every time he saw her? Beau's heart raced in his chest as she opened the door and invited them in. He was more aware than ever that the outcome of this visit could change his life.

Sebastian gripped his hand tighter as they crossed the threshold, reminding Beau with that small gesture that he was there and would be, whatever the outcome. The action mixed with his nerves threatened to send Beau into Middle space, but he recognized his need to present a united dominant front right now. He took a deep breath, reset his thinking, and made his way to Kenzie's living room.

"So, how would this work?" Kenzie wasted no time, asking her first question before her bottom had even made contact with the seat of the recliner.

Beau took a seat on the couch with Sebastian beside him. "I'd be your Daddy again."

"And I'd be Daddy to you both," Sebastian added.

"So, both of you would be my Daddies?"

“Yes.”

Kenzie took another minute contemplating what they'd said so far before asking, “How would that work? Would there be a schedule? Would one of you get me on one day and the other the next?” She rubbed her hands up and down her thighs, obviously racked with nerves.

Beau let Sebastian take that question knowing that he was better with words than Beau was.

“It wouldn't be anything as structured or contrived as that.”

Beau saw the flash of disappointment in Kenzie's eyes, she thrived on structure. Rules and consequences, schedules and routines, those were Kenzie's biggest requirements to allow her to flourish. Apparently, Sebastian saw the look as well.

“Of course, there would be structure. We'd all agree on the rules and schedules for you, but Beau and I would be one unit when it came to your care. We'd work together, it would be like any normal dynamic but with twice the protection and twice the snuggles and cuddles.”

Kenzie

Everything they were saying sounded not only reasonable but amazing! Their conversation went for a long time, covering everything from rules and consequences to limits, safewords, and everything else one could possibly discuss before beginning a dynamic. Kenzie wanted so badly to have what they were offering. There was just the problem of her worries.

“What if it doesn’t work out?” Her hands gripped her knees tightly, her knuckles turning white as she whispered her greatest fear.

For the first time, the men stood from the couch and approached, both of them kneeling in front of her and each taking one of her hands into their own.

“There are no guarantees in life, princess—” Sebastian started.

“—But I’ve lost you once,” Beau interjected, “and I can’t stand going through that again.”

“I already feel a strong pull to you and a need to protect you like I have only felt once in my life.” Sebastian cut his gaze to Beau as he spoke.

“If you give us the chance, baby bear, we’ll do everything in our power to never hurt you and never lose you. You just have to find the courage to take a chance.”

Sebastian

He watched as her face screwed up into an adorable contemplative expression and she took a deep breath. He was holding his own breath as he waited for Kenzie’s decision.

They’d discussed everything he could think of and given her every tool she’d need to make the decision that was best for her. He was aware, however, that she waffled on making choices. She’d told them directly in the discussions of what she needed in a caregiver.

Part of Sebastian wanted to save her from this particular choice, but she needed to make it herself. He couldn't take the burden of this one from her. After she accepted him as her Daddy, he could do his best to help her, providing support for whatever decisions she might need to make, but this one needed to be hers alone.

He breathed a sigh of relief when she tightened her grip on his hand and whispered softly, "Okay, I'd like to try."

If he hadn't been so busy hugging both his Littles, Sebastian might have done a happy dance, and he wasn't a dancer.

Chapter 8

Kenzie

“Are you shitting me right now?”

Kenzie added another spoonful of sugar to her morning coffee as she listened to River react to her news. She tended to make her coffee more like syrup. Liking the jolt the caffeine sent to her system but not really being a fan of the flavor, she covered it.

“Nope, I’m serious.” Kenzie didn’t see much point in more of an answer since she’d just spent the whole twenty minutes it’d taken to drink her first cup of coffee explaining the situation.

“You lucky bitch.”

Kenzie had to laugh at that, as it hadn’t been the response she’d expected from River, but then again, they never failed to surprise her. Her laughter stopped as quickly as it had begun, the reality of her concerns settling in. “You don’t think I’m making a mistake?”

“Kenzie, sweetie, you’ve spent a full year and a half grieving the loss of one man and continuing to love him, and

you said yourself that your attraction to the other was instantaneous and intense. I think you'd be making a mistake to turn this chance down."

"But—"

"No buts. I can understand where you'd be scared, but you can't let fear keep you from living the life of your dreams. Giving in to fear leads to regrets and sad lonely golden years. Don't let that happen to you, sweets. Take the chance and run with it."

Kenzie contemplated River's words as she sipped her still-too-hot coffee. "Ouch, ow, owie!"

"You burned your tongue again?"

"Mmm." Kenzie's mumble might not have been decipherable to anyone else but River knew Kenzie in a way most didn't.

"When are you finally going to learn to blow?"

"I know how to blow just fine, Ask any guy I've dated." She laughed at her own humor while River grumbled about her corny joke.

Sebastian

"How's the Pierson claim going?"

Sebastian brought himself back to the meeting he was attending. He'd spent too much time daydreaming since Friday. They hadn't visited Kenzie again over the weekend, not wanting to overwhelm her. Both he and Beau had

restricted themselves to texts and Sebastian had indulged in one phone call, getting to know his girl better.

Their *girl*.

“Sebastian?”

Shit, he’d done it again. He really needed to get his head in the game.

“The fire inspectors suspect arson but have yet to determine if it was an outside party. I’m still waiting on the final report.”

“Keep me in the loop on that. I have a bad feeling about this one.”

“I will.”

Tracy gathered her papers and bounced them on the table, straightening the stack as she started to rise. “Alright, if there’s nothing else, the meeting is adjourned.”

When no one at the table spoke up with any other concerns after a moment’s wait, each person at the table gathered their things and headed out of the room. Sebastian took his time, not wanting to get caught up in the stampede of people heading to their respective desks.

“Are you okay?”

The question came from Jorge, a work colleague and friend. When Sebastian had first transferred to the New York office a year ago, Jorge was the first person to befriend him and make him feel welcome. Jorge had also been the one to convince Sebastian that he needed to balance his focus on his career with a social life. That had led to Sebastian finding Little Hearts Club six months ago, which had led to meeting Beau and now Kenzie.

“Smashing.” His reply was a bit absent-minded, and not very convincing, but his thoughts were already on escaping the office and finally taking his Littles to the club for the first time when both were his.

“Sure. That’s why multiple people had to work to get your attention this morning. What’s going on, man?”

Jorge might be a decent bloke that Sebastian considered a friend but he wasn’t ready to share what was on his mind with Jorge yet so he shrugged and simply said, “Personal stuff, but it’s not a big deal.”

Thankfully, Jorge seemed to accept his excuse. Once Sebastian got back to his office, the day passed faster than he’d expected. Probably because he’d spent most of the day doing more plotting and planning for the evening ahead than actually investigating insurance claims.

When five o’ clock finally rolled around, Sebastian was out the door in a flash. He was ready for tonight.

Beau

He felt like a teenage girl on her first date. Standing at his closet, he contemplated what to wear. He wanted so badly to wear some torn jeans and a gaming shirt but that was his usual Middle attire, and he wasn’t sure if he should indulge in that side of himself on the first night being Kenzie’s Daddy again.

Presenting the undeniable image that he could be what she needed was important to him, but he also wanted her to see the side of him she hadn’t really had the chance to see.

“You’ve been standing there for an hour, love.” Daddy’s voice startled Beau, and he jumped. “Sorry to scare you, I thought you’d have heard me coming in. Do you need help, pet?”

Beau thought about it for a minute before answering, “Yes, please.”

Sebastian came to him and took Beau’s face in both his hands, placing a light kiss on his forehead. “Don’t overthink it, love. For this to work, she needs to see both of our authentic selves.”

After placing another gentle kiss on Beau’s forehead, Daddy turned toward the closet, pulling out Beau’s favorite torn jeans and shirt. The jeans were black and the shirt was green and featured Link from *Legend of Zelda* with a sword drawn and the words, *Call me Zelda one more time!* It was a favorite of Beau’s since *Legend of Zelda* was his comfort game.

“You’re allowed to be your younger self with her. It doesn’t make you less of her Daddy to play with her and be fun. Anyone can see she desperately needs that part of you as well. Having me to keep watch as you both immerse yourselves in who you are means you get to have that as well. Lord knows I’m strict enough to make up for you being the ‘fun’ Daddy.”

Beau had no idea how Sebastian always knew just what to say, but he was grateful for the boost of confidence and as he dressed, he considered his Daddy’s words. Sebastian was right that Kenzie needed more fun and that was something he could provide as her Daddy because his being a Middle made him the perfect Daddy for that.

Chapter 9

Kenzie

Why had she insisted on riding to the club with River? Sebastian hadn't been pleased with the decision and it wasn't like she suspected either of the men would hurt her. Not physically anyway. She still worried about them leaving her later but she knew she had to set that fear aside and take the leap.

Despite her belief they wouldn't ever harm her, she'd still insisted on riding to the club separately from them, which had left her sitting on one of the dark benches in the dim lobby of Little Hearts Club with an awkward silence hanging in the air as Julia, the receptionist and owner's wife tried to work and eye Kenzie worriedly at the same time.

The silence hung so thick in the air that when the door opened, Kenzie jumped in surprise, then sagged in relief when her men walked through. Her men. It was still a bit strange to think that she was back with Beau, much less that she now had a *second* Daddy as well. Maybe it was because they hadn't spent time together in their new dynamic. Perhaps tonight would make it more real for her.

Beau approached her wearing an outfit that she'd never seen; one that declared him a Middle and Kenzie was surprised at how excited she was that he could finally let this side of him out. She'd felt bad since learning of his Middle that she hadn't been able to offer him the opportunities he needed to explore his Middle side; she'd always been much too needy and wasn't always able to control when her Little came out. Maybe Beau had been right that Sebastian was exactly what they needed.

Kenzie was also surprised by the strong urge she had to climb the both of them like a tree and cling to them like a baby koala. She reached into the bag beside her and stroked the soft fur of KoKo, taking comfort in the stuffed koala's presence. Excitement for the night ahead filled her as Beau lifted her off the seat and hugged her to him before setting her on his hip and heading toward the door that led to the inner sanctum of the club.

Beau

“Have you forgotten already, pet?” Sebastian laid a hand on Beau's knee as he asked his question. “She's looking for your attention, yet here you sit. What are you afraid of, love?”

Daddy was probably right as Beau had noticed Kenzie cutting her gaze to him several times while she played with her friends. “Messing up this first night. What if she is turned off by this side of me instead of finding it more attractive? She needs Daddies, but will she still consider me one?”

“You’re overthinking this, babyboy. You need to be yourself and let her form her own opinions. Holding back part of yourself is doing her no favors. In fact, you’re actually doing her a disservice. She deserves all of you, especially if you’ll be demanding all of her.”

Daddy was right and Beau knew it, but that didn’t stop the nerves from overtaking his system as he stood and rubbed his hands over his thighs as he approached Kenzie and her friends.

A grin that practically reached from ear to ear lit up Kenzie’s face and her eyes sparkled when she looked up and found him standing nearby. “Mind if I join you guys?”

“Of course, Daddy! You can build the city hall! I am making the zoo because I get to take care of all the animals.” As Kenzie spoke, the other Littles in the circle scooted over making a space for him next to her. As he settled in and started selecting Lincoln Logs for his building, he thought this just might end up being the best night of his life.

Sebastian

Sebastian watched as his Littles played together, Kenzie naturally deferring to her other Daddy even as they played, both of them obviously in a much younger headspace. It warmed his heart to know that his babyboy would finally have everything he needed to make his life complete.

Both of them looked adorable, with Kenzie in her princess-style dress, her hair styled in some kind of braid woven with shiny strings and going completely round her head like a

crown, and Beau in his gamer clothes. They were so different and yet they laughed and played so well together. Beau even let Kenzie put a princess crown on his head and wrap a dress-up tutu around his jeans; he really was the best sport.

Sebastian's heart was fuller than he could ever remember, and it was only their first official night out as a throuple. He couldn't imagine how much more he'd love them both in a few months or a few years down the road. The more time they spent together, the more he realized that Kenzie really was the perfect addition to their family.

Beau said something to Kenzie that Sebastian couldn't hear from his seat, but he knew what it was when Kenzie nodded her head excitedly and Beau grabbed her hand, still dressed in his tutu and tiara. They approached and Sebastian readied himself to head to the arcade room.

"Daddy!" Beau exclaimed with the joy and exuberance Sebastian loved seeing in him, "Kenzie and I want to go play in the arcade. Can we? Please!"

"Yeah, Papi, it'll be so much fun! Please, please, please with glitter sprinkles on top?"

Kenzie's words sent a sharp and intense pleasure through Sebastian. She'd called him Papi. He wasn't sure why Papi was the title she'd chosen but it was such a perfect moment that it didn't matter.

"Have you cleaned up your toys?" He knew they had but wanted to give himself a minute to absorb the feelings coursing through him. At their affirmatives, he took a deep breath and rose. Taking both their hands, Sebastian led his babies to the arcade.

Chapter 10

Kenzie

Papi: I want a full glass of water in your tummy for every coffee you drink this morning, princess.

Daddy: Don't forget to eat breakfast, baby bear.

Papi: And have a great day at work!

Daddy: Yes, but don't eat too much candy while you're there.

Kenzie smiled as she woke to the texts from her Daddies. The group chat blowing up had woken her five minutes before her alarm went off, making this morning a bright one before she'd even rolled out of bed.

Heading to the bathroom to get ready for work, Kenzie thanked the stars it was *finally* Friday. She hadn't seen her Daddies since Monday night at Little Hearts Club when she and Daddy spent the night playing, and Papi spent the night watching over the two of them and caring for Kenzie in all the ways she'd needed. The evening had been akin to being in heaven, a mixture of everything she'd ever needed, and she couldn't wait to experience more this weekend.

Her Daddies kept in constant contact with her all week but had kept away physically, insisting she needed rest to be her best while working at the candy shop. She'd missed them greatly this week but had to admit that thinking about her and what she needed over what any of them wanted was a major turn on for her.

She started the coffee and poured a glass of water from the pitcher in the fridge. It wouldn't do to get herself in trouble today. Though she was curious about what a punishment from two Daddies would be like, and though the thought was a huge turn on for her, she had a feeling she wouldn't be getting to the ultimate goal she had for the weekend if she was naughty.

Kenzie guzzled down the water before the coffee pot even finished brewing and doctored her cup quickly. She needed the life-giving liquid before she faced the crowds and constant activity of Sweet Treats.

The day passed quickly with a steady stream of families and one school field trip. They'd sold out of several candies, so she needed to place an order and was busy taking inventory when the bell above the door rang.

"Welcome to Sweet Treats! I'll be right with you!" she shouted from inside the storeroom.

When Kenzie crossed the threshold into the main shop, she was surprised to see her Daddies wandering the shop. When Sebastian saw the store's uniform of flared pink-and-white-striped material layered underneath with pink petticoats, his gaze locked on her and flared with a heat that made her toes tingle. The skirt went to her knees and was reminiscent of the nineteen fifties. It was topped off by the white frilly apron and she wore pink Mary Janes. In all honesty, the uniform was part

of what made Kenzie apply for the job four years ago. It was adorable and allowed her to be an adult and still feel Little.

“Are you almost ready to head home, princess?” Sebastian picked up a giant lollipop and inspected it. It was huge and colorful. A new item that arrived in the last order, Kenzie hadn’t had a chance to try it yet. It was next on her purchase list, though.

“We’re a bit early. We’re fine wandering the shop.” Beau lifted a couple of her favorite unicorn suckers and moseyed to the next display.

“I do have about twenty minutes.” Kenzie’s gaze perused her Daddies and she had to close her mouth tight to keep from physically drooling.

Sebastian approached the counter, crooking a finger to encourage Kenzie to lean closer. She was quick to obey. Sebastian held her chin in a gentle grasp and whispered, “If you keep looking at us like that, we may not make it home before pinning you to a wall and indulging in every dirty fantasy we’ve had this week.”

Even as her cheeks flamed, Kenzie looked at the clock and calculated. “My relief should be here any time.” Her voice had gone shaky and breathy with need.

“Correction, your relief is here if you want to head out.”

Kenzie watched Nicole head to clock in. It only took her a second to consider before she started gathering her things. “Thanks!”

She was halfway to the door before she remembered that she needed to count down the register. When she turned to do so, Nicole waved her away saying, “I’ve got it. I’ll leave the report on the office desk. Just go and enjoy your evening.”

Thanking the universe for helping her get more time with her men, Kenzie practically bounced out the door, with a Daddy on each side guiding her along with her hands in theirs.

Sebastian

Sebastian opened the car door for Kenzie and buckled her in before doing the same for Beau, then headed to Kenzie's car, which they planned to leave there until she was heading back home and grabbed her bag for the weekend and the scruffy stuffed koala sitting beside it. His mind wasn't fully on his task, instead replaying the interaction between Kenzie and her co-worker. There was something about it that bugged him. Sebastian wasn't sure why he felt that way, but Kenzie's co-worker seemed a bit dodgy to him.

"How long has Nicole been working with you?" he asked Kenzie as he settled into his seat and started the car.

"She'd been there about three months now. She's okay but doesn't really talk much to anyone but the customers. I guess she's quiet or, maybe she's just a loner. I've tried drawing her out, but it hasn't worked."

Sebastian absorbed the information before letting go of the niggling in his head. He wanted to enjoy the weekend with his girl. They had a wonderful surprise for her once they got home and he couldn't wait to see her reaction.

Beau

As soon as they entered the apartment, Beau placed a kiss on Kenzie's forehead, forcing himself to keep it chaste and heading down the hall to do his part in presenting their surprise. He adjusted the placement of a few items, thinking about Sebastian's question in the car and what he might be thinking. If it was about Kenzie's safety or health, he knew Sebastian would fill him in when he could.

Beau checked to make sure everything was neat and that the surprise reflected her personality. They had put a lot of thought into this and he wanted it to be perfect. Beau was surprised at how much relief and freedom sharing Kenzie with Sebastian brought him. He marveled at how much weight had lifted from his shoulders and how much happier both he and Kenzie were. Satisfied with the final look, he sent a thumbs up text to Sebastian and sat down to wait.

Chapter 11

Kenzie

Papi led her by the hand, showing her his quaint, two-story home. It was situated in one of the nicer and quieter suburbs. The outside was reminiscent of a cottage in the woods, complete with window boxes brimming with gorgeous flourishing flowers of all types and colors. The front lawn was perfectly groomed and landscaped to add to the cottage appeal despite being in the city.

Inside was a shock to Kenzie. She'd expected a bit of a bachelor pad look, but instead it was warm and inviting. The living room had a fireplace as the center attraction with a soft, furry rug in front of it, colored different shades of pink and gray. A gray couch and loveseat surrounded the rug and were scattered with pink pillows of different shades. A television was mounted above the fireplace, with gaming consoles and controllers set up on the mantel, ready to use. The outer edges of the room were obviously play areas with toy boxes and a slate coffee table set up with coloring supplies, pink and gray bean bags in three corners and even a pink doll house.

The look called to her as pink and gray were her favorite colors. It was almost as if the room was hugging her, welcoming her, and letting her know this is where she belonged. The warmth in her chest bloomed more as she was led from room to room, each one reflecting everything she ever thought a home should be.

Sebastian didn't talk much during the tour and Kenzie wondered if he was okay, until a text pinged on his phone and his face broke into a smile. "One last room to show you, princess."

Sebastian squeezed her hand a bit tighter before leading her to a door they'd skipped in the tour earlier. Placing her directly in front of it, Sebastian asked, "Can you keep your eyes closed, or do I need to blindfold you?"

Kenzie's breath caught and her panties suddenly became damp at the thought of being blindfolded by Sebastian but she replied, "I can keep them closed, Papi."

"Mmmm, we'll come back to the idea of a blindfold. The way your thighs are rubbing together says you like the idea." Papi's voice was so close to her ear that she could feel his breath tickling the canal, sending shivers down her spine. "For now, close your eyes, princess, and keep them closed until I say to open."

Kenzie dutifully squeezed her eyes tightly shut and held her breath.

Sebastian

Sebastian was unwilling to give up his intimate position with Kenzie, so he reached around her waist and silently pushed the door open. His groin tightened even more at the sight of Beau sitting among the game-controller pillows scattered across the dark gray couch on his side of the room.

Sebastian nudged Kenzie forward, stepping in sync with her, keeping himself at her back, “Okay, princess. Open your eyes.”

He deliberately whispered the words directly into her ear eliciting another full body shiver. He had plans to build on that reaction, but for now, he placed a hand on her waist and felt her sharp intake of breath.

“It’s beautiful!” The excitement and awe was evident in her reverent whisper.

Stepping forward, Kenzie reached out and touched a tower attached to the pink, castle-shaped bed set. She ran her hands along the grey and white bedding and was sure to feel every koala-themed decorative pillow. One hand was over her mouth, blocking his view of those tempting lips as she felt everything she could reach and turned to pay the same attention to the tree in the corner.

Obviously just noticing the sturdy nature of the tree built into the wall, Kenzie gasped and spun around, “Is that...” Kenzie trailed off for a minute and Beau stepped in, breaking his silence.

“A climbable tree? Yes, baby bear. How would you be a koala if you didn’t have some trees to climb? We also figured KoKo would enjoy having a fun place to hang out.”

Before Sebastian could even form another thought, Kenzie had placed a Mary-Jane-clad foot on the first branch and was

scrambling up the limbs before he could even tell her to take off her shoes. His heart skipped when she reached the top in record time, with visions of her bloody shoes slipping and her cracking her skull open playing in his head. It might not have been as high as a live outdoor tree, but his Daddy heart didn't seem to know any better. Maybe the tree wasn't the best of ideas after all. One look at the joy on Kenzie's face, though, and he knew he wasn't about to change it. She'd sure be getting a bollocking about wearing shoes when climbing though.

New rule. No shoes in the playroom from now on. They don't really need them. It needs to be kept clean anyway if my babies are going to be sitting on the floor while playing. In fact, maybe we should all start taking off our shoes when we come into the house.

“Look, Papi! I'm a koala!” Kenzie giggled wildly as Sebastian watched her swing from a branch until her feet found purchase on a lower one.

Reaching up, he gripped her waist and lowered her down, wrapping her legs around his waist and settling her on his hip, “Okay, koala baby, let's get you settled in a koala nest, while Daddy and I get your bags.”

“Silly Papi!” Her higher-pitched voice was pulling at his heart and Sebastian found himself reluctant to let her go. “Koalas don't have *nests!*”

“No, but my princess has a nest that looks like a koala.” He ended his words by tossing her onto the beanbag shaped like a koala head, adding to her squeals and giggles by tickling her in any spot he could reach.

Beau joined in the fun, capturing her wrists and holding them above her head as Sebastian's wriggling fingers found

her armpits. Kenzie's squeals mixed with Beau's laughter filling the room to the brim with joy, until the atmosphere changed. Thickened. Charged.

Kenzie's laughter died and gave way to heavy breathing, Beau's hands lost their grip on her wrists and traveled over her soft skin, Sebastian's gaze locked with Kenzie's as he leaned closer and whispered, "If anything becomes too much, little girl, I expect to hear your safeword, understand?"

Kenzie nodded her head, but Sebastian shook his own in response. "Words, princess. I need your words."

"If it becomes too much, I'll say my safeword."

The words were barely out of her mouth before Sebastian had claimed her lips. He didn't ease in; he was too hungry for her. Sebastian devoured, demanding entry and taking full advantage of her acquiescence. Her natural spicy taste played a perfect undertone to the traces of strawberry on her tongue as his stroked inside.

Kenzie moaned loudly and Sebastian opened his eyes to find Beau holding a fist full of her hair, holding her in place for Sebastian's kiss. Kenzie's legs wrapped back around Sebastian's hips, nestling her heat on his erection, and straining Sebastian's control.

Chapter 12

Beau

Beau had never seen anything as hot as the sight of his Daddy dominating their girl. None of them had planned this but Beau couldn't find a single speck of unease about it in him. She was theirs. He'd never been more certain of anything. It was about time for them to claim her fully, and Kenzie seemed more than ready for that as well.

Kenzie's skirt raised to her waist as she locked her ankles around Sebastian's hips, giving Beau an unobstructed view of her pretty, pink-panty-covered pussy grinding against Sebastian's bulging cock. Beau slid his hand between her thighs and alternated between rubbing her pussy and squeezing Daddy's erection, causing each of them to groan in turn.

For the first time, Beau felt complete during an intimate encounter. He'd always known he was attracted to both men and women but hadn't ever had the chance to make love to both at once. He didn't think he'd ever be able to go back, and they'd barely begun.

Kenzie

Kenzie's entire body was on fire with need. Both men's hands were roaming her body and Papi had yet to break the kiss. Hands glided around her hips and gripped her ass cheeks before Kenzie found herself being lifted up, mouth still connected to Papi's, and carried out of the room.

"Are you ready for us, baby bear?" Daddy's voice caressed her ear even as his hand slid up her thigh, under her skirt and rubbed circles on her ass.

She would have shouted a resounding yes if she could have spoken, but even when Papi released her lips and trailed kisses down her neck, her breath was still coming in short pants and words failed her. Daddy recaptured her lips with his in a brief, yet intense, kiss before she was laid out by Papi, like a feast, on a soft cushy mattress.

With a fluid ease that spoke of their connection, the men switched positions. Beau worked Kenzie's shirt over her head and up her arms, where Sebastian used the material to capture and bind her wrists.

"Tonight, princess, you'll be at our mercy. Subject to every dirty fantasy that has played out in our heads." Sebastian's words, whispered directly into her ear, sent shivers of anticipation down Kenzie's spine as she nodded her head.

Her chest instinctively lifted off the mattress when Beau's lips closed around one taut nipple, sucking hard in that way he knew Kenzie loved.

“Do it again, love,” Sebastian commanded, and Beau immediately obeyed.

As Kenzie tossed her head in pleasure, Sebastian’s hands slipped down, gliding along her ribs, over her soft tummy, and under the waist of her skirt. He cupped her mound over the top of her panties, slipping one finger barely under the material.

“So hot and wet already, princess?” he said before capturing the lobe of her ear gently between his teeth and sliding his hand into her soaked undies. He parted her lower lips and gathered her arousal, spreading it all around her sensitive nub, touching everywhere *but* her clit. Kenzie huffed in frustration even as a moan escaped her lips from the pleasure Beau was creating with his mouth on her tits.

“She’s so responsive, Daddy.” Beau’s words inflamed Kenzie’s need, and she wriggled her hips, trying to direct Sebastian’s touch to where she most wanted it. His soft chuckle gave away the fact that Sebastian knew *exactly* what he was doing.

“That she is, love. That she is.” When Sebastian lifted up and took Beau’s lips in a heated kiss, Kenzie felt her breath stutter and fresh arousal flooded her panties, no doubt drenching Sebastian’s hand where it still worked her pussy into a frenzy.

When Sebastian’s free hand slid down to cup Beau’s erection, Kenzie almost came on the spot. There was something distinctly sexy about seeing her men lose themselves in each other.

Their lips parted and Sebastian looked Beau in the eyes. “You’ll be my good boy and do exactly as I say. Isn’t that right, love?”

Beau glanced briefly at Kenzie as if gauging her reaction. He must have been pleased with what he saw as he immediately nodded and replied, “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good boy.” Sebastian stroked Beau’s cheek lovingly before backing away and instructing, “Remove our girl’s soaked panties and feast on her pussy. Don’t stop until I’ve told you to.”

The grin that spread across Beau’s face declared that he was more than happy with his orders. “Yes, Sir,” was all he said before he lowered himself down and went to work following instructions.

Beau

Kenzie’s unique flavor burst on his tongue and Beau felt like he’d come home. He’d missed this, the intimacy, the connection. But it wasn’t just the act, it was the *person*. He’d missed eating *Kenzie* out, bringing her pleasure, hearing her scream out and feeling her tighten around his tongue. *Her*. Beau knew that no other woman would complete them the way Kenzie did and he was going to show her *exactly* how grateful he was for her letting them in.

Beau plunged his tongue into Kenzie’s channel and felt her body vibrate as a moan ripped from her lips. Her heels dug into the mattress attempting to lift her abdomen again but Beau’s arm banded around her pelvis and held Kenzie in place, hostage to his assault.

When he licked up her slit and circled her clit, she whimpered in need. Knowing what that sound meant, he was glad to have Sebastian issue the order, “Make our girl come all over your face, Babyboy.”

Beau pushed two fingers into Kenzie’s tight channel and sucked her clit at the same time, lightly scraping his teeth along the sensitive bud and sending Kenzie soaring. Her pussy gripped his fingers rhythmically as she screamed out her pleasure.

Kenzie

Kenzie had never come as hard as she did when Papi told Daddy to make her. She had no idea how hot it would be to have one man directing the other and controlling her pleasure. She’d barely come down from her high when Papi instructed Daddy to pull back.

“My turn for a taste.”

Oh lord, she wasn’t so sure she could handle more so soon. Despite her reservations, however, as soon as Papi’s tongue speared her entrance, Kenzie was lost in sensations. He didn’t ease in like Daddy had done. No, Papi ate her pussy like a man starved, licking and sucking with abandon in all the areas that drove her wild while Daddy played with her breasts and nibbled her ear in that way she loved until she was soaring again in record time.

The sound of the drawer opening in the bedside table caught her attention when her hearing had finally returned to

normal and she looked over to find Daddy pulling two foil packets out of the drawer. He ripped one open with his teeth and turned to face Papi, who was standing just behind him.

“Can I taste you, Daddy?”

Papi cupped Daddy’s face and leaned in to kiss him deeply. “You want to taste your Daddy’s cock, love?”

“Please.” Kenzie was amazed at how wet she still was. Just seeing her two Daddies together had revved her engine in a way she’d never experienced before despite the fact she just had two of the most massive orgasms of her life.

When Daddy dropped to his knees in front of Papi, Kenzie lifted up on her elbows, squeezing her thighs together in an attempt to get her raging desire under control.

Sebastian

Sebastian sucked in a sharp breath as his boy’s lips wrapped around the head of his dick and sucked. Beau immediately began bobbing his head and taking Sebastian to the back of his throat, a sure sign that his babyboy was more than a little turned on.

Sebastian knew how he felt. He’d never experienced anything as intense as loving his babies together, and he was pretty sure he could never go back.

As Beau pulled back, lightly scraping his teeth along Sebastian’s shaft, Sebastian had to reign in his control to keep from coming on the spot. He’d barely gotten himself together

when he was plunged back into Beau's wet heat and he knew there was no way he'd keep his cool if Beau continued.

Reaching down, Sebastian gently grasped a handful of Beau's hair, guiding him to a stop. "That's enough of that for now, babyboy." Sebastian glanced over at Kenzie who was avidly watching, catching her touching herself. "Our girl has been neglected too long and decided to take matters into her own hands."

"Mmmmm." Beau's hum of disapproval cut off once he saw the sight laid out on the bed before them. "That won't do at all, Daddy." Slowly rising from his knees, Beau looked from Sebastian to Kenzie and back again, "What should we do with a naughty girl who plays with her Daddies' toy without permission?"

Sebastian felt a zing of excitement run through him at the thought of finally seeing his handprints marking Kenzie's gorgeous ass. "Hmm," he mused, "seems only fair we remind her who's in charge of her pleasure by doling out a bit of pain."

His words sent Kenzie's eyes flying wide open as the hand that had been rubbing her pretty pussy flew to her mouth to cover her gasp and heat flared in her eyes while his words sank in. His girl liked the idea of a bit of pain to go with her pleasure, and Sebastian knew he was the perfect person to give her what she craved.

Chapter 13

Kenzie

“On your hands and knees, pretty girl.” Papi’s stern command sent shivers racing down Kenzie’s spine, and heat flooding her core. “Shoulders pressed to the mattress, we want that luscious ass of yours high in the air.”

Kenzie scrambled to do as she was instructed with a heady mixture of anticipation and trepidation coursing through her system. She wasn’t scared of them or what was about to happen, but that fear of the unknown was instinctive, primal, and a huge turn on. So, when the drawer of the bedside table closed with a soft click, Kenzie jumped as if it had slammed shut, adrenaline making her jumpy and heightening her senses.

“Look at that perfect ass, displayed so beautifully.” Papi’s hand smoothed over one globe as he spoke, then squeezed gently before he continued, “Spread your knees, Princess, we want to see everything that belongs to us.”

Papi never removed his hand so when she wiggled to do as he’d instructed, his fingers slid into her wetness, and he groaned close to her ear.

“So fucking wet. You like a bit of pain with your pleasure, don’t you, princess?”

She couldn’t deny it, so she said nothing in response.

“Don’t worry, baby bear. Your Daddies know what you need, and we’ll always give it to you.”

Daddy’s voice almost startled Kenzie.

Papi grazed his hand up from her bare ass to her back in a soothing motion as he leaned closer to her ear and asked softly, “You understand this is a funishment, and you aren’t really in trouble, right?”

Kenzie nodded her head.

“Good girl.” He faced where Daddy was standing behind her, and said to Beau, “Give it to me, love. Our girl’s ass needs our marks on it to remind her who she belongs to.”

There was a slight rustling as something was passed to Papi, but Kenzie was at the wrong angle to see what it might be.

“Have you ever had a crop used on you before, princess?”

Kenzie sucked in a breath and shook her head. They’d talked about what implements she’d be comfortable with trying and she was full of excitement at the prospect of trying this one.

“Tell Papi your safeword.”

“R-red to s-stop, y-yellow to s-slow down,” she stuttered as she watched him stroke the long thin handle of the crop.

“Such a good fucking girl.” His words sent a rush of wetness to her pussy and she wished desperately that her knees

weren't parted, "Make Papi proud and use it if this gets to be too much."

With no further warning, he lifted the hand holding the implement and landed a smack sharply across her bottom. Fire shot from the thin line of impact and spread through her cheeks. Kenzie sucked in a sharp breath before the persistent sting morphed into a warm heat that seemed to travel directly to her clit making her moan long and loud.

"She likes it, Daddy." Beau's words were muttered to Papi as he gathered some of the wetness now flooding her lips and smoothed it over the sting.

"Back up, love."

There were no other words. Almost as soon as the hands left her skin, the crop landed again, and fire exploded once more. This time, there was no time to absorb the heat before the next blow landed so the swirling heat mixed with the fiery sting and Kenzie had to fist the sheets in a desperate attempt to hold still.

The mixture of sensations collided in her system, causing her core to gush until she was sure she'd left a puddle on the sheet. She couldn't control the sounds coming from her if she'd tried. Her moans and screams filled the air, a soundtrack of her pleasure and pain until silence suddenly reigned. Pleasure so intense she couldn't breathe coursed through her system, her core clenched, and stars exploded in her vision before everything in her released and an orgasm like she'd never dreamed possible sent her soaring.

Sebastian

Thank god Beau had put the condom on him because the sight of Kenzie coming from his crop was more than Sebastian could take. He had to feel it. Dropping the crop on the edge of the bed, Sebastian quickly lined himself up with Kenzie's entrance and plunged. Her pussy was so tight and hot, and it was gripping him so hard, he was sure he saw grey creep into the edges of his vision. He didn't move once he'd seated himself inside her. He just enjoyed the sensation of Kenzie coming on his cock until her pulsing slowed, and she started to come down from the high.

Only when Kenzie had recovered, did Sebastian slowly pull back until he'd almost completely withdrawn from her. She mewled softly as he did and tried to move her hips to keep him inside her. Gripping the soft, warm, now red cheeks of her ass, he pulled her toward him as he plunged back in. Sebastian was *not* a gentle lover but his girl seemed to be more than okay with that if the sounds she was making as she gripped the sheet and pushed back hard were any indication.

He saw Beau rounding the bed, watching his lovers and stroking his hard cock. When Beau climbed onto the bed and settled in front of their girl, a sense of pride swelled in Sebastian. Kenzie didn't hesitate for even a second before releasing the sheets, gripping Beau's thighs and taking Beau deep into her mouth with one smooth, quick movement.

Feeling her channel gripping him tight in reaction to her situation, Sebastian let loose all the pent-up desire inside him for this incredible woman. He took her hard and fast, slamming home with each thrust, and she met him stroke for stroke, using the momentum of their movements to aid her in pleasuring her other man.

It wasn't long before he knew he had to stop or he was going to come, but he was loath to leave her wet heat. He allowed himself three more forceful thrusts before forcing himself to pull back and beckoning his boy to come take his place.

Chapter 14

Beau

Beau was lost in the warm, wet heat of Kenzie's mouth. Her tongue flicked the sensitive spot just under the head of his cock and his eyes rolled back, causing him to almost miss the signal from Daddy. Almost.

He wasted no time in pulling out of Kenzie's mouth. Leaning down and pressing a soft kiss to her swollen lips, he whispered, "Good girl," before backing away.

As he rounded the bed, he quickly tore open the other foil packet he'd had clenched in his fist since pulling it from the drawer. He rolled the condom into place, dropped to his knees, and with a pleading look at his Daddy asked, "May I please clean you up, Sir?"

At Sebastian's nod, Beau wrapped his lips around Sebastian's condom-clad cock, reveling in the flavor of their girl. A low moan from Kenzie drew his attention to Sebastian pumping his fingers into her pretty pussy while she watched Beau intently, desire so hot in her eyes that Beau had a brief vision of them all melting from the heat.

“As good as your mouth feels on me, love, I think our girl needs something more substantial than my fingers filling this soaking kitty of hers.”

The thought of finally being inside Kenzie again was enough for Beau to abandon one of his favorite tasks without the usual reluctance. It had been too long since he'd had her.

“Fuck our girl well, babyboy,” Daddy instructed while he smacked Beau's ass as he took Daddy's place behind Kenzie.

“Oh, I certainly will, Daddy.” His voice dripped with lust, much as the gorgeous pussy before him dripped with Kenzie's honey.

Beau lined himself up and slid inside easily despite his rather large size. Kenzie was more than ready to accept his girth and was eager, pushing back against him and trying to take him deeper, as if that was possible. She gripped him tightly, making Beau have to take a minute to steady himself. There was no way he wanted to come too soon. He was going to make this last.

Beau gripped Kenzie's hips for leverage before pulling almost all the way out and sliding gently inside. Her needy whimper made him smile. He knew their girl liked it rough, and he'd accommodate her, but first he was going to tease the fuck out of her.

He continued his slow movements, relishing the feeling of his cock dragging along her walls. He occasionally put just a bit of force into his thrust right before he hit that special deep spot to feel that tight channel clamp down like a vice each time. She wiggled her hips, her whimpers became desperate, and she attempted to push back hard several times but Beau knew what he was doing and held her firm. Finally, when Kenzie keened her displeasure, he let loose, pulling back and

slamming home full force. Kenzie's scream was music to his ears as he repeated the movement again and again.

A hand on his sweat-slicked back caught his attention and Beau reveled in the feeling of being touched by one lover while being buried in the other. This was what he'd been made for and Beau knew he'd never let either of them go. When Daddy put pressure on his back urging him to bend over Kenzie's form, Beau did so without hesitation and without losing his rhythm.

The cool feel of liquid dribbling down the crack of his ass clued Beau in on what was about to happen, and tingles of anticipation coursed through him. Daddy positioned himself behind Beau so each time he pulled out, Daddy's cock brushed his back hole, spreading the lube.

Suddenly as he pulled from Kenzie's heat, Daddy thrust forward, gliding smoothly into Beau. Stars of bliss started to dance in Beau's vision. His cock swelled further—which Beau would have sworn was impossible before that moment—as Daddy used Beau's rhythm with Kenzie to create his own, pulling out and thrusting forward in that way Beau loved so much. The three really were made for each other, all of them preferring a hard-and-rough ride over a slow-and- gentle glide.

The rhythmic slap of skin on skin was a backdrop to the grunts, moans and screams of pleasure filling the air. No words were spoken, nor were they needed. Waves of bliss crashed over Beau as he took his girl and was taken by his man. Sweat dripped from his forehead and trailed down his chest. Hands roamed his skin, trailing up his body to wrap carefully around his throat.

Daddy tilted his head back and nipped his earlobe before murmuring in his ear, "Make her come. I won't last much

longer. You look too fucking hot taking our girl, and feel too fucking good wrapped around me.”

Fueled by his Daddy’s words, Beau increased his force on his next thrust. When Kenzie’s walls clamped down on his cock, he repeated the action in rapid succession. Daddy kept up with each and every change in Beau’s movements until Kenzie’s pussy fluttered, squeezed his shaft tight, then gripped and released his cock with its steady pulsing as Kenzie screamed out her release.

Between Kenzie coming on his cock and Daddy fucking his ass, Beau didn’t stand a chance. His balls drew up, fire raced through him, and he stiffened as he released spurt after spurt into the condom, barely registering Daddy’s own shout of pleasure as he came as well.

Kenzie

She wasn’t sure how long it had been since the three of them had collapsed into a heap, but at some point the sweat had cooled, her heart had slowed, and her men had arranged her between them comfortably.

Kenzie was pretty certain she might never move again but if that was how she went, it would have all been worth it. If there had been a doubt left in her mind, it was gone now. Kenzie was more than certain these men had been made for her, or she had been made for them. They’d been made for each other.

Cool air coasted down her spine as Papi slid from the bed and headed to the bathroom. She heard the water running in the tub but couldn't find enough energy to contemplate why.

"Come on, princess. We need to get you into a warm bath. Don't want you sore tomorrow," Papi said as he returned to the room.

Kenzie snuggled closer to Daddy and mumbled, "Don't wanna," into his chest.

The truth was that a bath sounded heavenly; she just wasn't sure she had the energy for it. Before Kenzie could ponder it further, Daddy had lifted her smoothly into his arms and carried her to the tub. He climbed in with her and held her close making sure her head stayed above water as Papi gently cleaned her body from head to toe.

Kenzie drifted in and out of sleep as she was bathed, knowing her Daddies had her, and she was safe. They'd never let anything bad happen to her.

Chapter 15

Kenzie

“Why! Why can’t you just—” Daddy glanced over at Kenzie and obviously chose to avoid whatever he was about to say— “I know you’re beatable, I’ve done it before, and I’ll do it again.”

His adamant statement to the video game character made Kenzie giggle while she placed another fake diamond onto her masterpiece. She loved getting to see him in his Middle space so much. She especially loved how it had become a regular occurrence for them to play together.

She loved that Daddy wasn’t self-conscious about playing dolls or having a tea party. Heck, he even colored and painted with her. The walls were covered with their masterpieces. She’d found that she enjoyed some of his favorite things too. Daddy had ordered her several LEGO kits that were more her style so they could build together, and she had so much fun helping him build the elaborate designs he loved with dominoes.

Watching the designs tumble was her favorite part, making her giggle and clap as they toppled faster and faster and split

off into multiple paths at once. Kenzie wasn't much for video games, however, they tended to stress her out more than relax her, so, when Daddy wanted to play his video games, she'd just find something to do alone.

Kenzie had spent every day at Papi and Daddy's house for the last two weeks, ever since the night they'd made love and changed her life. They'd taken her to and from work every workday and she'd slept between them every night. Kenzie had no desire to return to her lonely apartment, so she hadn't protested when they'd taken her to gather several days' worth of stuff, or when they'd done it again a week later.

She had drawers in their dressers, space in the closet, and they'd given her free rein to add any and all touches to the décor that she wanted. Not that she'd taken them up on *that* particular offer. She wasn't quite that at home in their house yet, even if they did insist it was all of theirs now.

Kenzie felt like her world had turned into a dream come true. Things at work had even improved. She and Nicole had become friendly. Kenzie wouldn't say they were besties yet, but they'd become much closer.

Once Nicole had found out about her new relationship, she'd begun shooing Kenzie out the door as soon as shift change time happened each day, whether Kenzie was done with all of her change-over duties or not. She repeatedly assured Kenzie that she would take care of checking the shelves, restocking the counter-displayed candies, and balancing the cash in the drawer. Kenzie couldn't be more grateful. Sebastian didn't trust it yet, but Kenzie was becoming aware that Papi was a bit suspicious of anyone new, but she wasn't too worried. He'd come around eventually.

The only complaint Kenzie could find about staying with her Daddies was that they'd replaced so many of her favorite snacks with vegetables and fruit. She didn't so much mind the fruit. If she closed her eyes and tried really hard, she could *almost* pretend it was fruit snacks instead of actual fruit. The vegetables were a problem, however. There was really no way to make vegetables more palatable and she was getting really sick of having to skip Cheetos for carrots, or cupcakes for broccoli. Kenzie loved her carbs and her sugar; she wanted more of her favorites back in her diet.

Mmmmmm, Cheetos.

As Kenzie placed the next "diamond" in its designated section, a brilliant idea popped into her head. It was *perfect!* After spending the next few minutes planning how to pull it off while she worked, Kenzie glanced over at Daddy, finding him absorbed in his game and decided if it was going to work, now was the time to do it.

Carefully closing the container of tiny jewels so they wouldn't accidentally spill—she'd learned that lesson the hard way—Kenzie snatched up her tube of superglue as well as KoKo, her partner in crime, and quietly headed from the room.

Sebastian

Whistling a tune that had recently been stuck in his head for several days, reminding him of his years growing up in England, Sebastian unlocked the door. He'd gotten his most imperative work done at the office and come home early. He was excited to have both of his babies home during the day.

He'd had a stressful week and needed some time Daddying his Littles.

Sebastian closed the door quietly wanting to surprise Beau and Kenzie. Making his way to their playroom where he was sure they were spending their day, Sebastian stopped in his tracks when a noise in the kitchen caught his attention.

He changed direction expecting to find Beau making a snack for their girl. He could easily surprise Beau first and then get Beau to help him surprise Kenzie. Sebastian stopped in his tracks when he reached the doorway.

What in the world is she doing?

He leaned against the counter and watched with extreme curiosity as Kenzie dumped a snack size bag of Cheetos onto the counter. She wiggled her hips in a dance that clearly conveyed happiness and excitement and he fought the urge to chuckle at her antics, not wanting to give himself away.

Sebastian's brow raised in surprise as he watched Kenzie carefully place a few baby carrots into the now empty chip bag and some Cheetos into the carrot bag. She zipped the freshness seal of the carrot pack closed, then used superglue to close the chip bag. Oh, his girl was inventive for sure. She was also in need of a hot bottom. She knew the food rules were in place due to health issues she suffered from when her diet wasn't properly balanced.

Sebastian waited until she'd finished super-gluing the chip bag closed again and zipping up the carrot bag before announcing himself by clearing his throat. He had to fight a smile and struggled to keep his stern face in place when Kenzie jumped and whirled around.

“Papi!” She tried to hide the evidence behind her as she continued speaking, obviously trying to distract him from her task. “You’re home early.” She batted her lashes and adopted the most adorable, fake innocent face he’d ever seen. “I was just making a snack; would you like one?”

“Nice try, little girl.” He straightened from his relaxed pose and began slowly stalking toward her, “I’ve been standing here a few minutes already.”

“Crap on a cracker.”

Chapter 16

Beau

Beau made his way down the hall. He'd already checked the bedroom and both bathrooms, having gone in search of Kenzie once he'd realized that she'd been gone a while. As he got closer to the front of the house, he was surprised to hear Daddy's voice.

"I've been standing here for a few minutes already."

When Kenzie replied with her version of an expletive, Beau wondered what was happening. It didn't take him long to find them in the kitchen with Daddy towering over Kenzie in that way he had when he was in full stern Daddy mode.

Uh, oh. Someone's in trouble.

Beau hesitated a moment before announcing his presence and asking what was happening.

"Our girl decided to replace the baby carrots with Cheetos." Daddy's answer wasn't much of a shock, honestly. Kenzie had always been creative in her mischief.

"That's brilliant." When Daddy faced him with a raised eyebrow, he realized he'd said the wrong thing, but he wasn't

done yet. “Extremely naughty, and a blatant violation of the rules, but brilliant.”

“Thank you,” Kenzie said.

Oh, the sass.

“Unfortunately, your genius isn’t going to save that gorgeous ass of yours.”

“Shoot and darn.” Kenzie’s crestfallen face pulled at his heartstrings. Punishments had always been hard for Beau; he understood too well the appeal of being naughty, but he also understood the importance of knowing someone cared enough to address it.

“Shoot and darn, indeed.”

Kenzie

Why’d Papi have to come home early? She totally could have gotten away with it if he’d arrived at his usual time. She’d have been long done and Cheetos looked enough like those stupid carrots, she’d have been fine; but *noooooo*, he just *had* to decide to take half a day off.

Now, Daddy was involved too, and she just knew she was really in for it. If she talked fast, could she maybe charm them into forgetting all about it? Probably not, but it was worth a try, right?

“See, this isn’t what it looks like, Daddy.” She made sure to bat her lashes sweetly and clasp her hands in front of her,

knowing that made her look sweet and innocent. She needed all the help she could get.

“Oh? I’d really love to know *what* it is if it *isn’t* you switching out your healthy snacks for junk food.” Daddy didn’t look at all like he believed her, but Kenzie was sure she could change that.

“Well, see, what had happened was...” His raised eyebrow made her pause, how the heck could that look be so dang sexy as to distract her when her bottom was on the line? “I was doing my pretty picture in the playroom and then I heard voices in the kitchen. I couldn’t ignore it, if someone was here, I needed to know. Safety is important, right?”

“It is. And how was checking out the voices on your own safe?”

Shoot, she hadn’t thought that part out very well, had she? Kenzie needed to get explaining before she made things worse, so she made sure to rush through the rest of her story. “Well, that’s not important right now. What *is* important is that when I got here, the voices were coming from the fridge and pantry. I listened for a minute and then realized the Cheetos and carrots were talking to each other trying to explain to the other the differences in their environments and I decided to help them out by switching them so they could *experience* it. It’s the whole walking in someone else’s shoes thing. I was just trying to help!”

Well, those arms crossed over his chest and the strict look on his face didn’t bode well for Kenzie’s success but the twinkle of humor in his eyes was promising. Maybe it worked.

“Little girl...” The tone Papi’s of voice indicated that her plan wasn’t working well, “that story, while entertaining, isn’t working.”

Well, fudgesicles.

Sebastian

Goddamn, their little girl was cute as a button trying to get out of her predicament. It wasn't working, but it was still adorable. Sebastian took Kenzie's hand and led her to Beau.

“What are we going to do with her?” Beau asked, shaking his head, with an exaggerated frown plastered on his handsome face.

“Oh,” Sebastian replied, “I have several ideas.”

His ideas were boundless. Kenzie had a strong pain tolerance, since she was quite fond of pain for pleasure. He'd have to make sure her spanking was sufficiently unpleasant to get the point across, but he needed to add something else. Taking her health seriously was one of his most important rules and her antics were in direct opposition. He'd make sure she never considered doing so again.

Sebastian was silent on the walk to their bedroom. It not only gave him time to think back to their conversations and what she said her most dreaded punishments were, it also gave her time to anticipate and wonder what was coming for her.

By the time they'd made it to the bedroom, Sebastian knew what he had planned. He didn't know if Beau wanted to add anything to the plan so he'd have to step away with him to discuss things.

“Your Daddies need to discuss some things so we're stepping out of the room. We'll be right outside the door.” He

wanted her to be aware they weren't abandoning her, "While we are away, I want you to strip and to kneel in the center of the bed with your hands on your knees."

Kenzie stared at the floor as she mumbled, "Yes, Papi."

Sebastian lifted her face to him with a finger under her chin, making sure her face didn't show too much distress. Worrying over what was going to happen was expected, but he wasn't about to do anything that would mentally harm her.

"Good girl. We'll be right back."

With that, Sebastian took Beau's hand and they headed into the hall, leaving her to get ready for their return.

Beau

Beau was more grateful than he cared to admit that Daddy was the main authority when it came to discipline. Of course, Beau would participate but he was happy to hand over the biggest responsibility to Daddy.

Daddy quickly explained his plan before saying, "I wanted to see if there was anything you'd like to add before we begin."

Thinking about the future and his strong desire for the two of them to make love to Kenzie as one, Beau was quick to say, "There is one thing."

Chapter 17

Kenzie

Kenzie scrambled to get undressed, neatly folding her clothes and setting them on the seat of the rocking chair. She knew her cheeks were probably beet red, the slight embarrassment of having to take her punishment in the nude was enough to make her wet between her legs.

Her breathing was coming faster as she climbed on the bed and got into the exact position requested. Her trepidation and embarrassment were combining to have her panting in need. Since Papi hadn't said she couldn't, Kenzie spread her knees offering her Daddies a view that she knew they'd enjoy. Maybe they'd like it enough to get distracted from their mission. A girl could hope.

When the door opened again, she'd barely finished arranging herself. They really hadn't left her long and she appreciated that. She'd always had issues with feeling abandoned if left alone too long to think.

"What a pretty picture our good girl makes," Papi said almost immediately.

"I'm not a good girl or I wouldn't be getting punished."

Darn it. How did that fly out of her mouth? Now having her pussy on display would do *nothing* to distract them.

“You will always be our good girl, baby bear,” Daddy said emphatically.

“All little girls do naughty things, princess. It doesn’t mean they aren’t good girls.” Papi sat on the edge of the bed and used a finger on her chin to make sure she was looking at him. “Little girls are impulsive and mischievous. It’s just part of being who they are. Daddies expect some naughty behavior. That’s why punishments exist, so we can correct the behavior and move on with all forgiven.”

Kenzie soaked up the words, taking comfort in the fact that once they were done, they’d go back to how they were before. She loved that she wouldn’t have to worry about things being brought up later.

Daddy sat on the other side of the bed. “Look at me, baby bear.” As soon as she’d faced him, he asked, “What is your most important rule?”

“To always put my health and safety first,” she recited.

“That’s right,” Papi interjected, “And is replacing your healthy snacks with junk food a good way to put your health first?”

“No, Papi.” Despite her strong desire to lower her gaze, she had learned that Papi liked her to have her eyes on his, so she resisted.

“Breaking a health and safety rule is a serious offense.” Daddy’s words made the trepidation inside her flare brighter.

“Therefore,” Papi added, “the punishment for a health and safety violation is hefty. It’s designed to strongly discourage future instances of disregarding that particular rule.”

Well, that sucked unicorn hooves.

Kenzie hadn't really wanted to break an important rule. She'd honestly just considered it a cute prank and hadn't considered the ramifications. Maybe she should have.

Beau

Beau stood from his spot and headed to the drawer where they kept toys and implements. He had no trouble finding exactly what he was looking for; Daddy kept the drawer meticulously organized. Once he'd gotten the two items he needed, he went into the bathroom and opened the packaging before cleaning his hands and the toy to his specifications. No way was he taking a chance when it came to their girl.

He quickly returned carrying the items and saw Kenzie's eyes go wide as saucers. He knew she'd never had a plug before, but she'd been extremely interested in the idea. They'd also had conversations in which she'd expressed a desire to take both men at once. For that to happen, she'd need to be trained. No better time to start than now.

“On your knees, baby bear, with your ass lifted in the air.”

To her credit, Kenzie didn't hesitate to follow instructions. Beau could see her breathing heavily as she waited for his next moves. He noted Daddy making his way to the desk along the wall, likely setting things up there.

Popping the cap on the bottle of lube, Beau dribbled a bit at the top of her crack and used his fingers to spread it. He fought the raging erection in his jeans, reminding himself that

this was a punishment and there would be no sexy fun times. Naughty girls didn't get orgasms.

Slowly, Beau inserted his finger into her back hole, pushing past the initial resistance, "Relax and let me in, baby bear. I'll take good care of you."

Taking his words to heart, Kenzie's top half sagged into the mattress pushing her bottom higher. He pumped in and out of her several times before adding a second finger. When he began scissoring his fingers, Kenzie moaned, signaling Beau that he needed to hurry up.

Naughty girls do not get to come. Naughty girls do not get to come.

"Stay put. I'll be right back," he told Kenzie as he pulled his fingers out.

Naughty girls do not get to come.

He repeated the mantra all the way to the bathroom, the entire time he washed his hands, and all the way back. He continued chanting it in his head as he worked the plug slowly into her ass. He thought it more emphatically with every whimper and moan from Kenzie's mouth.

When the plug was fully seated in her bottom, Beau breathed a sigh of relief. Punishments might possibly be more torture for a Daddy than they were for a Little. Then again, as he remembered punishments doled out by his own Daddy, Beau thought maybe Kenzie really did have it worse off than he did.

"How are you doing, baby bear?" He checked in one last time.

"Mmm. I'm good, Daddy."

Excellent. It was time to hand over the reins.

Chapter 18

Sebastian

The crop wouldn't do. That had made her come and Sebastian didn't allow orgasms during a punishment. *Especially* not a punishment for a health and safety violation. So, the crop was out. He couldn't use the wide paddle because of the plug in her ass so that was out too. Sebastian perused the drawer, searching for the perfect tool. With his options limited, it didn't really take him long to find what he needed.

Perfect!

He grabbed his chosen implement and headed back toward the bed just as Kenzie declared herself to be "good."

Not for long, little girl.

As Beau stepped back to watch, Sebastian stepped forward and reached out to smooth his hands over her derriere.

"I am going to spank your bottom. First with my hand, then with this paddle." He held the length of wood at an angle that allowed her to see it from her position, not ready to give up his view just yet. "I am going to paddle your bottom until I feel it's sufficient. You can use your safeword at any time if it

becomes too much and everything stops. Your punishment won't be over, however, just delayed and adjusted so I highly suggest not trying to safeword to get out of it.”

Sebastian didn't really believe she would do that, but it was their first punishment, so he felt the need to lay it all out for her.

“I won't, Papi.”

“Good girl. After your spanking, you'll be writing lines.”

Kenzie's groan of agony almost made him smile. Apparently, she hadn't lied about abhorring lines. Perfect.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Sebastian patted his knee and said, “Come here, little girl, and drape yourself over my lap.”

As soon as Kenzie was in place with one of his legs firmly over both of hers to keep them from kicking, Sebastian took hold of her wrists, locking them behind her back so she wouldn't reach for her bottom and get hurt. Then he laid down the first smack. With Kenzie's love of pain, Sebastian didn't warm her up—he wanted her to feel this spanking and remember it.

His hand came down on Kenzie's ass hard and fast, peppering her bottom with palm prints that soon converged, causing her cheeks to glow a lovely shade of red. He continued until her moans turned to whimpers, and her whimpers gave way to wriggling and trying to escape. Without loosening his grip on her wrists, Sebastian reached over and grabbed the paddle. He'd chosen a thinner one so he could avoid hitting the plug in her bottom with something as hard as wood.

His actions barely gave Kenzie a chance to take a breath before he brought down the paddle with a satisfying thud. A line of deeper red appeared on her bottom and Kenzie fought against his hold harder.

“Please, Papi! I’ll be good!” Desperate pleas and promises poured from her lips, but Sebastian was not deterred, raining blow after blow to the soft rippling flesh of her behind until finally the first sobs escaped and she sagged over his knee, accepting her punishment.

Sebastian laid a few more carefully placed smacks on her cheeks as Kenzie began to sob in earnest. He placed the final two swats on the tender spot between her thighs and her bottom. Dropping the paddle, he quickly gathered her in his arms and rocked her, running a hand up and down her back.

“Let it all out, sweet girl. Papi’s here.”

Beau came and sat beside him, wrapping his arms around Sebastian and Kenzie both, wiping her tears and telling her what a good girl she was for taking her spanking so well. The two of them continued to hold their girl until her sobs turned to hiccups and her tears dried to trails of salt on her cheeks.

Kenzie

I will not disregard my health or safety because my Daddies wouldn't be able to stand it if anything happened to me.

Kenzie wrote what felt like the five-hundred-millionth line in neat print letters. Okay, so it was only line five, but it

seriously did feel like so much more. This was stupid. She hadn't even been *that* careless with her health.

What was the *real* harm in replacing a few carrots with something tastier? Besides, Cheetos were made from corn. Corn was a vegetable. So really, she'd just replaced one vegetable for another. A much tastier one.

I will not...

Okay, so maybe she shouldn't have tried to deceive her Daddies, but seriously, all the vegetables were slowly killing her soul.

I will not...

Shifting in her seat Kenzie winced at the soreness even as she fought a surprising mix of arousal and embarrassment as the plug shifted in her bottom and reminded her of its presence.

I will not...

Why were they making her do this? It was just vegetables! She'd been avoiding them for a long time and she was *fine*!

I will not...

So what if she'd had more energy and less allergies and sniffles since spending all her time here and being forced to eat the stupid vegetables?

I will not...

It didn't prove anything. Did it?

“How's it coming, princess?”

Kenzie couldn't stop the groan that escaped her if she tried, “Stupid lines. Do I really have to write one hundred trillion of them?”

Papi's chuckle did not amuse her. At all. She narrowly avoided sticking her tongue out at him. That would not turn out well for her still-burning bottom.

"I said one hundred, little girl. Not one hundred *trillion*."

"Same difference."

Papi laughed long and loud as he walked away.

Well, at least he's amused.

Some of Kenzie's anger faded, however, when Papi returned and draped a soft blanket over her shoulders a few minutes later. They really did care about her and really did just want the best for her. Maybe it really was better to let them take care of her. Even if it *did* mean eating icky veggies.

I can do it. As long as they don't ever ask me to like veggies.

Chapter 19

Kenzie

“Have a good day, baby bear.” Daddy stole one last kiss before letting her go and closing the door to the car that she’d just exited. Well, technically, it had been several minutes since he’d opened the door and helped her out of the car, but he’d been a little too preoccupied with kissing her senseless to close it before now.

Shaking the delicious memory of Daddy’s lips on hers from her brain, she opened the door to the candy store and tried to get her brain into work mode. As soon as she’d entered the store, she’d felt a chill. The atmosphere was different today. Heavier. Not happy and joyful like it normally was.

Kenzie looked around trying to figure out why she had such a foreboding feeling all of a sudden and was surprised to find Annie, the store’s owner, at the register with a grim expression on her face.

“Kenzie, I was hoping to speak with you before you begin your shift.”

Uh oh. What had she done wrong? Kenzie tried to wrack her brain for any policy she’d broken or task she’d forgotten to

do but she couldn't think of anything.

“Sure.” She *wanted* to refuse. She had a bad feeling, and it was making her anxious, but it wasn't like she could really do that.

Annie led her to the back and offered Kenzie the seat across the desk from her. She wasted no time in beginning.

“You've been a model employee for a long time, Kenzie, and I am saddened to have to have this talk with you.”

Annie's face conveyed the truth of her words and Kenzie felt her stomach drop, but she remained silent waiting for what else Annie needed to say.

“I'm not sure what's been going on the last month or so, but your till has been short almost every shift and I just can't afford to let it keep happening. I really am sorry, but I'm going to have to put you on leave without pay until we figure out what's causing it.”

Kenzie's mouth dropped. She was extremely careful to make sure her counts were correct. She counted change to customers twice and always double checked what she put in the register before finishing a transaction. She'd had very few short tills since starting her job. She couldn't understand why that would suddenly change.

Kenzie would be the first to admit she'd been preoccupied lately but not *that* much so. Surely it couldn't be right. There had to be a mistake, but when she tried to tell Annie that, Annie had simply stated that an investigation would take place and everything would be figured out then. In the meantime, Kenzie was on suspension. Effective immediately.

Barely holding back her tears, Kenzie exited first Annie's office, then the store. Once in the parking lot, Kenzie let go

and bawled as she dialed her Daddy's number.

Sebastian

When his phone rang, he glanced at the screen, expecting to find an unknown number for a telemarketer. Everyone else knew his work times and didn't usually call. When he saw it was Beau calling, he immediately answered. Beau never called in the middle of a workday without an excellent reason.

"What's wrong, love?" He didn't see a point in wasting words. If there was an emergency, the sooner he knew what it was, the better.

"It's Kenzie. She called crying asking me to pick her up at work. She was crying too hard for me to understand her explanation of what happened, and I couldn't get her to calm down."

Sebastian was already gathering his things as he told his boy, "I'm closer so I'll probably beat you, but I'll meet you there."

Sebastian drove faster than was probably wise, but something was wrong with his girl and he wasn't about to slow down until he knew what it was. He swung into the parking lot to see Kenzie sitting on the ground outside the shop with her head resting on her knees and her shoulders shaking with her tears.

Screeching to a halt, Sebastian rushed from the vehicle and ran to his girl. Something was seriously wrong.

Beau

Beau had never been so freaked out. What was going on? Kenzie had been fine when he dropped her off. She'd been happy and excited for her day. How had that changed so drastically between dropping her off and him pulling into the driveway at home? Why hadn't he waited just a few more minutes before pulling out? He could have been so much closer if he had.

He was doing his best to obey traffic laws; he didn't want to break one of Daddy's rules right then, but it was so hard. He may have ignored one or two, like speed limits, but what Daddy didn't know wouldn't hurt him. Besides, this *had* to be an exception, right?

Beau was smart enough to slow down some and not pull in driving like a crazy person. That would get his hide tanned for sure, but once parked, he was by Kenzie's side faster than lightning could flash.

Daddy was already holding their girl, so Beau snuggled in behind her as they surrounded her with their comfort and protection. They didn't know what was happening but until her sobs slowed down, she wouldn't be able to explain. As difficult as it was, they'd have to be patient about finding out who they had to maim or kill. Whoever had done this to their girl was going to pay. But first, they had to take care of her and make sure she was okay.

As Kenzie cried it all out, Beau began rubbing her back, her arms, anywhere that he could reach, trying to provide

comfort while also checking for injuries. He saw red at the thought of anyone physically hurting their girl. Emotionally was bad enough, but physical harm to their Little girl meant the culprit wouldn't just pay. They'd be dead.

Chapter 20

Sebastian

He wasn't sure how long they sat on a sidewalk huddled around a sobbing Kenzie. He couldn't imagine what the people passing by who stared in shock at them were thinking, and frankly, he didn't fucking care. All he cared about was calming their Little girl down and finding out what the hell had happened to upset her this much.

When Kenzie's sobs finally slowed and her hitching breaths evened out, Sebastian pulled out the handkerchief he habitually had in his pocket and gently dried her face of tears. She tried to take over when he held it to her nose and instructed her to blow, but Sebastian wasn't having it. He needed to take care of her, especially when she was so upset.

"Tell us what happened, princess," he gently commanded.

She did. She told them about every minute from her entering the shop to the moment she'd been sent home. Sebastian interjected occasionally, asking questions to get a better understanding while Beau remained silent and cuddled with her, comforting her.

“So, now I am suspended until their investigation is complete and I could lose my job.” Silent tears began falling from her eyes at the mention of losing her job, and Sebastian had heard enough.

“Bollocks to that,” he grumbled, cupping her damp cheeks in his hands, and making sure she was looking at him. “I refuse to see that happen. No way are you losing a job that has brought you so much joy, especially when you aren’t at fault.”

“There isn’t much we can do until the investigation is complete,” Kenzie replied desperately. “I just hope it proves I didn’t do anything wrong.”

As he held her and Beau close until Kenzie’s fresh tears stopped, Sebastian thought of everything she’d told them. It didn’t take him long to figure out what was *really* going on. He thanked fate for the suspicious nature his time in insurance investigating had honed in him, and for the fact he’d felt compelled to document things based on his suspicion. Once the lightbulb lit in his head, he could no longer stay still.

Sebastian signaled Beau who took Kenzie more fully in his arms. Sebastian needed to move, furious energy vibrating in his system. He paced the sidewalk mumbling to himself, “I knew I didn’t trust that bitch. She was being too fucking nice all of a sudden and there was definitely something off about her helpfulness.”

Kenzie’s head popped up and she stared at Sebastian in shock. “What are you talking about, Papi?”

Her use of his honorific in public was another sign of just how upset Kenzie was and he couldn’t stand to see her hurting. He wanted to take the pain from her and endure it himself. Or, better yet, fix it.

“Come on, little ones.” He reached down and took each of their hands, helping them to stand from the ground, “We have a shop owner to talk to.”

Kenzie

Kenzie wasn't one hundred percent sure what was happening, but Sebastian led them to the door of the candy store with purposeful steps and a determined expression. Despite how upset she was, Kenzie could appreciate the fact he was hot as hell this way.

Once they reached the entrance, Kenzie hesitated. She really didn't want to go in there right now. She was too ashamed and embarrassed. She'd never had any disciplinary action at work before. She strived to exceed expectations because she loved the store and its customers, and she loved working in such a cheerful and positive atmosphere. It didn't feel cheerful and positive right now and she desperately wanted to avoid it.

Stopping in his tracks when Kenzie's sudden halt caused her to tug his hand, Papi faced her and said simply, “Trust me, princess.”

Kenzie realized she did indeed trust him. She trusted Papi and Daddy completely. Somewhere along the line she'd lost her hesitation and worry over things going badly. They'd never hurt her, and she loved them. So, she nodded her head and allowed him to lead her in.

They didn't stop, Papi didn't look around, he took them straight to the register where Annie had taken over Kenzie's shift. He didn't waste a second as he stopped directly in front of Annie.

"I have some information you may be interested in. We really need to talk immediately."

Annie looked startled at first, but after seeing Papi's serious expression, she nodded and headed to put the *back in ten minutes* sign they used for bathroom breaks on the door. Annie waved an arm to point down the hall, indicating they should lead the way to her office.

Once settled, Papi dived right in and tilted Kenzie's world. "Kenzie isn't your culprit. She's been framed and I can prove it."

What the... *What?*

Papi explained to Annie about not trusting Nicole from the moment he'd seen her by saying, "She was suddenly a bit too friendly when Kenzie said she'd always been a loner before. It also seemed insincere. She gave fake smiles and forced laughs. At least, that's the way it seemed to me. When I'd asked Kenzie about Nicole after first meeting her, the things Kenzie said didn't add up with Nicole's sudden change in demeanor."

Nicole? He thinks Nicole has something to do with this?

Papi talked a few more minutes to Annie, explaining the fact that Nicole had offered to finish closing duties for Kenzie on multiple occasions, including making sure the till was balanced for the next shift.

"You said you have proof of this?" Annie sounded and looked skeptical, with scrunched brows and pursed lips.

Papi didn't answer verbally. Instead, he pulled a phone from his pocket, tapped a few buttons on the screen and rocked Kenzie's world for a second time in a short while when he pressed a final button and a recording began to play of Nicole offering to balance the money for the next shift.

"It's dated and time stamped." He explained before playing recording after recording. He must have recorded each instance of it happening since the very first one.

No wonder he'd made a point of asking each time he picked her up if she'd completed her closing procedures. He'd been checking to see if he should record the shift change or not. He'd taken precautions and he'd done it all to protect her.

"I love you, both of you," she blurted unintentionally.

She hadn't meant to tell them here, or in front of her boss. She wasn't thrilled with the timing or the atmosphere, but she wouldn't take the words back. She *did* love them. She decided she *especially* wouldn't regret the words when Sebastian slowly turned his face in her direction, an adoring look blending with the complete joy on his face as he told her, "I love you too, princess. More than I ever could have imagined."

When Daddy spoke up despite their audience, and declared, "I love you both," she thought her world was complete. But when the men rose from their seats and sandwiched her in an embrace, with Papi and then Daddy kissing the life out of her, she knew she'd found everything she'd ever need.

A snuffle from the direction of the office desk interrupted the intense moment as Annie wiped a tear from her eye and smiled widely. "That's beautiful," she declared.

It settled Kenzie's mind to know she didn't judge them or find the fact that they all loved each other strange.

"Y'all go on. Kenzie, take the rest of the day off but I'll see you tomorrow. That is, as long as you don't want to quit now. You don't, do you?"

Wrapping her arms around each of her Daddies' waist, Kenzie smiled widely and called out, "See you tomorrow, boss lady," over her shoulder as they led her from the room.

Epilogue

Kenzie

“A little to the left.”

Kenzie watched Papi adjust her favorite—and first ever—diamond art picture according to her instructions. She’d finished it almost a year ago. It was funny that her broken heart was what had spurred her to create it. Now, the same man who’d broken her heart had fixed it and filled it with so much love and joy, she could hardly contain it. He’d also brought someone else into their lives who fulfilled them both and completed them both in ways she hadn’t realized they’d needed.

Kenzie finally felt like this was her home too and was taking up their offer to add décor around the house. She’d even moved in a few days ago. Her boxes were still scattered about the house, waiting for things to be unpacked and placed, but despite so much still being packed away, she’d never felt more at home than she did in that moment.

Once the picture was hung to her satisfaction, Papi reminded her of the time, and she had to rush to get ready for work. She didn’t want to be late. Things had been great there

since Nicole had been fired and arrested for theft. Apparently, after they'd left that day, Annie had called the police and started a criminal investigation.

It was discovered that Nicole had been traveling the country, getting jobs at different places with assumed identities. She'd steal what she could until she was either caught—or about to be—and at each new place, she'd begin by pilfering small amounts of money at a time, with the big payout being the large amount she would take before suddenly “disappearing.” Her name wasn't even Nicole but Annalise something or other. Kenzie didn't remember exactly, and she wasn't worried about it. She was just grateful Papi had the foresight to get what he needed to prove Kenzie's innocence. She couldn't imagine what would have happened if he hadn't. Maybe she'd be the one in jail instead of Nicole.

All was right in Kenzie's world these days and as her Daddy buckled her into the car so her men could take her to work together, she thanked the heavens for the fact she'd decided to take this chance. She couldn't imagine her world without Daddy and Papi, but since she'd found her courage and taken the leap, she didn't have to.

The End

About L.G. Knight

L.G. Knight is the author of all-inclusive age play romance. She is the author of the Devil's Wrath MC Daddies series and the Little Hearts Club series. She hopes these series' will be just two of many.

L.G. lives in Texas with her Daddy, her two kids, and her service dog named Thor (because he's her superhero). She is an avid supporter of the LGBTQA+ community and strives to include all types of Age Play relationships in her books. When she isn't writing, you can find her coloring, playing with her kids, crafting or, most likely, reading.

L.G. finds inspiration from some of her favorite authors such as Kate Oliver, EJ Frost, Pepper North and Laylah Roberts.

For real time updates, exclusive first looks, and much more, follow L.G. on social media!

Knight's Panda Mafia Facebook Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1383193159087300>

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Tik Tok: [L. G. Knight \(@authorlgknight\)](#) | [TikTok](#)



A Little Las Vegas
Wedding by Bayleigh
Rae

A MF story by Bayleigh Rae

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Part I

Margo and Knox

Chapter 1

Margo

Margo burst through the door after a wedding planning meeting with her best friends and found her Daddy, Knox, sitting on the couch with his hands in his lap and a big ol' frown on his face.

“Daddy, what’s wrong?” she asked, tiptoeing over, as she went through the day’s events in her head. Her Daddy looked the way he usually did when he was about to spank her, but she hadn’t even done anything wrong!

Not that she would say no to a spanking anyway. Spankings were her love language and planning a quadruple wedding was stressful!

Today’s ‘meeting’ had accomplished nothing, other than establishing that every one of them had very different tastes and ideas about how their special day was supposed to go. A quadruple wedding had sounded like a great idea last week when Tessa had proposed it, but the reality was enough to make Margo wish she’d been like Mariah or Jade and married her Daddy right away. Out of all the Las Vegas Littles—that was what she called her friends that had once lived in the

penthouse with her—Margo had been with her Daddy the longest, but they had wanted to take it slow.

Knox sighed loudly, and Margo's attention shifted to the present. Something was wrong. Her Daddy was acting funny, and, she noticed belatedly, he was dressed up. He looked sexy, if not out of place, in black dress slacks and a dark gray button-down. He was even wearing a tie. A black one. Her Daddy was a construction foreman who was doing the renovations on the swanky hotel/casino they all lived in. It would open as a premiere kink-lifestyle resort for Bigs and Littles in a few short weeks. Aside from the few weddings they'd attended together, she'd never seen him dressed up like this. He always wore jeans and a plain t-shirt. Sometimes, he had a flannel over it.

Her stomach knotted. Had someone died?

“Daddy,” she asked again, stepping close enough to pick up his tie and fiddle with it. “What’s wrong?”

He looked up at her as if just noticing her presence, and swallowed hard. “Hey, babygirl.” He smiled, but it didn’t reach his eyes.

He wiped his hands on his pants and Margo wondered if they were sweaty. Was he nervous? He looked nervous. She went to sit on his lap but he stood abruptly before she could. “How was your meeting?” he asked, his voice flat like he wasn’t really interested.

Then he didn’t even wait for her to answer. “You need to get dressed. I laid your clothes out on the chair.”

Margo frowned. She was dressed, and in her favorite outfit. A bright blue shirt with a pink owl on it and a blue-and-pink-ruffled skirt with pink bike shorts underneath. He’d

helped her get dressed that morning and even picked out her clothes. Why did she have to change?

Before she could question, he disappeared into the bathroom. She could hear the water running and Knox muttering to himself.

Confused, she tiptoed over to the chair to inspect the clothing he'd set out. The dress—a bubble gum pink frilly, lacy, angelic looking concoction that wasn't really her style, except for the color—was something she'd never seen before. It certainly hadn't come out of her closet. It had a matching ruffled diaper cover and was next to white patent-leather Mary Janes, shiny opaque tights, and a pink headband with a giant bow affixed to it. None of it was really Margo's style, but she wanted to make her Daddy happy so she put it on.

The fabric was a little itchy and she felt as out of place as her Daddy looked.

She was considering taking it off and refusing to wear it, but Knox stepped out of the bathroom and his eyes lit up when he looked at her. Suddenly all the awkwardness she felt was gone and she was a princess. She gave a little curtsy and giggled. "Do you like it, Daddy?"

"Very much," Knox said. Pride and love radiated in his beaming expression. Gone was all the nervousness that she'd seen only a few minutes earlier. "It just needs one more thing."

He walked over to his nightstand and returned with a small leather pouch that he handed to Margo.

She frowned. The nightstand was where they kept things like paddles and butt plugs for easy access but this pouch was far too light and small to be anything like that. Pulling open the drawstring, she reached inside, gasping when her fingers

touched what could only be jewelry. She pulled it out, slowly revealing a delicate gold chain. The gold owl pendant attached to it had gemstones for eyes and a diamond in the center of its belly.

“Oh Daddy!” she gasped. “It’s beautiful! Thank you!” Margo wasn’t normally one for fancy jewelry, or any jewelry really, but she knew immediately that she would wear this every day.

“May I?” Knox asked, holding out his hand to take it from her. At first, Margo wasn’t sure what he was asking, but then she realized he wanted to put it on her, just like in the movies.

“Oh yes, please,” she exclaimed, twirling around until her back was to him. Her dress swished and swirled when she did so.

She could feel his beefy hands shaking as he fastened the delicate clasp and she looked down at the pendant to see it sparkling against the pink fabric of her dress.

“Okay,” he said when he finished.

She twirled back around with a smile on her face.

Knox held out his hand for hers. “Ready to go?” he asked.

Without hesitation, she slipped her hand in his. She still had no idea where they were going, but she no longer cared. It didn’t matter to her that Knox was dressed up, or that her dress was itchy and had too much lace for her liking.

She would follow her Daddy anywhere, anytime.

Knox

It seemed like a good idea at the time. That was what Margo always said after she got caught in one of her epic shenanigans and the time came to pay the piper. It was exactly how he was feeling right then.

When he'd planned today, knowing he wanted to keep it simple and true to them and their relationship, the details had seemed perfect. Now that the time had actually come, he was questioning everything.

Most girls would not be happy about what he had planned—they wanted flowers and fancy dinners and soft music with flowery lyrics—big romantic gesture type of shit—but Margo was not most girls.

Still, his idea was a little out there. Even Baze had hemmed and hawed and questioned the plan before agreeing that Margo would probably like it.

His heart was racing as they rode the elevator down to the main floor.

“Where are we going, Daddy?” Margo asked the question at least ten times, but he didn't answer once. Finally the elevator jerked to a stop and they stepped off. Margo immediately turned in the direction of the main entrance, thinking that they were leaving the resort but he pulled her back toward the dining hall where they took all their meals.

It was lunchtime, and the hall was filled. Chef Graham had made all Margo's favorites—a very un-gourmet spread of chicken nuggets, homemade mac and cheese, and corn on the cob—and like most days, all her friends were there. There was Baze and Luna, Chef Graham and Mariah, Pastor Ryan and Jade, Sam and Ellie, and Ellie's twin sister Tessa with her

Daddies, Beau and Dax, and Jilly and her new Daddy Axel, along with most of Axel's MC buddies who were now working and living here at Utopia. All of them, aside from Axel's friends who would be there for lunch but not the festivities afterward, were dressed up in their best clothes. For some of them, like Baze and Pastor Ryan that wasn't unusual, but it didn't take Margo long to start questioning.

"Why is everyone dressed up? Those aren't the clothes they were wearing earlier!" He could hear the worry and confusion creeping into her voice and felt guilty for putting it there. Maybe asking everyone to dress up had been over the top, but he just wanted every detail to be as special as possible.

"Daddy!" Margo tugged on the hand she was holding. "Why is everyone staring at us?"

Knox looked out at the room to find that indeed, all eyes were on them. So much for acting natural.

"Come on babygirl, let's get our lunch." He walked her through the line piling up her plate with food. His own plate was nearly bare. He was too nervous to eat. They took a seat at a smaller table with Jilly and Axel, along with Lucky, Bandit and Slim. He figured that out of all of them this table was the least likely to accidentally spill the beans. Plus, he was enjoying getting to know the guys and was considering joining their club, the Sin City Saints.

Jilly offered him a soft smile as they sat down, as if she could tell he needed the encouragement. Axel nodded. Lucky, Slim and Bandit had no idea what was going on and would probably leave after they ate. That was for the best. He wasn't sure if they were really into the lifestyle the rest of them here at Utopia lived. They were moved in as a safety precaution after their clubhouse burned down and they were outed at their

day jobs in retaliation for the retribution they had taken on Jilly's behalf. Knox didn't know all the details and he really didn't want to.

Jilly and Margo immediately started whispering amongst themselves about wedding preparations and Knox nodded at Axel and the men. "How's it going?"

"A little boring. I mean not much to secure when it's not open to the public yet," Slim answered, "but other than that, can't complain."

"You all settled in? How's your mama doing?" Slim's mother, Carlene, whom he had lived with before the fire, had also been moved into a suite of her own following the fire. Knox looked around the room for her.

"She's watching her shows," Slim explained. "She doesn't come down for lunch. Chef Graham always makes me a plate to take up. She'll be here for dinner though."

"Ah, gotcha," Knox answered. He didn't know what else to say. He had no idea if he and Margo would be here for dinner or not. It depended on how lunch and the rest of the day went.

"Daddy," Margo whined beside him, demanding his attention. He looked over to find her glaring at Jilly with her arms crossed over her chest. "Jilly won't tell me why she is dressed up! And she knows why everyone is dressed up and she won't tell me that either!"

Axel, on the other side of Jilly, frowned. Knox could see him choosing his words carefully so as not to give anything away. "Jilly," he admonished in a warning tone, "I thought we agreed we weren't going to talk about that..."

“She asked me outright, Daddy, and I’m not s’posed to lie!”

Axel pulled his mouth into a perplexed frown, obviously not sure how to answer that.

“I’m not dressed up,” Slim said from beside Axel. “Neither are these guys.” He jerked his thumb at Lucky and Bandit. “We don’t have any idea what’s going on either.”

Knox was pretty sure that was a lie, but he was thankful for it. Not that his regular everyday clothing appeased Margo at all. Her friends were dressed up and that was all that mattered.

Guilt twisted his gut. Soon she would figure it out. Until then... he pointed at her plate. “Eat your lunch,” he said gruffly.

“You too, young lady.” Axel followed his lead.

Margo pouted, but bit the head off a dinosaur-shaped chicken nugget and chewed like her life depended on it. She and Jilly went back to giggling, this time talking about the glitter bomb they’d sent to Axel’s shop, and the makeover they’d given his bike, and the outcome of both pranks. Margo had confessed her part in both, and he’d spanked her for it, because that was what she wanted. He hadn’t been mad though. Both pranks seemed fairly harmless and Axel had taken them in stride. It was good to see Jilly coming into her own.

The rest of the group ate in silence, and when Lucky, Slim and Bandit finished, they clapped him on the back as they left as if to wish him luck. He felt kind of bad that they weren’t invited, but it really wasn’t the type of thing you invited possibly-non-kinky, almost strangers too.

“I’m done, Daddy!” Margo announced, pushing her plate, empty save a smear of ketchup and ranch toward him. “Now will you tell me what’s going on?”

“Almost.” He took both their plates and carried them to the garbage and washing station, scanning the room as he walked.

Almost all the extras had cleared out by now, with just a few slow eating stragglers.

Feeling a rush of panic, he patted his pants pocket and met Baze’s eyes. He needed to make sure the other man had procured the rest of what he needed. Baze gave a quick nod to answer his unspoken question. Knox sighed, his whole chest heaving with relief.

Margo and Jilly had been joined by Jade and Mariah, and there was a lot of giggling and bouncing going on.

He took his seat and watched the group with interest, listening in to make sure no secrets were being spilled.

Finally the crews left. Baze, Sam and Pastor Ryan went to work, creating a semicircle of chairs in the center of the room with another semicircle row behind it, until there were enough seats for everyone but Knox and Margo. Then, finally, he dragged one chair in front of all the others, facing the opposite direction.

This caught the attention of the Littles. They all fell silent. He caught several of them sneaking knowing glances at Margo as their Daddies came and got them, leading them over to a chair. First Baze and Luna, then Ellie and Sam, Tessa, Beau and Dax, Jade and Ryan, Jilly and Axel, and finally Mariah and Chef Graham, until he and Margo were the only ones left standing and the forward facing chair to the crowd was the only one left.

“Daddy?” Margo gulped, looking up at him, her expression uncertain. “What’s going on?”

He took her hand and led her across the room. “What’s going on, babygirl, is that you and I are going to have a little talk.”

He sat on the chair and pulled her into her favorite position: face down, ass up, across his lap. He said nothing as he flipped the skirt of her dress over her back, and pulled her diaper cover, tights, and pull-up down. Baze walked over and handed him a paddle making it very clear what was about to happen.

“Daddy!” Margo shrieked when she realized. “Why am I getting a spanking? In front of everybody! What did I do?” He happily noted that there was no fear or panic in her voice, only confusion.

“What did you do?” Knox looked out at their friends, *no*, their *family*, that had gathered around them. “Well, little one, the funniest thing happened. I found myself knee-deep in wedding planning, and I haven’t even proposed to the bride yet.” He punctuated his accusation with a stinging smack on each bottom cheek.

“Oooohhhh,” her friends in the peanut gallery teased. Margo just wiggled her ass. He couldn’t see her face, but he didn’t have to to know she was grinning.

Any other woman or Little in her position, ass up in front of a crowd, might start questioning themselves at this point, but not his Margo. “Hmmp! You said you were just waiting until I was ready!”

“Yes, I did. And I was. Waiting for you to tell me that you were ready, not waiting for you to just jump into wedding

planning like I was an afterthought in the process.”

“Oops. Sorry!” She didn’t sound all that sorry. Of course she didn’t. She liked what was happening way too much. Margo was a hardcore spanko with an exhibitionist streak and an uncanny ability to know when he was actually upset versus when he was just being bossy.

Today was neither of those things, but if she could tell, it didn’t faze her.

“I thought today was the perfect opportunity to show you what I expect in a blushing bride,” he told her with a teasing lilt in his voice as he lay down a volley of smacks across her perfect bottom.

“To punish me for not letting you propose?” Her voice was still confused sounding but with a playful lilt to it.

“For not *letting* me?” he asked, his voice full of bewildered amusement. “Since when do you control me in any way shape or form?”

He smacked her thighs, five times each in rapid succession.

She growled. “I’m just repeating what you said!”

He ignored her protest and continued spanking, watching as her fleshy, freckled bottom turned a peachy-pink hue under his hand.

“I’m the Daddy here,” he lectured as he spanked, “and you best not forget that.”

“Okay, okay! Geesh!” She threw her hands back to cover herself and he pinned them to the small of her back, holding them in place with one of his before continuing.

“If there’s a wedding, as the groom, or in this case one of them, I do need to have a say in it.”

“Do you... do you not want to marry me anymore?” He could hear the tremble of fear in her voice and it clenched his heart.

He picked up the paddle. *Whap!* was the sound it made as it came down hard across the center of her ass.

“Baby girl.” He spoke firmly but lovingly. “Of course I want to marry you. But we have done everything your way and on your timeline and I just want my moment.” Every other word was punctuated with a swat from the paddle. The tell-tale glistening between her thighs let him know that just because she didn’t quite understand what was going on didn’t mean she wasn’t enjoying it.

“Y-your moment?” Her voice wavered and she squirmed across his lap, her nether regions rubbing against his cock. He stifled a groan and the urge to adjust himself, one drawback to doing this in front of an audience.

“Mmmhmmm,” he murmured. “My moment.”

He wanted it and he would have it, just as soon as her bottom was the right shade of pink.

But he was growing impatient, and nervous. He was afraid she’d feel the bulge in his pocket and catch on. It may be unorthodox and many might not understand, but he was going to do this their way and if he had to make up a more appropriate story for future kids and grandkids, well, then so be it.

He turned all of his focus to paddling her behind, and bless Margo; she didn’t even question why. There were no more

questions or words of protest, just a Little trusting her Daddy, the way it should be.

Finally, when her bottom was the correct shade of pink and her whimpers were coming with every couple of squats, he knew it was time. Dropping the paddle, he switched back to his hand, the swats he was landing becoming more like love taps.

“Marguerite Mae, I love you so much. You are my sunshine and my girl. You brighten every day with your sass and pranks and antics and you certainly make life more interesting. You know when to be naughty and when to be good. You are the best friend I’ve ever had and the best friend I’ve ever seen. You are fiercely loyal and protective and will do anything for those here in this room. Which is why I wanted to have them here to see me remind you to do something for yourself once in a while. We talked about getting married and of course I want to marry you, but you jumped into a wedding because it was what your friends needed. You never stopped for a second to think about what you might miss out on.”

“I’m not missing out on anything!” Margo cried indignantly. “I didn’t give anything up! I want to get married with my friends!”

He shook his head and heaved a long suffering sigh. “Yes, of course you do, and we will, but in that process we will not miss out on our own special things.” He kept spanking her with light taps that got harder as he went on.

“What are you talking about?” Margo cried.

Her friends and their Daddies started to chuckle. Either she really hadn’t caught on or she needed to be nominated for an Academy award.

Stopping his onslaught on her bottom, he pulled her pull-up over her now reddened and heated bottom, following it with her tights and diaper cover. He righted her skirt, and then lifted her just enough so as to slide out from underneath her while pulling her into a sitting position on the chair. Digging in his pocket, he pulled out the small box and knelt in front of her.

“Marguerite Mae, what I’m trying to say is anything I do with you, I want to do it right. So, even though we are already deep in wedding plans and getting married in only a couple weeks, I’m asking if you will please make me the happiest Daddy on earth and accept my proposal.” He flipped the lid of the box open, revealing a soft pink cushion-cut solitaire. “Will you marry me?”

Margo’s jaw dropped. Her gaze skittered between his face and the open box.

“A proposal?” she shrieked. “That’s what this is all about?” She looked indignant and he wondered if he had miscalculated. Then, suddenly she softened and giggled. “Well, spankings are my love language.”

“Exactly.” He beamed at her, leaning forward to steal a kiss.

She tried to deepen it, but he pulled away and looked at her expectantly. “So? Will you?”

Margo tapped her chin and played coy. “Will I... what?”

“Oooh you.” He fake growled, tickling her sides until she howled. “Are you tryna get put over my knee again, little girl?”

“I mean... maybe. It is my favorite place to be.” She really looked like she was waiting to see if he would do it and just

when he was about to, she jumped into his arms, wrapping hers around his neck. “Of course the answer is yes, you silly Daddy! Of course I’ll marry you! I mean, I already was, wasn’t I?”

Even though she was right and her answer had been a foregone conclusion, their friends erupted into cheers behind them, everyone leaping to their feet to embrace them in celebratory hugs. Graham disappeared into the kitchen and came back with a cake and a bunch of congratulations balloons.

Knox hadn’t been in on that plan. “What’s this?”

Baze smiled. “This is your engagement party, such as it is. Excuse us for not being very fancy. We didn’t have a lot of time.”

A cake and balloons were above and beyond what Knox had been expecting since he hadn’t been expecting anything at all.

“Wow. That’s great. Thank you, guys.”

“And there’s presents too!” Luna cried, tackling both him and Margo in a group hug.

Knox just shook his head, amazed at the family he’d found and everything they did for him and his babygirl every day.

Chapter 2

Margo

“Open this one! Open this one.” Her friends each held a brightly-colored gift bag and were waving them in her face. Presents were fun and tempting and she was abundantly thankful for this impromptu shower of love but all she really wanted to do was get her Daddy upstairs and give him a proper answer to his proposal. One that included both of them having their clothes off. Plus, she couldn’t wait to get out of this itchy dress. She was thankful for it, of course, because there had been pictures taken as he was asking and after she said yes, and there were still pictures being taken, but in her expert opinion the dress would look better on the floor beside their bed.

“Margo! Open mine!” Mariah cried. Margo realized that the only way out of this was through it and resigned herself to having to wait a little longer before she could have her Daddy alone.

“Okay, okay,” she giggled, taking the bright orange bag, making a show out of removing the tissue paper. When she peeked inside, Margo, who wasn’t one to embarrass easily,

gasped as her cheeks turned a deep shade of red. “Mariah Sue! What in the world?”

“Well now I need to see what’s in the bag,” Knox teased. “Show us, sweetheart.”

Her eyes wide, Margo shook her head emphatically from side to side. “Excuse me, we are in mixed company and there is a pastor present,” she hush whispered.

With his brows raised, Knox took the bag from her and peeked inside, letting out a low whistle when he saw the contents.

“Well. We will certainly be using that later. Thank you, Mariah.”

Margo glared at her friend as the next bag was shoved into her hands. It was green, obviously from Jilly so she figured it would be safe.

It was not.

“Jilly!” she hollered. “What has gotten into you?”

Jilly grinned and shrugged. “Lately... a lot of things.” The innuendo was clear and Margo’s eyes nearly bugged out of her head as she handed the bag to Knox.

Tessa marched up and handed her a yellow bag. She didn’t even peek inside before shooting her friend a death glare. “Is this one safe?”

Tessa shrugged.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake! Are any of them safe?”

The remaining Littles still holding their gift bags looked at each other and back at her.

“Not really,” Luna finally admitted.

“Crap on a cracker, you guys!” Margo exploded. Her friends exploded into shocked giggles and Margo face-palmed as she realized that she’d more or less just given her Daddy a reason to use whatever might be in the bags. Knox was a stickler for ladylike language and that included forbidding her favorite catch phrase.

Knox caught her eye but didn’t say anything, he didn’t have to.

Margo grabbed Ellie’s bag and peeked in. Soap. In every color. All of them said Bride on the front in scrawly font. Ellie erupted into giggles.

“You guys are the worst!” Margo cried, but she was smiling.

She “opened” the last few gifts without actually opening them, just removing enough tissue to get a clear view of the contents. She shook her head and her face was purple, but she thanked each of her friends and gave them a hug. Baze announced it was time to cut the cake.

Margo loved cake, and especially frosting, but she barely tasted the corner piece she all but shoveled into her mouth. All she wanted to do was run upstairs with her Daddy.

Finally, the cake had been devoured and the well wishes wished and Baze announced it was time for everyone to get upstairs for their naptime.

Knox couldn’t get her out the door fast enough as he scooped her into his arms and carried her out of the dining room. “You too, little girl, let’s go.”

“Daddy,” she whined, “I’m too excited to be sleepy! Can’t we just skip naptime, just this once?”

Behind them a chorus of her friends echoed her sentiment and Knox walked faster to get ahead of them before leaning down to whisper in her ear. “Maybe I could be convinced if it means we get to try out the contents of those bags.”

Margo groaned, but her pussy spasmed, and her pull-up dampened with the juices of her arousal. “Okay, Daddy,” she agreed with a saccharine smile. Inside she was cackling because she was getting what she wanted on every level.

Knox

The plan hadn't gone off without a hitch, and there had been more than a few times that he doubted the wisdom of it. But now that it was all said, done, and they were upstairs in their suite with a diamond sparkling on Margo's finger, all he felt was joy. Well, that wasn't *all* he felt. He was also horny as hell. He hadn't realized how tough it would be to spank Margo with an audience and not be able to touch her the way he wanted to, when he wanted to do it. But, thanks to her naughty jokester friends, they had bags full of gifts that would help take the sting out of that particular torture.

He leaned against the closed door and Margo sat on the bed, looking prim and proper and miserable as hell in the frock he'd picked out for her. He'd loved seeing her in it, but now he just really wanted to see her out of it.

“Strip,” he ordered, pointing at her.

“Oh thank goodness!” Margo exclaimed, acting like he'd just handed her the keys to the universe. She jumped to her

feet and pulled the dress over her head as fast as she could. Next, she ditched the diaper cover and tights and when she was standing in just the undershirt she often wore in place of a bra and her pull-up, she ditched those too.

“Ah, that feels good!” she cried, putting her arms out at her sides and giving a little shimmy.

He had to laugh and the temptation to keep her in all her happy, naked glory was strong, but there was something he wanted more.

Reaching for the bags on the floor, he grabbed the yellow one and held it out to her.

“Put it on,” he commanded. He knew she knew what he was talking about. Her eyes grew wide and her mouth dropped into a little o. Her blush started between her breasts and climbed up her chest and neck before resting on her cheeks.

Reaching in the bag she pulled out the outfit in question and held it up with one finger. It was a bright pink teddy with a satin bustier, embroidered with deep pink roses. There were thigh highs and garters that matched. As far as lingerie went, it was not very Little.

“Oh,” Margo whispered, getting her first good look at the ensemble she’d been afraid to take out of the bag in mixed company.

“I won’t feel or look very Little in this,” she whispered.

“That’s okay,” Knox replied. “You can be Daddy’s big girl.”

“Oooh!” she squealed, rushing over to him. She had to jump to wrap her arms around his neck and he caught her, lifting her off the ground when her lips covered his.

Her legs wrapped around his waist and it quickly became much more than a kiss as their starved-for-each-other bodies ground against each other. Any other day, he'd have her on the bed, with his cock sheathed in her pussy within seconds. But not today.

Finishing the kiss with a loud smack of his lips, he tapped her bottom and shook his head. "Do as Daddy says or we'll put some more of those presents to use tonight."

Her eyes wide as she considered the contents of the bags, Margo dropped to the floor and did as she was told while Knox watched with rabid appreciation.

Her soft curves, tucked into the tight fabric, spilled over in all the right places. She did not look Little.

"Oh baby girl," he moaned. "Daddy just wants to eat you up."

She did not feel Little either. He could see it in the coy seduction of her smile. "Go ahead then."

Knox smiled, stripping off his clothes as he advanced on her. "Maybe I will."

Margo being Margo attempted to run, but he caught her and tossed her onto the bed and climbed on top, covering her body with his before she could attempt another escape.

"Silly Little girl," he whispered in her ear. "You belong to me, and every minute of this day is going to go exactly how I planned it, especially this."

Looking up into his eyes, Margo gulped. "Yes, Daddy."

Part II

Sam and Ellie

Chapter 3

Ellie

“Ughhhh!” Ellie cried as she stomped through the door to the suite that she and her Daddy, Sam shared, after her wedding planning meeting with her sister and friends. “Why is planning a quadruple wedding so hard?” She threw her backpack on a chair and dropped to her bottom on the floor to pull her shoes off.

She wanted this to be easy. Every meeting she went to she went in with the intention of agreeing with whatever everyone else wanted, but she never ended up doing that because it didn't seem fair. It was her day too after all—she should have some say in it and get at least some of the things she wanted. But she was the baby of the group even though she went to these meetings as their peer after convincing her Daddy that it was okay for her to be a bigger Little sometimes when she was hanging out with her friends. But she was still the weakest personality in the group of four brides-to-be, and the biggest people-pleaser. She was having to work twice as hard as everyone else not to get stepped all over or worse, forgotten.

“Planning a single wedding is hard,” her Daddy said wisely, coming to lean against the chair she had thrown her bag on. “Nobody ever said this would be easy.”

“Well good, cuz if they did, they’d be liars!” With her shoes off, she shimmied out of her pants while her Daddy Sam watched with his head cocked in confusion.

“Why are you changing your clothes?” he asked.

“Because it’s almost naptime and I wanna be comfy!” Ellie pulled her shirt over her head and was about to dig in her drawers for a soft nightie or a cozy two piece set, when Sam walked up behind her and smacked her pull-up-covered bottom.

“Ow!” she cried even though there was far too much padding between her hand and his bottom for it to truly hurt. It was the principle of the thing. “What was that for?”

Sam spun her around into his arms and took her chin between his fingers, tilting her head upward until she was forced to look into his eyes. “I’m sorry you are frustrated, *babygirl*,” he said, enunciating the baby, “but what is the one condition we have regarding you being allowed to go off with your friends and be a big girl?”

Ellie’s eyes went wide as her error sunk in. “Oh.”

“Use your words. Tell me what it is.”

“I can be a big girl outside this room, but once I cross over the threshold to our space, I’m your baby.”

“That’s right. And tell me, Miss Ellie, have you been acting like a baby, stomping in here, tearing your clothes off, making your own choices and trying to dress yourself?”

“No,” Ellie whispered, her cheeks flushing. Her bottom clenched, knowing her Daddy was unhappy. Their arrangement might not be for everyone but it was a compromise they’d come to in the early days of their relationship and it worked for them. “I’m sorry, Daddy.”

Sam shook his head. “I don’t want to hear how sorry you are. I want you to fix it.” He reached in the pocket of his button-down oxford shirt and produced her favorite binkie, handing it to her.

Her lashes shuttered her eyes as she looked down at the floor in shame and popped it in her mouth, sucking vigorously as she tried to find her baby headspace.

Sam lifted her off her feet and laid her on her back on the changing table. “This pull-up nonsense makes you act too big for your britches,” he complained, lifting her hips to slide it off her body.

“Daddy changes you,” he reminded her, cooing softly as he did just that. Discarding the wet pull-up, he replaced it with a dry diaper, taking care to clean and powder her pussy thoroughly.

As he changed her, Ellie relaxed, feeling herself softening as her baby side took over. Sam was a strict but gentle Daddy, and he relished caring for her more than anything. The simple things like changing her diaper and helping her dress, brushing her hair, and feeding her a bottle before her nap. Those were the things that meant the most to him.

She liked them too.

Ellie loved being Sam’s baby more than anything; she just recognized that she couldn’t do it all the time. Sometimes she needed a smidge more independence and freedom. Snapping

back was always the hardest part but it was what Sam required of her, and what they'd agreed on.

When she was in a fresh diaper, he dug through her dresser drawers and extracted a light onesie with a trap-door bottom, but made no move to put it on her. Ellie's tummy fluttered. She knew what that meant. She was in trouble and her Daddy planned to make sure she remembered what her rules were.

What would he do, she wondered. Any of her friends in her situation would be thrown over their Daddy's knee for a long, hard, bare-bottom spanking, but Sam wasn't much of a spanker, unless he was sure the situation called for it. He was, however, an ass man whose punishments generally involved her bottom in some other way, but he'd covered it when he diapered her so that didn't seem to be in the cards. A jolt of disappointment shot through her. There was just something so humbling and exhilarating about having him take her ass when she was in trouble, whether it was with his fingers, a plug, or his cock.

She wanted desperately to know what he had planned but she didn't dare ask. He lifted her off the changing table and carried her across the suite to the couch. He sat down and set her beside him.

"You are not a big girl," he told her. "Out there, sometimes you can be, but in here you are not."

Ellie swallowed hard. "Yes, Daddy."

"Now what would be the best way for Daddy to remind you of that hmm? How should Daddy put you in your place?"

Her cheeks flushed. "I dunno," she whispered, looking down at the floor. "I'm just a baby." This time she felt it.

“That’s right. You’re just a baby. Daddy’s baby, but you went out and forgot that, didn’t you? Got a little too big for your britches, hmm?”

Her tummy turned over. When Sam accused her of being too big for her britches, well, it never ended well for her.

“Sorry,” she whispered again, waiting to see what he would do.

His hands went to his belt and she watched in interested horror wondering if he planned to spank her after all, but while the buckle was undone, the leather never left its loops.

He lifted his hips off the soft leather of the couch, just high enough to shimmy his designer jeans over his hips and down his legs until they puddled on the floor.

His gray boxer briefs couldn’t conceal his bulge.

Ellie licked her lips.

Sam reached over and stroked her lower lip with the pad of his thumb.

“Naughty baby,” he whispered. “Daddy should spank you or fuck your bottom, and maybe I will, but right now, I want your mouth on my cock.” He tugged the paci from between her lips. “Daddy will be your paci today.”

Ellie’s eyes lit and she nearly squealed. Cock warming, or using Daddy’s cock as her pacifier was much more a reward than a punishment. It was nearly her favorite thing.

Laying across the couch, she turned so that her head was in his lap, aligned with the bulge in his boxers. She didn’t even wait for him to pull them down or take them off.

With a wink, Sam solved the problem she had created, pulling his cock out from the flap in the front of his boxers.

She practically nosedived onto it with her open mouth, loving the way the softness of his cockhead felt between her lips.

“Mmmm,” she murmured, snuggling in to get comfy. She would lay there just like that as long as he would let her.

Sam leaned back against the back of the couch and picked up a book, holding it open with one hand, playing with her hair with the other. And they sat there like that, him casually reading while she sucked on his cock like it was a rubber nipple for the longest time, until finally, Sam set the book down and shoved his hand between her legs.

She wished the pull-up wasn't there, and that she could feel his touch. As soon as she had the thought, he pulled on the side tab of her diaper, undoing it for easy access.

“Mmmm.” She shifted her body to angle toward him, giving access to her sopping-wet pussy. He ignored her obvious hints and took his hands to her bottom, using one to separate her cheeks and the other to press against her tight bottom hole.

She gulped.

“Daddy was very nice to you today, wasn't he?” A single digit breached her barrier, sliding inside of her.

A shiver for what might come raced down her spine. “Yesh, Da-ee,” she muttered around a mouthful of cock.

“You have another meeting with your friends tomorrow, don't you?”

Even with his cock filling her mouth, she couldn't keep from sighing. She'd been trying not to think about that. Tomorrow they were supposed to pick songs and music and look at flowers. She bobbed her head in agreement.

“If you come home tomorrow with the same big girl attitude you had today, Daddy’s not going to be as nice or as patient,” he warned, pumping his finger in and out of her bottom.

“Yes, Daddy.”

“You’re always such a good girl with my finger in your bottom,” he mused. “I think that might just be the ticket.”

Jerking away to look at him, his cock falling out of her mouth, she furrowed her brows in confusion. Before she could ask any sort of question and find out what he meant by that, he explained.

“Tomorrow before you go, I’m going to fill your ass with a nice big plug, so that you remember whose babygirl you are, all day, but especially once you get home.”

Her belly knotted and her bottom clenched in anticipation. “I know whose baby I am!” she cried in protest, knowing it was futile. Needing the comfort, she latched onto his cock once more, taking it deep in her throat.

Sam moaned deeply. “Careful, baby girl, or you are going to be doing a lot more to Daddy’s cock than just warming it.”

Ellie thought that sounded just fine. Hefting herself up on her knees, with her ass in the air in front of him, she managed to pull his boxers down his hips and free his cock and balls from the soft fabric. Cupping his sack with one hand, she wrapped the other around the base of his cock and brought him back into her mouth with slow, sensual licks up his length. Her tongue worked around him, tasting every part. The low hum of pleasure in her throat caused vibrations that she knew from experience drove him wild.

Her pussy purred knowing the pleasure she was bringing him. When his body tensed and his back went rigid, she looked up into his eyes, loving the haze of lust that she saw there.

“Can I make you come, Daddy?” she asked sweetly, knowing that it was far too late for any other outcome and there was no way she could have stopped him.

His fingers strummed her clit as she sucked his cock, making it harder to concentrate. Fire rose in her veins and her body flushed. She could feel herself teetering on the edge of orgasm but she concentrated on his.

His cock swelled and hardened in her mouth, and she knew he was going to come any second.

“Come, Daddy!” she said, and then giggled because she wasn’t supposed to be the one telling him what to do.

As if he had the same thought, he gave a low growl, smacked her ass with his cupped hand, and gave a command of his own. “Daddy’s going to come in your pretty little mouth, darling,” he said as the first burst of salty cum invaded her senses. “Take it all for Daddy. Every last drop!” Sam cried as he came, arching his back against the worn leather of the couch, playing her clit like a fiddle still, until she too was screaming out a release.

Like the good girl she tried so hard to be, Ellie milked every last drop of cum from his cock before pulling back and licking her lips.

Sam smiled down at her, and she smiled up at him. “Did I do good, Daddy?”

“Oh babygirl, sweet thing,” he murmured, wrapping her up in his arms. “The very best. You always do.”

“You too, Daddy.”

Chapter 4

Sam

Sam paced the floor of the suite he shared with Ellie, glaring at the clock. She was late. Of course, there was no set time for the wedding-planning meetings to be over, but it was always over before lunchtime, which had already started. He'd also heard from Knox, Axel, and Dax that Tessa, Jilly, and Margo had indeed been back for a while and were eating lunch in the dining hall right now.

He was sure she was still on the property, of course, so he was trying not to worry. Trying and failing. What could he say? He was possessive, overprotective and a bit of a worrywart. He knew these things about himself and tried to rein them in the best he could.

But he was done reigning.

Grabbing his phone from his back pocket, he dialed Ellie's number again. He'd already called once, fifteen minutes ago. It rang and then went to voicemail.

This time, just when he thought it was about to go to voicemail again, she answered, her voice cracking. "Daddy..."

He could hear her sobbing through the phone line and he was pretty sure his heart broke.

“Ellie. Baby. What’s wrong? Where are you?”

“I’m... I’m...” Her voice cracked and she gasped for air. “I’m in the hallway... outside the penthouse.”

She was less than twenty feet away. Had she been there the whole time? Had he been worried for nothing? “You’re in the hallway? But why?”

A loud wail pierced the phone line. “I’m not supposed to come home... Big.” She shuddered out a sob. “I wanna be Little. I need to... Daddy, I need to be your baby, but... I’m afraid I won’t be able to.”

Guilt overwhelmed him. His strict rigidness coupled with her sweet tender heart seemed to often cause pain and misunderstandings between them. He hated that.

“It’s okay, babygirl. Just come home. We’ll figure it out.”

“No.” She hiccuped into the phone. “You don’t understand. I don’t wanna be Big. I need to be a baby, but I don’t... I don’t know if I can. Help me, Daddy! Please!”

And just as quickly as she accused him of not understanding, he suddenly did.

“Hold on, baby, I’m coming. Daddy’s coming!” Dropping the phone onto the bed, he ran down the hall toward the main entrance and pulled open the door. Ellie was sitting with her back against the wall and her head on her knees, sobs racking her body. Her phone sat beside her, still open to his call.

Dropping to his knees, he scooped her, and her phone, which he turned off, into his arms, and carried her to their room. She was limp as he laid her on the changing table,

peeling off her brightly-colored big-girl ensemble and the pull-up she wore when out with her friends. When she was naked, he took her into the bathroom and ran a bath with warm water and calming bath salts. Her bath toys stayed in their basket and he bathed her like a newborn baby, concentrating only on washing her gently and thoroughly, letting the sweet smelling warm water calm her.

Her eyes closed and the corners of her mouth turned up into a blissful smile.

When the water began to cool, the sweet smell faded and Ellie's tears dried, he lifted her out of the water, wrapping her in an oversized towel. He put her in a fresh diaper and a purple pastel onesie. He handed her Eli, her stuffed elephant, to keep her busy while he prepared a bottle.

Whisking her into his arms, he bounced as he walked her across the room. Sitting on the couch, he teased her lips with the nipple of the bottle. She resisted at first, but he rubbed her cheek with his finger until her mouth parted just enough for him to slip the nipple in. Once it was, instinct took over and she began to suck voraciously, milk trickling from the corners of her lips as she emptied the bottle.

As the minutes wore on and the bottle emptied, her eyes closed and her body went limp in his arms. She'd fallen asleep without lunch and he still hadn't eaten, but he could order up lunch from Chef Graham. The two of them could eat it later and a late dinner as well. There was no way Ellie was leaving his sight or their room for the rest of the day.

Ellie

She woke up in a daze hours later, in the bed, tucked tightly in her Daddy's arms, with her body floaty, and her mind quiet.

Tipping her head back, she looked up at Sam and found him wide awake, watching her. She wondered if he had slept at all, or if he'd even needed to. Her throat felt dry, and she licked her lips. "Hi, Daddy."

"Hi, babygirl." He pressed a kiss against her forehead. "How do you feel?"

"Much better, Daddy. You always know just how to take care of me." Her tummy growled and she blushed. "I am hungry though, and wet."

"Are you, hmmm? I'm not surprised. You fell right asleep after emptying your bottle." He kissed her again and stood to gather her into his arms. "Luckily hungry and wet are two easy problems for Daddy to solve."

And he did solve them. Sam was gentle and sweet and not upset at all about her earlier meltdown the way she expected him to be as he changed her wet diaper out for a fresh, dry one, removed the plug he'd made her wear to the meeting earlier, washed both their hands and fastened her into the highchair. She watched in happy awe as he took two containers from the refrigerator, dished them onto plates and heated them in the microwave.

"It's too hot for babies," he told her, setting her plate out of reach while he took several bites of his own food and waited for hers to cool.

When her tummy growled again, he looked up with a smile, picked up her plate and blew on it gently before scooping a bite of mashed potatoes onto a plastic spoon.

Usually she waited for him to tell her to “open up for Daddy”, but she was too hungry. She swallowed the bite and opened her mouth for more, much to her Daddy’s apparent delight. He chuckled and happily obliged. She ate a whole pile of potatoes, four chicken nuggets, cut into tiny bites, and even cleaned her plate of all the vegetables on it.

“Still hungry,” she announced when she was finished.

“I had a feeling you might be,” Sam responded. “But this was a late lunch, so dinner will be soon. We need to save room, but I’ll make you a sippy cup of juice to tide you over.”

“Okay, Daddy!” Ellie put her arms in the air, indicating that she was ready to be picked up, and when he set her on the ground, she began to dig in her dresser for pants, and look for her phone.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Sam’s voice was gentle, but he stepped in front of her and stopped her in her tracks.

She faltered. “I was getting ready to go down to dinner later, but I should have asked you for help. Sorry, Daddy.”

“Yes, you should always remember to ask Daddy for help, but also, we are not going down to dinner tonight.”

“We’re not?” Ellie blinked in confusion. They almost always ate down in the cafeteria with everyone else.

Sam shook his head and picked her up, holding her with his hands supporting her bottom as he looked into her eyes. “Babygirl, you have had far too much time with your friends lately, and it hasn’t been good. When you came home today, you were absolutely beside yourself. Whatever is happening in these meetings, it’s got you so stressed that you are going to

make yourself sick. And I've talked to Dax; I don't think you're the only one."

Ellie frowned. Dax was her twin sister Tessa's Daddy. Well, one of them. Her twin telepathy normally tuned her in... surely if her sister was having the same feelings as she was, she'd have known... wouldn't she? "I'm not?"

"No, baby girl, you're not. And the Daddies have frankly had quite enough. So we are going to come up with a solution between us and Dax and I will be going to the next meeting with you."

Ellie bristled. She hated reminding her friends that she was different than they were; she hated being seen as the baby of the group, even though she was.

As if he could read her mind, Sam leaned his head against her forehead. "Dax is going to go too," he repeated.

Ellie took a deep breath and nodded. That was better. She may be a baby, but Tessa was not, and Dax, who moonlighted as a Little for their alpha Daddy, Beau, was the most laid back of all the Daddies. If he came too, maybe she wouldn't look like such a baby. Plus, it would be kind of nice to not have to suffer through another miserable meeting where nothing was accomplished and nobody was happy, only to have to go home and get in trouble because she couldn't get in the right headspace.

"You need a break for the rest of the day, and you are going to stay here and be Daddy's sweet baby," Sam said, kissing her cheek as he reminded her of the core of the problem.

He hugged her tight, and she settled into his embrace, her fears calming. "Okay, that sounds nice. Thank you, Daddy."

Her happy floaty calm returned and she remembered how lucky she was to have a Daddy like Sam, and to be his babygirl.

Part III

Tessa, Beau and Dax

Chapter 5

Tessa

Tessa sat cross legged on her bed, staring up at the ceiling. Inviting her friends and her sister to take part in her special day had seemed like a good idea when she did it. But now everything was a mess, and she wasn't sure she even wanted to get married now. What was the point really? She was in a throuple with her Daddies so it wasn't like it would be legal anyway.

Planning a wedding was hard enough when yours was the only opinion you had to worry about, but now there were three other very different brides to consider.

Tessa wanted everyone to be happy and get what they wanted, but she didn't want to forget what she wanted in the process.

Why did being nice have to be so complicated?

She threw herself backward on the bed and stared at the ceiling.

“Knock, knock,” Dax called as he pushed her door open.

Tessa didn't say anything. She really wasn't in the mood to talk.

“Daddy Beau and I finished work early and we have to wait for a client to get back to us before we can move forward, so we are done for the day. We were thinking it would be nice if we had a little date night? Maybe go out for dinner, go to an arcade or see a show or something? Got any ideas? Anything you're craving?”

Tessa rolled her eyes. A date night meant getting ready and getting cute. And walking. Lots and lots of walking. It sounded exhausting.

“I don't wanna!” she said, not bothering to sit up.

“You don't wanna? Is something wrong?”

Everything. Everything and nothing at all and too many things to name. She ignored the question because she didn't have a good answer for it.

“Tessa?” Dax tiptoed into her room and sat on the edge of her bed. “Are you okay?”

She still ignored him. She just wanted him to go away and leave her alone. She didn't have the energy to put her thoughts and feelings into words.

“Tessa Marie Stevens, you answer Daddy right now.” Dax, her Daddy who had a little side and topped her while still submitting to Beau who was Daddy to both of them, had his Daddy cap on. Great. Just what she needed.

“I don't wanna,” she insisted. “It's too hard. I don't wanna talk and I don't wanna go out, and I just wanna be left alone.”

“Are you sure? If you tell me what's wrong, I might be able to help you solve it.”

“You can’t.” She didn’t know that for a fact but she just wanted to be alone.

“Tessa,” he pushed.

“Arghh!” She sat up on the bed, screaming. “I’m communicating okay? I communicated that I don’t know what’s wrong, I communicated that I don’t wanna talk about it. I communicated that I don’t wanna go out, and I communicated that I want to be left alone. I communicated. I did what I was supposed to do. Now please just listen to me.”

Dax sighed and nodded. “All right, little one.” He rose to his feet and tiptoed from the room, but he left the door open.

That annoyed Tessa so she jumped up, ran across the room and slammed the door so hard a framed picture fell off the wall. She locked it too, for good measure, even though doing so was against the rules. She didn’t care. She would cross that bridge later when she felt like she could breathe again.

Dax

Beau came out of the bathroom, splashing aftershave on his cheeks. “What was that?”

“Tessa’s door,” Dax answered dryly. “She’s not in a good mood.”

“She slammed it?”

“And locked it.”

Beau furrowed his brow. “That’s not allowed.”

He started across the room and Dax blocked his path. “I know it’s a broken rule, but there’s nothing that says we have to deal with it right now. I really think we should just give her the space she asked for. She was very strident that she had asked for space respectfully and that I needed to give it to her.” That she had asked for it respectfully was a bit of a stretch but that wasn’t relevant at the moment. She *had* asked for it.

Beau frowned. “Did she tell you what was wrong?”

Dax shook his head. “She said she didn’t know, and she didn’t want to talk about it.”

“Well what should we do?”

“Probably what you do to me when I get like that,” Dax said with a grin. “But not right now. Right now... well, I was thinking maybe you and I could go on a date.”

“By ourselves?”

“Why not? Tessa doesn’t want to go, and we haven’t done that in forever. We’ll bring her back a treat and maybe she will feel like talking when we get back.”

“And if she doesn’t?”

“You know how to handle that,” Dax answered slyly. When he was in a mood like Tessa’s, he often found himself flipped seamlessly over Beau’s knee with a finger (or more) in his ass while Beau whaled on his backside until he felt like talking and was able to put his complicated thoughts into words.

A therapy spanking, Beau called it. Tessa had seen the evidence of it and heard about it; she’d even seemed intrigued by the idea, but she hadn’t experienced it yet. If Dax had his way, that would change tonight but only after he’d had some much needed alone time with his Daddy.

Beau

He'd felt bad about the idea of going out without Tessa, but Dax was right, it had been far too long.

They'd gotten burgers at their favorite burger joint, shared an over-the-top milkshake, and then walked to an arcade in the lobby of one of the casinos and played skeeball to their heart's content. In the end they had enough tickets from their games to trade for a small, pink, stuffed giraffe for Tessa. They also picked her up a bag of cotton candy before making their way home.

He knew exactly how he wanted to end the night, but he had a pouty little girl to take care of first.

When they got to their suite, Tessa had migrated from her private room to the main one that they all shared. She looked up, hurt, when they came in.

"You went out without me?" she accused, her lower lip puffed into a pout.

Beau didn't have to look at Dax to know that he would immediately feel guilty for having fun without her. He had to take the lead on this. "Excuse me, little girl. You were invited, were you not? You declined the invitation, did you not?"

"I didn't know you were gonna go without me!" Her cry of abandonment was so theatric, he had to school himself not to roll his eyes.

"Tessa," he said, sitting down on the couch beside her. "Daddy Dax asked if you wanted to go out. He asked what

was wrong and he tried to get you to talk, and he wasn't treated very nicely. And then you locked your door, which you know is against the rules. And we will be talking about that later. But I hope you know that if you had not asked to be alone or you told us what was wrong, or what you needed, we would have moved heaven and earth to give you whatever it was. You asked for space, so we gave it to you."

When her anger softened, he continued. "Daddy Dax and I worked hard all week, and we wanted to go out. We would have preferred our plans involved you, but we don't deserve to suffer just because you have an attitude. Now, are you ready to talk about what's bothering you?"

She looked at him, and he could tell that whatever it was was on the tip of her tongue, but she shook her head.

He looked at Dax. "Daddy Dax, I think you were right."

That piqued her curiosity. "About what?"

"About this." Without hesitation or explanation, he picked her up by her slim waist and deposited her face down across his lap. Before she even had time to process, he had her pants and pull-up around her ankles.

"W-what are you doing?" Tessa cried. "Is this because I locked the door? You said we would talk about that later!"

"And we will." Beau parted her cheeks, exposing her puckered hole, and inserted his finger. It was his wholehearted belief that a stubborn submissive usually could be cured by sticking something in their bottom. "This, little girl, is your very first therapy spanking."

Chapter 6

Tessa

Her tummy fluttered at Beau's announcement. She'd heard of this. She knew Dax got them semi-regularly, and Jilly swore the one her therapist Soleil had given her had changed her life.

But Tessa had not expected this tonight. Her first instinct was to fight it, but Beau probably knew that would be the case, just like he probably knew that his finger in her bottom would shut down that instinct.

"I don't want a therapy spanking!" she cried with a pout.

"It's not about what you want. It's about what you need." Daddy Dax joined them on the couch, sitting near her head. She tipped it up to glare at him.

He chuckled. "The look you are giving me is not helping your case, little girl."

Beau plunged his finger deeper into her bottom. "My finger doesn't seem to be doing the trick. Maybe I should replace it with a plug?"

She hated that he phrased it as a question. Then she was obligated to give a response. Her instinct was always to say no

when she wanted to say yes.

Dax, who could be so clueless on some things, but always seemed to read her like a book, stood. She followed him across the room with her eyes, unsurprised when he opened the nightstand drawer that held the majority of their toys, and extracted her yellow Daddy's Girl plug, a bottle of lube, and a small wooden paddle.

Her heart sank, but the heat between her legs increased.

Still, she couldn't make this easy. "That's not necessary!" she lied. "What if I just talk?"

"Talk then," Beau prompted.

She opened her mouth but no words came out. She scowled. She didn't want to need this, but she knew she did. She could only hope it helped as well as everybody claimed.

Clamping her lips shut, she scowled at them over her shoulder.

Dax nudged Beau, and without a word, lubed up the body of the plug before handing it to him. Ugh, teamwork. She hated and loved when they worked together so seamlessly to the detriment of her poor bottom, but she could tell that tonight was going to be one of those nights.

The lubed up plug pressed against her tight back entrance even as Beau removed his finger, essentially replacing it with the much larger plug. Tessa whimpered as he pushed it past her barrier, stretching her as he wiggled it in. Why was there something about a plug in her ass that made her attitude fall away? Why did it make the words that had been failing her want to bubble to the surface? Why did it make her want to crawl into her Daddies' laps and cry out all her problems, begging them to make it better, to fix whatever ailed her? And

why, why did they know it would do that? How did they know that no matter what was going on, no matter how angry or frustrated she was and no matter how impossible talking about it seemed, sticking a giant silicone plug in her ass would always help. She hated that as much as she loved the fact that they knew it.

The plug filled her, her ass contracting around it and she had no choice but to give in to the delicious act of submitting.

And she did, until the spanking started. The idea of a therapy spanking both fascinated and terrified her. Dax loved them and Jilly swore they were life-changing and what if she couldn't measure up? What if it didn't work for her? What if she couldn't get out of her head?

The rhythmic motion of Beau's hand smacking against her ass did nothing to lessen the volume of angry frustrated voices in her head. In fact they seemed to grow even more frustrated with every smack.

Then Dax started to play with her hair and Beau started to lecture. It wasn't really a lecture, not the same way it would be if this were a punishment spanking, but his words gave her something else to focus on.

"It's not good to hold things in babygirl, and maybe that used to be the only choice you had, but that's not true anymore. You have a ton of friends and two Daddies who love very much. If you have a problem you have to know we will move heaven and earth to be able to solve it, but even if we can't, we can listen."

She exhaled a breath she hadn't realized she was holding.

Beau stopped spanking and grabbed the base of the plug, pulling it almost all the way out of her bottom with one swift

tug before pushing it in again, fucking her ass with it.

“Daddy,” she whispered, but it was all she could say. She was hovering on the precipice of getting what she needed, but she wasn’t quite there.

The plug pushed in and out of her, and Dax smacked her ass while Beau fucked her bottom with it.

“Tell your Daddies what’s wrong,” Dax coaxed. “I promise you’ll feel better if you do.”

“I c-can’t!” Her breath hitched on a sob that was threatening to bubble toward the surface. She felt them shift beneath her, and glanced over her shoulder to see Dax hand Beau the paddle he had retrieved earlier.

She closed her eyes and buried her face in her arms. She wanted so badly for this to work. She hated the way she felt.

“Is it anything to do with us? With this relationship?” Beau asked with the first smack of the paddle as it hit the plug, forcing it deeper inside her.

She shook her head.

“Okay, good.” The paddle fell again, across the center of her ass then five times on each cheek before he spoke another word. The pain was good; somehow it was helping but it wasn’t enough.

“Does it have anything to do with your sister or your friends or those relationships?” Beau asked, bringing the hard wood down across each of her sit spots.

It hurt, but she was still so in her head and tense and angry she was determined not to show it, so she just sucked in a breath, bit back a whimper, and shrugged. The relationships were fine, but were they only fine because she was so

miserable? If she stuck up for what she wanted, would the relationships still be okay?

Beau seemed to sense her hesitation. The next thing he asked was “Is it about the wedding?”

She opened her mouth. She tried to hold on, whether to admit it and answer sensibly or to deny it, she didn’t know but all that came out at first was a shaky breath. It turned into a mournful wail and when Beau picked up the paddle and began to slam it across her bottom with no mercy, the words rushed from her lips.

“A quadruple wedding was a stupid idea!” she cried, tears stinging her eyes. “It sounded so fun, and Ellie and I always wanted to have a double wedding if we could, and Jilly was so sad and I just wanted to help, so I figured heck, what’s a few more?”

Beau slowed down to a pace that allowed her to hear him over the thud of the paddle, but didn’t stop. “Not as easy as you thought, huh?”

“It’s impossible!” Tessa cried. She had so much more to say but she didn’t know where to start so she just settled into the pain of the paddling, letting it wash over her in waves. She couldn’t deny it was starting to help ease some of her pent-up tension.

She wasn’t ready to talk more, but she could cry, and she did. Great wailing sobs that had her gasping for breath. The pain seemed to free the pent up frustration inside of her, finally allowing her to put words to her fears. Beau slowed his ministrations, and waited for her to speak through her cries.

“Nobody agrees on anything. Not flowers or cake or music or food or vows or decorations or anything. Everytime we get

together to sort things out, we just end up almost fighting. Nothing gets resolved and I know I'm not the only one coming home pissed off."

"Have any decisions been made?" Dax asked gently. "The wedding is coming right up."

"We all have our dresses," Tessa answered tearfully. "But we didn't have to agree on those."

"That's it, huh?" She could tell Beau was trying to keep the surprise and concern out of his voice.

"Nobody wants to give in, but also nobody wants to put their foot down. I'm terrified to say what I'm thinking all the time 'cuz I don't wanna fight and I feel like that's the only possible outcome. I wanted to get married and have an amazing day with my friends but now I'm just afraid I could lose them forever."

The paddle was dropped and she was pulled into their laps, cuddled tightly into a Daddy sandwich.

"Do you feel any better, babygirl?" Dax asked, kissing the top of her head.

Tessa took a deep breath and took stock of her body and emotions. Her bottom was on fire, just sitting on their laps was the best kind of excruciating. But the tightness in her chest and shoulders had faded. She still couldn't see a solution, but she also didn't feel as hopeless and alone.

"Are you a believer in therapy spankings now?" Beau asked with a teasing lilt in his voice.

Was she? Probably, but she wasn't going to admit that just yet so she offered a coy shrug.

“What if I told you that Daddy Dax and I had an idea for how to solve your problem so that everyone is happy and gets what they want, nobody fights and we still have an amazing quadruple wedding?”

Her mouth dropped open and she turned to search his eyes. She saw no hesitation or bravado there, but it felt too good to be true. “I don’t think I’d believe you,” she admitted.

“You should,” Dax half scolded. “You already know Daddy Beau is a master problem solver.”

“Yeah... but...”

Beau shifted her to Dax’s lap and stood. “I think I’m gonna go work on it right now.”

Tessa gasped. That was not what she wanted. She was enjoying being the middle of a Daddy sandwich and wanted to move it to the bed. “No! No! Wait!” she cried, grabbing his hand before he could move across the room. “I believe you! I do, I promise. But... could you just wait?”

Dax chuckled. “I think there is a different problem Tessa wants us to solve first, Daddy,” he teased.

Lustful understanding dawned in Beau’s eyes. “Well, it is important to prioritize.” Lifting Tessa off of Dax’s lap he carried her to the bed.

Dax

Beau met his gaze and they communicated the way they always did, with their eyes, so that Tessa would never hear

them negotiating the logistics of their sexual relationship and feel anything less than the princess she was.

Tonight it was easily decided that all the attention would go to her. That Dax would take her bottom and Beau would fuck her sweet pussy.

Kneeling on the bed himself, Beau commanded her into position while Dax gathered condoms and lube. “C’mere, sweet girl,” Beau said, kissing her neck. “Do you want to be the cream in our cookie tonight?”

“Mmmm yes please, Daddy,” Tessa hummed, on her knees in the center of the bed.

Dax took his spot behind her, passing a condom to Beau and rubbing a generous dollop of lube onto his cock and around the rim of her tight hole.

Tessa purred when he touched her there, leaning against his chest while Beau reached to slip a finger inside of her.

“Oh! Ah!Ah!” she cried as they both played with her, getting her ready for their cocks. Beau kissed her lips while Dax kissed her neck. She ran a hand through Beau’s hair and held Dax’s hand as it rested on her shoulder.

Her moans of pleasure became whimpers of anticipation and need.

“Oh Daddies, Daddies, please.”

“What do you want, babygirl?” Beau whispered. Of course they both knew, but they liked to hear her say it.

“I want... please... please take me. Fuck my pussy and my ass,” she whispered shyly the phrase Dax knew he would never tire of hearing from her sweet lips.

“Your wish is our command,” Dax answered just as Beau grinned, showing his dimples and responded with a cheeky, “Happy to.”

They met each other’s eyes over the top of her head and as if in tune with a countdown that only the two of them could hear, entered her at the exact same time, filling her completely.

Her cry of pain and pleasure was like heaven to his ears, like a symphony of angels singing the hallelujah chorus.

Her bottom was tight around his cock and he could feel each time Beau thrust into her pussy.

“Baby, you feel so nice,” he whispered. “Daddy and I love sharing you.”

The sweetest blush rose up her cheeks. “I love it too.”

Dax met Beau’s eyes and motioned to him to slow down. He’d been primed all day and if Beau kept the pace he was using, Dax wouldn’t last long.

Of course Beau got his unspoken message and took it as a challenge. “Don’t come, baby boy,” he taunted. “Not until I do.”

Dax tipped his head back and groaned, grinding his hips against Tessa’s perfect bottom. He pulled out ever so slightly and grinned when he caught a glimpse of her tattoo—the one on her ass that they’d gotten together one afternoon when Beau was out of town for work. They’d gotten in a lot of trouble for that one—both of them—but that day had been the catalyst to them identifying the issues in their threesome and Beau doing what Beau always did: finding amazing ways to solve them.

Today would be another one of those days—one he knew he’d look back on fondly for all the days to come. His

thoughts wandered, making it easier for him to ignore the spiral of the orgasm building within him but only for so long.

Her tattoo disappeared as he shoved his cock hard into her bottom and then reappeared again in a beautiful rhythm.

“Oh god, Daddies!” she shrieked.

Even from his obstructed vantage point he knew she was about to come. Her skin was hot and flushed and her body was rigid.

Beau’s eyes met his over the top of her head and their Daddy gave an almost imperceptible nod, finally giving Dax permission to let go.

“Ahhhh!” he cried as he spilled his load between her bottom cheeks, pumping slowly as he expelled each drop.

Tessa squeezed his hand and Beau, his back rigid and his expression blissful, locked eyes with him as he too came, hard and fast inside their best girl.

The three of them collapsed against each other, still on their knees, sweaty and spent. Dax held Beau’s hand while squeezing Tessa tightly between them as they panted, dropping soft kisses as and where the mood led them.

Finally, they disentangled, pulling apart, discarding condoms, cleaning up and taking bathroom breaks to prevent infections.

As Tessa emerged from the restroom, still naked with her hair mussed and her body flushed, she smiled.

“Okay, Daddies. Now can you fix my problem?”

They shared a glance and a smile. “It would be our pleasure,” they answered together.

The End

There's more!

I hope you have enjoyed this conclusion to the saga of The Las Vegas Littles. The friend group may have found their forever Daddies and Happily Ever Afters, but the story is not over.

For more Las Vegas Littles and Sin City Saints, preorder *Ace: Sin City Daddies MC Book 1* [here](#).

About Bayleigh Rae

Bayleigh Rae is the sassy alter ego of a USA Today Bestselling Dirty Daddies Author.

She loves crocheting, traveling to her favorite places and writing about them, spoiling those she loves, and working hard to make her dreams come true.

She lives in the southwestern United States with a houseful of family and bonus family.

Don't ask her who she is, because she won't tell you. Okay, she might... if you ask nicely. She's really bad at secrets.

Find Bayleigh here:

Newsletter:

<https://bayleighraeauthor.co.page/newsletter>

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/bayleighraeauthor>

Reader Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3139174663003050>

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<https://www.bookbub.com/authors/bayleigh-rae>

The Brat and The Birch
by Lucky Moon

A MF story by Lucky Moon

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Chapter 1

Laura

Practice makes perfect.

Laura scanned the PowerPoint slide for the millionth time.

“The i-importance of the western river b-birch,” she whispered, her voice catching in her throat.

If only it were true that practice made perfect. Somehow, the more Laura went over the presentation, the more things she managed to get wrong.

“Albert,” she whined, eyeing her twelve-inch-tall teddy bear, “now I can’t even say ‘birch!’”

Albert sat quietly on the edge of the café table, providing essential moral support during this difficult time.

“I know! I know I said it right *that* time! But when I say it in the presentation I do it all wrong.”

The soft patter of rain against the café window blended with the hiss of steam from the espresso machine. The place was called *Cozy Cups*, and it was like a second home to Laura. It wasn’t overly fancy, and nothing about it screamed “hip.” But what it lacked in trendiness it made up for in comfort. The

smell of freshly ground coffee and baked goods filled the air, along with a hint of lemon from the floor cleaner. Laura had managed to secure her usual spot—a secluded table tucked away in a nook at the back. Far away from prying ears.

“The problem is,” Laura said, pausing for a moment to take a sip from her caramel latte, “that I care. I wish I didn’t care.”

Not many people *did* care about the western river birch tree. Even where Laura worked—the Wyoming Tree Council—there wasn’t much interest in the western river birch. Mostly people wanted to talk about pines.

“Pah,” she huffed. “Everybody *loves* pine trees. Tall and straight and... loggy.”

The Council was supposed to be all about protecting the state’s indigenous trees, but unfortunately, there wasn’t much money in it. Which is why Laura found herself going over her funding presentation yet again, desperately hoping that she didn’t butcher it when it actually mattered.

Practice makes perfect.

Laura cleared her throat and glanced at her stuffie again, for luck. “Okay, Albert, let’s do this,” Laura murmured, tapping the spacebar to advance each slide as she spoke. “The importance of the western river birch cannot be overstated. Once abundant in our region, it’s a vital habitat that provides food and shelter for countless species.”

She paused a moment, thinking about the animals that depended on the tree. Chickadees, warblers, beavers, rabbits, elk, otters, moths, and aphids. The fate of the rare tree weighed heavily upon her. If she didn’t stand up for it, no-one else

would. And all those creatures she'd just thought about would suffer.

“According to my research, there may be more of these trees up Pine Peak,” Laura continued, flicking through her slides. Pine Peak was a particularly jagged, treacherous mountain in the Wyoming Rockies. It had a reputation for sudden changes of weather and not everyone who had climbed up there had made it down in one piece.

The next slide was a picture of a historic map which Laura had found after many hours of work at Cheyenne Public Library.

“This antique map, marked 1893, clearly shows birch trees at the top of the tree line on Pine Peak. As you all know, commercial logging still takes place on the mountain. If there *are* western river birches up Pine Peak, we must act now to save this precious ecosystem, and these beautiful trees.”

This was good. It was the furthest she'd made it through the presentation without starting over. Laura tapped the spacebar again, but as the next image materialized, her heart stuttered in her chest.

What the...?

Instead of the detailed photo of endangered birch trees she'd been expecting, an explicit image of a Daddy Dom spanking a Little filled the screen.

Yikes.

The room suddenly took on a charged atmosphere, as the sound of the rain and the espresso machine seemed to fall away. Laura stared at the picture, her breathing coming out in short gasps.

The Dom was a tall figure, standing with a rod raised above his head, about to spank a kneeling submissive. He was wearing a black-and-white buffalo check shirt, with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows. He had faded denim jeans that hugged his thighs in a way that made Laura feel warm all over. His face was hidden in shadows, but Laura thought she could make out a smirk on his lips, as if he was enjoying every second of the spanking.

The Little, on the other hand, was wearing nothing at all. Her eyes were closed in anticipation of the strike. She was completely vulnerable yet trusting enough to let someone else take control of her pleasure. Laura's cheeks flushed crimson as she gaped at the unexpected intrusion.

"H-how the h-heck..." she stammered, eyes darting between Albert and the screen. "How did that get in there?"

Laura hastily got the slide off her screen, pulse racing as she tried to process what had just occurred. She looked around, desperately hoping no-one had seen the picture. Then, she looked at the folder on her computer where she'd been collecting images for the PowerPoint.

Ah.

There was the problem.

"Birch.jpg"

Obviously, the birch rod being used in this slide *wasn't* the kind of birch that the Wyoming Tree Council would be interested in saving. Although, if they felt the way Laura did about spanking, they'd know the importance of a nice, flexible length of wood in the world of corporal punishment...

Ha.

Laura took a deep breath, her heart rate gradually returning to normal as she deleted the wildly inappropriate slide from her presentation and replaced it with the correct version of “Birch.jpg.” She checked and double-checked she had done it right.

“Thank goodness I took the time to practice today, huh, Albert?” she muttered sheepishly.

Momentarily distracted, Laura navigated to another folder on her computer, entitled: “Laura’s Little Stuff.” It was full of images and videos that Laura had found online. It wasn’t *all* kinky photographs. There were also cartoons and romance audiobooks, as well as how-to guides for subs.

Laura had known that she was a Little for quite a while. A boyfriend at college had told her about the lifestyle, and before long, she’d found herself dipping a toe into the world of ageplay and BDSM. Not long after that, she’d dipped in her whole body.

Mainly her butt.

Laura *loved* getting spanked. She loved it with a freaking passion. There was something so delicious about surrendering to the pain, something so clean and almost refreshing about being forgiven by a couple dozen firm swats to the backside. She loved the way the feeling stayed with her, too, sometimes for days afterward.

It had been *far* too long since she’d had a good spanking. Too long since she’d called someone Daddy. Too long since she’d bent over someone’s lap and surrendered to sensation.

That was the thing about Cheyenne. It was a sweet town with lots of important tree stuff going on. But try as she might, she couldn’t find even a whiff of a Daddy Dom.

“Concentrate, Laura,” she whispered, as she scratched her forehead. “Stop thinking about spanking and start thinking about spruce.”

Laura sighed as she returned to the PowerPoint presentation again. She opened her mouth and prepared to give the presentation of her life.

The room wasn't big, but Laura still felt lost in it.

“A-and that's why I believe the western r-river birch could be found up Pine Peak, and why we must act immediately to secure its, uh, f-future.”

The council members sat dispassionately behind desks in the stuffy office space. Behind Laura, the final image of her PowerPoint presentation, an image of a lone western river birch, was projected onto the screen.

“If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer.”

The presentation had gone quite well, she thought. Of course, as she'd launched into her presentation, she couldn't help but recall the inappropriate image that had nearly derailed her earlier practice. Thankfully, she had managed to force the memory aside, focusing instead on the passion that fueled her research.

She'd gone through each slide in meticulous detail. The stakes. The evidence. The plan. The funding she needed. And they'd listened.

Finally, the silence was broken.

“Tell us more about how you plan to use the funding,” asked Donald Wright, a man from the Sierra Club. His fingers

were steeped in front of him, his eyebrows knitted into a frown. Donald was always a bit of a hard ass, especially when money was involved.

“Absolutely, sir.” Laura delved into the specifics, detailing the equipment, personnel, and resources needed to embark on this vital mission. As she spoke, she could feel the panel members’ interest growing, their expressions shifting from skepticism to curiosity.

It was an unusual plan. To keep costs low, Laura had proposed that she should be the one to climb the mountain in search of the trees. All she needed was a professional mountaineer to help her with the more dangerous parts of the ascent.

Of course, Laura had never been up a mountain before, but she’d make sure that she was sensible, only traveling up there in good weather and being super prepared. The climb would be scary, obviously, but she would feel like a superhero at the end of it. In fact, it might just be the confidence boost she needed.

“Thank you, Ms. Lash,” said the lead panelist, a kind-faced older woman with silver hair. “We will take your proposal into consideration and make a decision shortly.”

Laura nodded, collected her belongings, and left the room. She sat on a bench outside the door. She clutched Albert tightly, her mind racing with possibilities as she awaited their decision.

Finally, the door swung open, and the lead panelist emerged, her eyes twinkling with excitement. “Ms. Lash, I have some good news. We’ve decided to fund your project.”

Laura's eyes widened with surprise. "You have? That's... that's awesome!"

"We think that the western river birch is an important part of the heritage of the state." The panelist's mouth drew into a slightly concerned grimace. "Consequently, we've allocated \$6,000 of funding for your project. Congratulations."

"Wait. \$6,000?"

Laura had asked for \$30,000. How on earth was she going to get an experienced, professional mountaineer to lead her up the mountain for just \$6,000?

"Yes, well, budgets are tight. But we'll work with you on a spending plan."

"Thank you?" Laura said, uncertainly. She should be happy, shouldn't she? Even though it wasn't as much as she'd asked for, maybe there was still a way to make the expedition work. But as the reality of her upcoming expedition sank in, a question lingered in her mind.

"Who will be my guide up the mountain?" she asked, her brow furrowing with concern.

The panelist smiled warmly, her tone reassuring. "I might be able to help with that."

Chapter 2

Beckett

The watch was a Rolex Explorer II, made from oystersteel, with a self-winding mechanical movement, and a clean, premium look. He'd had it modified so that it gave him a heart rate reading, and he could log workouts on it, too. The watch was perfect—or at least it would be if there wasn't a deep scratch on its front.

It wouldn't cost much to get the scratch buffed out, but Beckett Jones would never do it. His watch had earned that scratch. Now, it had character.

Still, no matter how full of character his watch was, it couldn't change one fact: the scientist he was waiting for was already five minutes late. Beckett had agreed to keep his store open until she got there.

He shifted on the stool behind the counter, drumming his fingers impatiently. He couldn't help but think about the money he was losing with each passing minute.

“Come on,” he whispered, glancing towards the door. He made a fist, over and over, watching the muscles in his forearm tighten and relax. Tighten and relax.

His gaze traveled around the store, taking in the neatly arranged rows of carabiners, climbing ropes, and harnesses. Each piece of equipment had been meticulously researched and selected by Beckett for its quality and reliability. He took pride in providing the best gear for his fellow climbers, knowing that their lives often depended on it. But now, all he could think about was how much he hated waiting.

And when he thought about what he was waiting for, he had to wonder whether it was worth it.

Pine Peak.

The most dangerous mountain in the Wyoming Rockies. He knew the dangers of the peak firsthand, having climbed it multiple times. The weather was unpredictable, the wildlife unforgiving, and the terrain treacherous. And yet, part of him loved the challenge. It was, after all, what made him feel most alive.

“Maybe I’m just getting too old for this,” he mused, rubbing a hand over his stubbled jaw. “Maybe young people are fine with being late. Maybe my dad was right. Kids these days don’t have no manners.” At thirty-five, Beckett was far from being considered an old man, but sometimes he couldn’t shake the feeling that his best years were behind him.

“Or maybe I’m just looking for a reason to back out,” he admitted with a sigh, recognizing the nagging doubt that had been gnawing at him since the tree council had first approached him about the expedition. It wasn’t the climb itself that troubled him. It was the thought of being responsible for someone else’s safety, especially someone as inexperienced and unprepared as the scientist he was going to be guiding up the peak.

As another minute ticked by, Beckett found himself growing increasingly restless. “Where the hell is she?” he grumbled, trying to quell the irritation that was bubbling up inside him. He took a deep breath, reminding himself that patience was a virtue.

Of course, if he’d been at the Wolfpack... well, lateness there was a very different matter. A matter like that would normally be resolved with a firm hand and the offending person’s panties round their ankles.

Just as his clock told him that the scientist was ten minutes late, there was a knock at the door.

Beckett leaped to his feet and strode to the door. He was ready to yell at the person who had kept him waiting for so long. But when he opened the door and saw who was waiting for him, that anger disappeared.

“S-sorry I’m late,” she said, her full, pale pink lips giving him an awkward, apologetic smile. She held out her hand. “I’m Laura Lash.”

Beckett took it. “Jones. Beckett Jones.”

“Like Bond, James Bond?”

He looked her up and down.

Despite her clearly disheveled appearance, she was beautiful. Petite and slender, with fiery red hair that cascaded down her back in wild waves and bright green eyes that twinkled mischievously. Her skin was flawless, with a light dusting of freckles across the bridge of her nose. She wore a simple blue dress that clung to her curves, accentuating her delicate frame.

“You’re the scientist?” he asked, trying not to sound too surprised.

“Were you expecting Einstein?”

Well, well, well. What a sarcastic little brat.

“I was expecting you to be on time.” He almost added, “Young lady,” but managed to bite his tongue.

“Ah yes. Sorry about that. I was in the middle of a heated debate with my GPS. It insisted that the quickest route to our meeting point was through a coffee shop drive-thru.” She gave a sheepish grin. “I mean, I appreciate its concern for my caffeine levels, but it definitely slowed me down. Anyway, I’m here now, ready and raring to go!”

“Raring to go, huh?” Beckett’s jaw clenched as he tried to suppress his irritation at her tardiness. So, she was late because she wanted to buy a coffee. Hard to believe just how brazen she was being. Still, it was better than her being dishonest.

“Yes, Sir.”

Beckett’s eye twitched when she called him “Sir.” Hard to keep his mind on the game under conditions like this.

“Alright,” Beckett said, trying to keep his voice even. “Let’s get started.”

As they began discussing the upcoming expedition, Beckett found himself stealing glances at Laura. The way her mouth curled into a smile when she spoke about her passion for the western river birch tree, the earnestness in her gaze... all these little details tugged at something deep within him. He shook his head, attempting to refocus on the task at hand.

“Beckett,” Laura said, breaking him from his reverie, “what do you think is the most important piece of equipment we’ll need for Pine Peak?”

He looked into her eyes, a mix of curiosity and anticipation swirling within them.

“Rope,” he answered, trying to keep the conversation professional. “High-quality climbing rope is essential for a safe ascent.”

“Rope?” she said, a broad grin breaking out on her beautiful lips.

“Rope.”

“I thought you were going to say something a bit more technical than just rope.”

“Rope is extremely technical.”

“It’s like... shoelaces for your body.” A goofy grin. “Body laces.”

“Obviously we’ll need other equipment too.”

“Like what? Something else technical? Shoes?”

Young lady, you better watch that attitude unless you want to feel the palm of my hand on your behind.

“Do you think this is going to be a fun trip?” Beckett said sharply. “A jolly stroll up the mountain? A scenic walk followed by a picnic?”

Laura bit her lip and, for the first time that day, managed to look somewhat serious.

“Sorry. I tend to get... bratty when I’m nervous. And when I know I’ve done something wrong. Like turning up late for an important meeting.”

She had such an unusual energy to her. Bold, bratty, and defiant, but shy at the same time. She kept a man on his toes, that was for sure.

“Apology accepted,” he said, crossing his arms over his chest. “Laura, it’s crucial for you to understand the dangers of Pine Peak.” Beckett’s voice took on a serious tone as he began listing the hazards they might face. “The weather can be seriously unpredictable, with sudden storms and temperatures that dip below freezing even in the summer. We’ll also need to watch out for wildlife. There could be bears, mountain lions, and even venomous snakes.”

Laura’s playful demeanor seemed to vanish, her green eyes widening as she absorbed the information. The transformation was surprising, and oddly satisfying.

Beckett continued, emphasizing the importance of preparation. “Lastly, there’s the terrain itself. Rockslides, ice-covered cliffs, and narrow ridges that require expert-level climbing skills. One misstep could prove fatal.” He paused, studying Laura’s expression. “Do you understand the gravity of what we’re facing?”

“Absolutely,” she replied, her voice firm and steady. “I won’t underestimate the risks.”

“Good,” Beckett said, nodding. “Now, I need something from you, Laura. Total obedience. When we’re out there, my word is law. I cannot afford any mistakes or deviations from the plan. Can I trust you to follow my lead?”

For a moment, Laura hesitated. But then she met his gaze, determination shining in her eyes. “Yes, Beckett, you can. This is dangerous, but it will be worth it.”

“For a tree?”

“*Trees*,” she corrected him. “And the animals who rely on them. And the other plants. The whole ecosystem up there.”

“Alright,” Beckett said, allowing himself a small smile. “We’ll start with the basics—your gear. That backpack of yours won’t cut it on Pine Peak. We’ll need something more durable and lightweight.”

As they browsed the shelves, discussing the merits of various packs, Beckett marveled at Laura’s enthusiasm. She really did seem passionate about the trees, and about climbing up the peak to find them. There was something admirable about her bravery. Her sense of adventure. Something faintly... arousing about it.

Stop it, Beckett. This is not the time or the place to get turned on. Especially not by your damn climbing partner.

“So...” she said, slowly, “I know you’re not, like, a professional mountaineer.”

“I’m a world-champion rock climber.” He adjusted his pants as he spoke, hoping his growing hard-on wasn’t obvious. Jesus, it didn’t take much to get a hard dick up here in the mountains. You didn’t get a ton of women heading up this way, and you definitely didn’t get a ton of them looking like Laura.

“Right,” Laura said, her big green eyes blinking at him as she fiddled with a carabiner, “but you weren’t the first choice for this expedition, because I—”

Beckett arched an eyebrow. “Not the first choice, huh?”

“I didn’t get all the funding I asked for.”

Beckett shook his head in disbelief. “You’re not the most tactful person I ever met. You know that?”

“Tact isn’t really in my skillset.”

“You want me to list my achievements? Prove that I’m qualified?” He felt a bristling of anger and his arousal drained away.

“I’m sorry,” she said, “I always end up saying the wrong thing. I just... how long have you had this store here?”

“Five years,” he said moodily. “I have some other business interests in town that allowed me to open this place.”

It probably wasn’t the right time to tell her that his “other business interest” was a fetish club in the heart of Cheyenne. It would probably never be the time to tell her that.

“Aside from that, though, I’ve been climbing rocks and mountains competitively for fifteen years. I climb Pine Peak for fun, believe it or not. I know every trail, every rock face, and every hidden danger that mountain has to offer. I’m also a certified wilderness first responder, so I can handle any medical emergencies we might encounter.”

Laura raised an eyebrow, clearly impressed. “That definitely helps put my mind at ease.”

“Good. Now let’s get serious. It’s time to talk tents.”

As Beckett wrapped up his explanation of the necessary equipment, a mischievous glint appeared in Laura’s eyes, and she gestured towards the small climbing wall at the back of the store. He had it set up so that customers could try out their gear. “Mind if I give that a try?” she asked, already moving in its direction.

“Wait, Laura,” Beckett cautioned, concern furrowing his brow. “This isn’t the time for—”

But before he could finish, she had already bounded onto the wall, and was gripping the handholds with determination. Beckett couldn’t help but stare at her perfect ass as she

attempted to climb the wall. He knew he shouldn't be looking, but there was something about this woman—and her ass—that he found inexplicably magnetic.

To be fair, she was doing well. It wasn't a beginner's wall, and she was slowly but surely making her way up it. Then, when she was a few feet off the ground, Beckett's heart slammed against his chest as he saw Laura's grip falter. Time seemed to slow as her fingers slipped from the hold, her body teetering on the edge of a fall. Instinct took over, and Beckett lunged forward, catching her just in time.

"Got you," he breathed, his strong arms cradling her close. The scent of her shampoo filled his nostrils, mingling with the faintest hint of coffee. Her body felt warm and soft against his, and he couldn't deny the thrill that coursed through him at their closeness. Time was still slow, the moment stretching out until he carefully placed her down on the mat.

"Thank you," she stammered, clearly flustered by the situation. As she fumbled with her backpack, something fell out.

It was... a teddy bear?

Beckett stooped to grab the cute little guy, his eyes catching on the stuffie's green bow tie and deep brown eyes. He handed it over to Laura, who looked as though she was about to burst into tears.

"Uh, sorry," Laura mumbled, her cheeks flushing with embarrassment as she hastily scooped up the stuffie and squashed him back into her rucksack. "That's not mine. It's... obviously a child's. I... I should go."

A dangerous thought struck him. Could Laura be a Little? He'd seen plenty of them at the Wolfpack, the BDSM club he

co-owned, and although he didn't usually partake in ageplay himself, he couldn't deny the allure of a submissive partner.

It wasn't just the stuffie. She had an innocent, playful energy that made him feel, deep down, as though he really could be right about this.

"Wait," Beckett called after her, but she had already darted out of the store, leaving him standing there, his mind racing with questions and feelings he couldn't quite comprehend.

His watch buzzed. It was his heart rate. Abnormally high.

Of course it was.

The memory of Laura's body pressed against his own lingered in his thoughts, the sensation of her warmth and vulnerability awakening something within him. As he stared at the empty spot where she'd stood just moments before, he couldn't help but wonder what lay beneath the surface.

Chapter 3

Laura

So, this was it. She was going to climb a mountain. Easy.

Laura's breath fogged up in the cold morning air as she approached the Pine Peak Climbing Center, her eyes searching for Beckett among the small gathering of climbers. Her eyes settled on a poster in the window of the climbing center. It showed a woodcut image of Pine Peak. Beneath the picture were the words: "America's Most Dangerous Ascent."

It made the hairs on her neck stand on end.

She should have spent the past two weeks training, familiarizing herself with the climbing equipment on which her life was going to depend.

It wasn't like she hadn't tried. But it had been hard to concentrate on anything after meeting Beckett.

He was the only mountain she could think of. A huge, handsome rock of a man. Strong and stern and giving off such obvious Daddy Dom vibes that Laura's secret parts had been practically vibrating with anticipation.

When she'd dropped Albert after falling from the climbing wall, her eyes had met Beckett's and there had been a moment of... something. Understanding? Insight? Desire?

She wasn't quite sure. Whatever it was, she was going to have to bury it deep down in her heart or risk making a fool of herself on this dang trip. She was meant to be a scientist. A professional. Not some silly schoolgirl with a crush.

"Morning, Laura," came a deep voice from behind her, causing her heart to skip a beat. She turned around to find Beckett leaning against the wall, his muscular frame wrapped in climbing gear, his piercing blue eyes studying her intently. Her eyes lingered on the watch on his wrist, clearly expensive, but deeply scratched. His ruggedly handsome face broke into an easy grin that belied the gruffness she knew he was capable of. "Ready for our big science trip?"

"Beckett," Laura replied, attempting to sound casual despite the flurry of emotions she felt. Her mind kept replaying that moment when he had caught her in his unreasonably strong arms. She had spent countless hours thinking about it, wondering what he thought of her. She swallowed hard, forcing herself to focus on the task ahead. "As ready as I'll ever be."

"Good." Beckett nodded. "Just need to tell the folks at the center about our plan. Then we can get started."

Laura nodded, glancing up at the enormity of the mountain ahead of them. They wouldn't be climbing all the way to the summit—not even close. But the tree line was high up, and she knew from her research that it was a very demanding ascent.

Once they got to the right altitude, they'd circle the peak, looking for the trees. The trip should last a total of five days. It was all her budget allowed.

After Beckett registered their details with the officials at the climbing center, they made their way to the start of the trail. The first few hours were easy enough, and for a part of the way, they walked with some other hikers who were headed to a picnic spot.

Laura thought about how nice it would be to be here for a picnic, rather than for a grueling trip high up the mountain.

It wasn't long, though, before the other hikers split off to find their lunch spot, and Laura and Beckett were alone.

The path was beautiful. It cut a thin swathe through foliage as it wound its way up the peak. Lush ferns and wildflowers lined the trail, whistling birds kept them company, and as they climbed higher, pine trees filled the air with their sweet scent.

Beckett had been reasonably quiet. It was only when Laura grunted as she stepped up a steep rock that he asked her, "How are you holding up?"

"Good," she said, trying to sound composed. "Excited to be doing this. To have made it."

"We haven't made it yet," Beckett growled.

"Well, I know we're not at the top." Laura blushed. Beckett must think she was so silly. "It's just, you know, getting the funding was tough for me."

Beckett looked surprised, and then said, with genuine contrition, "I'm sorry. You're right, it must be a huge achievement. What do I know? I'm a knucklehead. I don't know how science works. Hell, I can barely pronounce it. Hey, watch your step there."

Laura, who had been lost in Beckett's blue eyes, glanced down to see that a fallen log lay in their path.

Beckett stepped over the log and held out a hand.

Laura's pulse pounded. It was probably an overreaction, but she felt almost scared to touch him. The memory of his hands on her body was so strong that she worried about gasping or yelping at his touch. "I got this," she said, stepping carefully over the debris.

"We'll have you climbing professionally in no time," Beckett said wryly.

"Sure. Just call me Spider-Girl," she replied sarcastically.

"You've got quite the attitude on you, you know that, Spider-Girl?"

She snorted.

After another hour or so, they had some lunch in a clearing. She'd brought bologna sandwiches, but watched with a grim fascination as Beckett took out an entire roast chicken and bit straight into the breast.

"Seriously?"

Beckett arched an eyebrow. "You know how many calories we're burning today? How much of a protein deficit we're gonna be in?"

"I don't think there is such a thing as a protein deficit," Laura said, trying to take small, ladylike bites of her sandwich as Beckett savaged his bird.

"Not for me," he said with a grin.

How was it that watching him eat like this could be so endearing? He was *not* the type of person who Laura usually spent time with. Not even close. She was used to talking to scientists and bureaucrats. Not mountain men.

“Finish up that sandwich,” he said. “Got a feeling things are gonna get a little tricky after lunch.”

He was not wrong.

Almost the moment that they finished their meal, an icy wind started to blow. The next part of the trail was steeper and much more treacherous. Occasionally, they’d approach an almost vertical section of rock that Laura had to climb using hands and feet together, hauling herself right over edges.

Laura wasn’t about to give up, though. She gritted her teeth in determination, her gaze locked on Beckett’s broad back as he effortlessly moved ahead of her to scout out routes and occasionally place anchors for her, scaling the rugged terrain with ease.

“Remember, use your legs more than your arms,” Beckett called out without turning his head, his voice firm yet encouraging. “You’ll tire less quickly that way.”

“Thanks,” Laura muttered, trying to follow his advice even though every muscle in her body screamed in protest. She couldn’t help but feel a mix of frustration and admiration for Beckett. His confidence and skill in this harsh environment were both intimidating and alluring. The way he navigated the treacherous climb made him seem like an extension of the mountain itself, so at ease with the unforgiving landscape that he appeared to be part of it.

“Damn it,” Laura whispered under her breath as she slipped on a loose rock, her heart skipping a beat as she scrambled to regain her balance. Her knuckles turned white as she clung to the cold stone, gasping for air.

“Are you okay?” Beckett asked, concern etched in his brow as he looked down at her, his piercing blue eyes offering

a semblance of comfort amid the relentless chill.

“Y-yes,” Laura stammered, willing herself not to reveal just how rattled she was. “I’m fine.”

“Good,” Beckett replied, a small smile lifting the corner of his mouth as he turned his attention back to the climb. “Stay close,” he added, his tone shifting back to the authoritative timbre that both intrigued and irked her. “I don’t want you getting lost or hurt.”

“Maybe you should let me climb first?” Laura said shakily. “Then you can help direct me?”

Beckett laughed. “No offense, sweetheart, but I’m not letting you place the anchors.”

Laura gave an audible, “Humph,” but she knew that Beckett was right. He was constantly setting up ropes to catch her in case she fell. And the likelihood of that happening was looking pretty high right now.

Just then, Laura felt a pinprick of cold land on her forehead. Then another, and another. It was snow.

Lost in the moment, she stuck out her tongue, let a few dots of cold land on her.

“Let’s keep moving,” Beckett said. “We need to cover more ground before this gets too thick. We can eat snow later on.”

Laura blushed. “*Will* it get too thick?”

“Hopefully not.”

The way the snow intensified was frightening. Laura had never seen anything like it. It was like the mountain had come alive and was trying to keep them from climbing any higher.

The wind howled like a wounded animal, its icy fangs tearing at Laura's exposed skin as the snowstorm whirled around them. Beckett's form became nothing more than a blurry silhouette amidst the relentless white flurry.

"Beckett!" Laura called out. Her voice was barely audible above the storm's hum. He was up ahead, and not far, but she'd lost sight of him. She wrapped her arms around herself, shivering violently as the cold gnawed at her bones.

"Over here!" Beckett's reply came in fragmented bursts, distorted by the gale-force winds. His figure appeared through the white. He gestured toward a small outcropping of rocks, barely visible, that might offer some meager protection. "We need to take shelter!"

Laura followed him, her body aching with every step. As they huddled together beneath the overhang, Beckett quickly set about constructing a makeshift shelter with the few materials they had on hand.

"Here," Beckett said gruffly, handing Laura a thin metallic blanket. "This will help keep us warm."

"Thank you," she whispered, wrapping it around her shoulders. She was thankful for the slight protection it provided. They were close to one another. She could feel the heat radiating from Beckett's body and couldn't help but be drawn to it like a moth to a flame.

"Well. Things went to shit," Beckett said, his teeth chattering.

"Is this normal?" she asked.

“Yep. But it’s also normal to have beautiful weather all day long. Pine Peak’s a skittish bastard. He can be an asshole, but he can also be a charming son-of-a-bitch.”

“He?” she asked, grateful for the respite that Beckett’s shelter gave.

“Ain’t no woman who’s as cruel as this mountain.”

“Beckett,” she said quietly. “I-I’m scared.”

“Nothing wrong with that,” he replied. “But we’ll get through this. I can promise you that.” His confidence was reassuring. “Come here,” he said, patting his chest.

She did as he asked, pressing herself up against him.

“We need to stay close.” He held her tight against his muscular torso. “Good girl,” he said, with a strange, compelling authority.

Laura felt a thrill as he said it. The wonderful warmth of his body made her feel slightly more alive again.

They stayed like that for an hour, barely speaking. The storm raged on, but somehow, Laura didn’t mind. There was magic in the way he looked after her.

“Never pitched a tent in a snowstorm before?” Beckett asked with a mischievous grin.

Luckily, the worst of the storm was over, otherwise there was no way that they would have managed to get the tent up. It was a relief to be inside it now. If Laura closed her eyes, she could almost imagine that the tent was pitched somewhere else. A beach. A sun-dappled forest. A wildflower meadow.

“I’ve only ever pitched one tent before in my whole life,” said Laura. “And it wasn’t in a snowstorm!”

“What kind of monster goes through life only ever having pitched one tent?”

Laura shrugged. “A tree-obsessed scientist who likes home comforts, I guess.”

Beckett chuckled as he pulled the tent ropes tight. “That’s what you are, is it?”

“I suppose.”

“Why is it I get the feeling there’s more to you than meets the eye?”

Instantly, Laura thought of Albert. “Probably because there’s more to *everyone* than meets the eye?”

Beckett shook his head. “Nope. It’s not that.” He paused for a moment, looked straight at her. When he held her gaze like that, it gave her more of a chill than the snowstorm.

“I’m an open book,” Laura said, giggling nervously, trying to break the tension.

“Sure you are.” Another pause. “Laura, I’m worried about the temperature tonight.”

She felt her heart pound. “Should we go back down the mountain?”

“We don’t have that luxury. Nope. I think we should share a sleeping bag.”

Laura swallowed. “Oh. You do?”

“For warmth,” Beckett said. “Technically, we’ll be in both sleeping bags, zipped together. Fully clothed, of course. It’s the only way we’ll be able to sleep.”

“The only way...?”

But even as she doubted him, she knew that she was going to obey. There was no way that she could ever disobey someone like Beckett.

Well. She was *not* asleep.

It was warm in the sleeping bag with Beckett. That was true enough. But there was no way in hell that she was going to get to sleep pressed up this close to him.

She could feel his body, strong and muscular, even though they were fully clothed bundled up in the soft sleeping bag.

Around them, she could hear wind gusting, and the soft sounds of night were strangely reassuring. There was something cozy about being in the tent, too.

Beckett wriggled slightly, trying to find a more comfortable spot. As he did, she caught sight of his eyes. They were wide open.

“Beckett?” she whispered. “Are you awake?”

“No,” he replied.

“Oh really?”

“We’ve got to sleep, young lady. We didn’t cover enough ground today. You only paid me for five days, and I don’t intend to work for free.”

“Fine,” she snorted, then, under her breath, “Mister Sensible.”

“Excuse me?”

“Nothing!”

“Did you call me Mister Sensible?”

“Ummmm...”

There was a wry chuckle. “If I had my way...”

“What? What would you do if you had your way?”

“Believe me,” he said, turning away from her. “You don’t want to know.”

Oh, but she did. She really, *really* did.

“Would you wash my mouth out with soap?”

“Careful.”

“I bet you wouldn’t have the guts.”

She could feel the tension rising. His face was pointed away from her, his broad back blocking her view, but she could hear something in his voice. There was something between them, she could just tell.

“Wanna test me?”

“Would you... spank me?”

Her heart thudded like a canon stuck on auto-fire.

“What did you say?”

She couldn’t tell if he sounded angry or something quite the opposite. “Nothing.”

“Young lady,” he said, “ask me again in the morning if I would spank you. See what happens.”

“Is that a promise?”

“Time to sleep,” Beckett said, with finality. “We need energy for tomorrow. I mean it.”

“Okay,” she responded.

Mister Sensible.

Chapter 4

Beckett

It was one of the best nights of his life. It was one of the worst nights of his life. Best, because he'd been squashed up against one of the sexiest women he'd ever met. Worst, because he hadn't got a wink of sleep.

The following morning, he lay there, still entwined in the sleeping bag with Laura, their bodies pressed together like puzzle pieces. He'd turned away from her, of course. He'd had to. Had to hide his stupidly big, insistent, hard-on from her.

It hadn't helped much, though. She'd wriggled up to him, pressing against him for warmth. He'd felt her breasts squashing into his back and her crotch nestling up to his butt.

She'd turned him into the god-damn largest little spoon in the history of cutlery. And the whole night that they'd lain like that, the conversation had played over and over in his mind like a Hallmark rerun.

Had Laura really asked him to spank her? Did she want him to wash her mouth out?

Even as he thought of it, he imagined slipping his fingers between her cherry lips, feeling the warm, soft, wet inside of her mouth.

“Not again,” he whispered under his breath, as he felt the familiar heat of arousal stir in him. “Stop it, Beckett.”

Carefully, he wriggled out of the sleeping bag, taking great pains not to wake Laura. The cold air outside greeted him as he stepped out of the tent, an unwelcome change from the heated confines within. A survey of their surroundings revealed the tiny cave he’d found last night, which now appeared less secure in the clear light of day. He frowned, the experienced climber in him admonishing himself for not being more cautious.

At least the weather was better today. The view from the outcropping was nothing short of spectacular, with snow-frosted pines stretching out for miles all around. There was a creek nearby, and he could clearly see the way it slinked down the mountain toward Pine Peak town.

If the weather held, they should be able to make up some of yesterday’s lost time. That was good.

But then he saw it. His backpack. Ripped apart.

He ran over, heart pounding. The food was gone. He had a couple snacks in his pockets, but they wouldn’t last long. Most of the provisions had been taken. No more tins. No beef jerky. He’d lost four days’ worth of food—the bread, energy bars, and trail mix he’d been so careful to ration out for himself and Laura for the hike up the mountain.

“Fuck,” he growled, under his breath. Beckett rummaged through the pack, examining each item carefully for signs of

damage. His bivy sack was still intact, as were his waterproof socks and spare layers of clothing.

He noticed something else: pieces of his carefully selected food were scattered across the ground. He knelt to examine them more closely and saw that they were partially eaten.

Of course.

“Beckett?”

Laura’s voice was sleepy and confused. He turned round to see her, yawning and beautiful, emerging from the tent.

“Morning,” he said. His voice was grim.

“What’s the matter?” She looked so worried. So innocent. He hated having to tell her the bad news.

“Looks like some wildlife got to our supplies during the night.” Beckett’s mind raced, considering their options. They needed food, and fast. The climb ahead would be treacherous without proper nourishment.

“W-wildlife?” There was fear in her voice. A tremble in her lip.

“Most likely it was a bear.”

“A bear? I thought they were rare up here.”

“Relatively. They tend to stay away from people. But lately people have been encroaching on their habitat. Which means less hunting space for them.” He pursed his lips. “So, they get hungry and make bad decisions. Like stealing our food.”

“Are we in danger?”

“Black bears aren’t typically aggressive toward people,” Beckett reassured her, trying to sound confident despite the

uncertainty gnawing at him. “But we’ll need to be extra cautious from now on.”

“Will we have to go back to base camp?” The disappointment was clear in her voice.

Beckett weighed this up. They definitely didn’t have enough rations to stay out for another five days. Far from it. “Afraid so. We can’t continue without food.”

Tears welled up in Laura’s eyes, and she began to cry.

Beckett’s protective instincts flared, and he longed to hold her tight, to tell her that everything was going to be alright.

“This trip means everything to me, Beckett,” she said, her voice choked with tears. “I don’t know if I’ll ever get another chance like this.”

He felt a surge of sympathy for her, knowing how hard she’d worked to make this dream a reality. He wanted to help her succeed, and not just because he was a skilled climber and guide. There was something more between them, something that tugged at his heart with each passing moment.

“Listen to me, Laura,” Beckett said firmly, his voice resonating with the authority he’d honed in his years as a Daddy Dom. “I’m going to do everything I can to make this happen for you. We’ll figure out a way, I promise.”

“B-but, how?”

There had to be a solution, something that would allow them to continue their journey without returning to base camp. A sudden inspiration flashed through his mind.

“Laura,” he said, the corners of his mouth curling into a determined smile. “I have an idea.”

She paused a moment, then nodded. “I trust you, Beckett. What’s the plan?”

Beckett stooped and picked up what was left of the pack. “Luckily, our ursine friend didn’t take the most important thing in my bag.” He lifted a small foil packet. “Coffee.”

“Imagine a caffeinated bear,” Laura said, a fragile smile spreading over her sad face.

“Not good,” Beckett said, smiling back. “Now, I’ll start a fire, and then I need you to add branches to keep it going. Make us coffee. I won’t be long.” He grabbed a coat and shrugged it on.

“What if the bear comes back?” she asked, worry creasing her brow.

“It won’t,” said Beckett. “It’s taken the food. It got what it wanted.”

“Where are you going?” she asked, looking far from reassured.

“Scouting for supplies. We might not have much left in our packs, but nature has its own pantry.” Beckett winked, trying to lighten the mood. “Stay put. Stay warm. I’ll be back as soon as I can. If you’re cold when I get back, I won’t be happy.”

He didn’t mention the spanking chat, but by the way she was looking at him, he had a feeling it was on *her* mind, too. Damn, she looked good today. Sleep-kissed and fresh. She wore no makeup this morning, and he loved how beautiful she was. Natural and vulnerable. Really, truly herself.

“Don’t be too long.”

“You can keep yourself company. Did you bring that teddy bear with you?”

Laura's cheeks flushed pink. "Um. Yes. I brought Albert."

"Albert. That's the perfect name for him. Lil' nerd," he said with affection. "Why not get him out? Make him a coffee."

"Caffeine and bears don't mix, remember?"

"Teddy bears can handle it."

With that, he set off into the wilderness, his keen senses guiding him as he searched for anything edible. He moved with purpose, his every step measured, the weight of responsibility heavy on his shoulders. Each rustle in the underbrush, each whisper of wind through the trees seemed to call out to him, urging him onward.

He didn't like to leave Laura alone, but she wasn't in any immediate danger. In his experience of black bears, they never bothered people in broad daylight.

His mind wandered to Laura as he focused on the task at hand. She was strong, resilient, and fiercely determined. Even though she was scared, she hadn't wanted to give up. He admired that deeply.

He'd foraged from Pine Peak before, but never in such a dire situation. He had a good idea of what to look for, though. After just a few minutes, he stumbled upon a patch of wild oats, their golden stalks swaying gently in the breeze. He smiled, knowing this could provide them with a much-needed source of sustenance. He gathered a handful, then a handful more.

As Beckett trod lightly through the thick foliage, the weight of last night's conversation hung heavily on his mind. Laura's plea for discipline had caught him off guard, but it

also stirred something deep within him. He'd told her to ask him again in the morning to spank her.

Sadly, the bear incident had put a stop to that.

He wondered whether if the bear hadn't stolen their supplies, he might be spanking Laura right now.

Stay focused, Beckett. If you don't find more food, you'll be heading back down Pine Peak, and probably never see Laura again.

Beckett's search continued. To his delight, he spotted a rare sugar maple tree, its trunk oozing with amber sap. He smiled as he realized it had been tapped before. An experienced forager had marked the tree for later harvest. Though the flow was minimal, Beckett managed to collect some in a small, empty water bottle. Its sweetness would make a fine addition to what he had planned.

Then, he heard the sound he'd been waiting for. Running water. The creek.

Lucky for Beckett, the trout-tickling tricks his grandfather had taught him many years ago had worked a charm. He'd pulled out two fat fish. Looked like they were going to be alright, at least for the near future.

With his backpack filled with wild oats, a bottle full of sap, and the fish from the mountain stream, Beckett began his trek back to their makeshift campsite. As he hiked, a decision crystallized in his thoughts: if Laura truly wanted him to take control, he would gladly oblige. He'd never been a Dom to a

Little before, but he'd spent enough time with his friends Reed and Griffin to have an idea of what to do.

Play. Protect. Discipline. There would be nothing to it.

The scent of burning wood wafted through the air as Beckett approached the campsite, signaling that Laura had managed to keep the fire going. But as he stepped into the clearing, his heart skipped a beat at the unexpected sight before him.

Laura sat cross-legged on a small blanket she must have pulled from her pack. Albert was perched beside her. A warm smile graced her lips, and a soft giggle escaped her as she poured imaginary tea into a real, tiny cup for her stuffed companion.

Beckett hesitated, not wanting to embarrass Laura. The tenderness of the moment tugged at his heartstrings, further solidifying his belief that she was indeed a Little in need of guidance and protection.

"Hey there!" he called out, making sure to give her enough time to compose herself before he entered the clearing. "I hope Albert's been behaving himself."

Laura's cheeks flushed a rosy pink as she quickly hid the tiny cup. "Oh, uh, yeah, we were just... passing the time."

"Nothing wrong with that," Beckett reassured her, his voice gentle yet firm. "Now, let's get some food cooked up, shall we?"

"You found something?"

Beckett smiled. "A feast fit for a teddy bear."

Chapter 5

Laura

Pancakes. Somehow, this magician of a man had gone out for half an hour on a snowy mountain and had scavenged ingredients for freaking pancakes.

“How? How did you do this?”

“It’s easy when you know what to look for.”

Laura’s eyes widened with excitement as she watched Beckett take wild oats and squash them firmly between two stones, flicking the flattened grains into a small tub.

“Course, these aren’t gonna taste like the pancakes you buy in a diner,” he conceded. “They’ll be a little more... rustic.” He mixed the collection of grains with water and pounded gently until they formed a thick batter.

While he worked, a small pan heated over the fire that Laura had carefully attended while he’d been away. She could feel the heat warming her chilly body.

“Let’s see how this does,” Beckett said. He poured a little oil into the pan, and then dolloped some of the batter down. It sizzled. It smelled good. It was a miracle.

As Beckett cooked, Laura allowed her thoughts to drift back to their conversation from the night before.

Would you... spank me?

Something about the sizzle of the pancake batter made her think of Beckett's rough hands, striking her soft skin over and over again. She shivered as she imagined it.

Not for the first time, she noticed his watch.

"How did your watch get scratched?" she asked, absentmindedly.

Beckett flinched. "Hmm. That's a long story."

"We've got plenty of time."

"Nope. We don't." He closed right down, prodding at the pancakes with a small spatula, before slipping them out. "Here you go," Beckett said, handing her a plate piled high with the stodgy-looking things.

"Wow! These look... interesting!" Sure enough, they didn't quite look like any pancakes she'd ever seen before. They were a little bulky and uneven. They looked more like solid oatmeal, really. The aroma, though, was delicious. Toasty and tempting, it wafted through the crisp mountain air, beckoning her to indulge.

Beckett laughed. "Yep. Interesting is about right. Oh! I almost forgot." He fished a bottle from his bag.

"What's that?"

Beckett didn't answer, but poured thick, sticky-looking liquid onto Laura's stack.

"That's not syrup, is it?"

He nodded, a wide smile on his lips.

“Boy oh boy, is it crazy that I’m actually thankful to that bear?”

“A little.”

There was something about the way he’d said that. A Little.

“I’m nervous to try.”

“They’re not poisonous.”

Laura tentatively brought a bite to her lips. When she tasted the pancakes, she couldn’t believe it. They were the best—and worst—pancakes she’d ever tasted.

“These are amazing! Like... earthy and... muddy, but in a good way!”

Beckett laughed. It was such a treat to see that stern face look so happy. She couldn’t help but laugh back.

“The syrup is amazing, though. How did you make it?”

“It’s literally tree juice.”

“Tree juice?”

“Laura, do you remember our conversation from last night?” The change of subject was so abrupt it practically gave Laura whiplash.

“Last night?”

“You asked me to wash your mouth out. To spank you.”

“Oh,” Laura mumbled, her cheeks flushing pink as she held her plate steady. She hesitated for a moment, her heart pounding in her chest. “Um, yeah. I remember.”

“Good. I was afraid that maybe you’d been asleep. Or... half asleep. Or something.”

“No. I was very awake. Do *you* remember it?” It was a dumb question. Of course he remembered it—he’d just asked her about it.

A knowing smirk played across Beckett’s face as he replied, “Of course I do. I don’t forget important discussions, especially with someone like you.”

“Like me?”

“Are you a Little, Laura?” Beckett asked suddenly, catching Laura off guard. His eyes blazed bright blue.

She froze for a moment—a rabbit caught in the headlights of his gaze. She thought about lying, about saying she didn’t know what he meant. But try as she might, she couldn’t. Lying to Beckett was as impossible as walking on the ceiling.

“Yes.” It was all she could say. It was all she needed to say.

Beckett nodded. “Thank you for being honest with me.”

“How did you know?”

“It’s partly Albert,” Beckett explained, grinning at her stuffed bear, “and partly just the feeling I get from you. I’ve met other Littles before.” He paused for a moment before continuing, “I actually co-own a BDSM club in Cheyenne called the Wolfpack.”

Laura gasped in surprise. The club was an urban legend, or so she’d thought. “That place is real?”

“Real as me.”

“Wait. You’re a Daddy Dom?” she asked, her voice barely audible.

“Definitely a Dom,” Beckett confirmed, his smile turning mischievous. “Maybe a Daddy. How does that make you

feel?”

“I guess I already knew. Deep down. I think.”

“We get each other, don’t we?”

She felt a connection between them, a line of golden light that was almost physical. “We seem to.”

So, he was a Dom, but not a Daddy? Or *maybe* he was a Daddy? It didn’t really matter to Laura. She had a feeling about him. A very *good* feeling. Laura watched Beckett as he took a sip of the coffee she had prepared, his eyes closing momentarily in satisfaction.

“This is amazing coffee, by the way,” he said with genuine praise, making her heart swell with pride.

“Thank you,” Laura replied, feeling a warmth spread through her chest at the compliment. She couldn’t help but notice his strong hands wrapped around the tin mug, the way his fingers flexed as he held it. There was something so capable and confident about Beckett that drew her to him like a magnet.

There was a brief pause as Beckett seemed to gather his thoughts, and then he looked at her with an intensity that made her breath catch in her throat. “Laura,” he began, his voice low and sincere, “I need to tell you something. I’m... attracted to you.”

Her heart skipped a beat, and she could feel her cheeks burning. No-one had ever just come out and said something like that to her before. It felt amazing.

“Ever since we started this journey, I’ve had this strong urge to protect you, to look after you,” Beckett continued, his eyes searching hers. “Not just because I’m being paid to do exactly that.” He laughed, running his hand through his hair.

“What I’m talking about is something deeper than that. I… can’t get you out of my head, Laura. Every single moment I’m with you I’m trying to figure out how to make you smile.” He paused. “It’s new for me, and honestly, it’s scary. I’m sorry if it’s inappropriate or if it makes you uncomfortable.”

“Beckett, no, don’t apologize,” Laura interrupted, her words tumbling out in a rush. “I feel the same way. But I thought you hated me because I’m no good at climbing. And because I turned up late to our first meeting.”

“Because you were late?” Beckett asked, raising an eyebrow. “Well, it’s true I don’t like tardiness, but that doesn’t mean I don’t like you. And as for your climbing—well, you’re a beginner. But you’re a damn brave one, that’s for sure.”

A soft smile played on Laura’s lips as relief washed over her. “So, where do we go from here?” she asked tentatively.

Beckett considered her question for a moment, then said, “Would you like to explore this dynamic between us, or would you prefer to ignore it for now and concentrate on our task? We’ve got a lot of mountain left to climb. And, frankly, I’ve got a lot of foraging to do.”

Laura chewed her lip, deep in thought. “I don’t see why we can’t explore the dynamic *and* concentrate on the task,” she said finally, her eyes meeting Beckett’s.

“I’m glad you said that,” Beckett agreed, nodding. “It might even help keep your mind on the mission. If I do this right, anyway. Like I say, I’ve never tried my hand at being a Daddy. But I’d like to try.” He reached out and took her hand gently, sending a thrill up her arm. “Let’s set some ground rules. Feel our way into this. How does that sound?”

Laura nodded, feeling the anticipation bubble within her. “Sounds perfect.”

“And also, don’t worry about time pressure. I know you’ve only paid me for a few days, but that’s all out the window now. Things just got complicated, in the best way possible. Let’s take all the time we need.”

Laura looked down at the blank page, her fingers drumming on the camping table as she contemplated what rules to suggest. She’d never done anything like this before. Not with someone she cared about. Beckett’s presence was strong and comforting beside her, his warmth radiating into her as they sat shoulder-to-shoulder, huddled around the fire.

“Before we get into any dynamic-specific stuff, let’s start with some safety rules for our climb,” Beckett suggested, his deep voice firm yet gentle. “The weather’s turned, and it’s important that we communicate clearly, especially during challenging moments.”

“Okay,” Laura nodded, feeling a shiver run down her spine as he spoke. “We need to trust each other completely.”

“You know what?” Beckett said, his eyes narrowing. “There’s something even more important than safety. Can’t believe I forgot.” He took hold of the pen, and wrote, in thick, capital letters.

Laura will call Beckett “Daddy” from now on.

Laura’s heart pounded. “Ooh, that’s a good one.” And then, a moment later, she added, “Daddy.”

“Good girl,” Beckett praised, sending a wave of heat through her.

Laura grinned like a doofus, feeling unreasonably proud of herself.

Over the next twenty minutes or so, the two of them worked out the full list of rules.

1. Communication: *Laura will call Beckett “Daddy” from now on and he will call her “babygirl.” Laura must always be honest with Beckett about her physical and emotional condition. In turn, Beckett, as Laura’s Daddy Dom, will always listen to her and be understanding of her feelings.*

2. Safety First: *Laura should never deviate from planned routes or risk safety without Beckett’s prior consent and careful consideration of potential consequences. Laura needs to trust Beckett’s expert judgment on all safety matters.*

3. Following Instructions: *Beckett’s orders related to climbing must be followed by Laura without exception. Even if Laura is feeling defiant or bratty, she needs to remember that Beckett’s primary concern is her safety.*

4. Equipment: *Laura must always take proper care of her equipment and never manipulate or alter it without Beckett’s guidance or approval.*

5. Training Routine: *Laura is to adhere to a regular physical conditioning routine agreed upon by both parties. Beckett, as her Daddy Dom, will set up and monitor this routine, and Laura must commit to following it.*

6. Respect for Nature: *Laura should not disturb wildlife, leave trash, or otherwise disrespect the natural surroundings.*

7. Rest & Nutrition: *Laura must eat properly and rest when Beckett advises her to do so, ensuring she maintains her*

energy levels throughout their journey. Beckett will be responsible for providing healthy, nutrient-rich food to Laura.

8. Emergency Response: *In an emergency, Laura must follow Beckett's instructions immediately and without question. Her safety is Beckett's responsibility.*

“Now for the fun part,” Beckett said, as they agreed on the list. “Let’s talk punishments.”

“But I’m not going to get punished, Daddy, because I’m a very good girl.”

“I’m sure you are, babygirl. A very good girl who answers back on the regular, and who turns up late for meetings.”

Laura’s cheeks burned. “Guilty as charged.”

“While we’re up here, I suggest we keep it simple,” Beckett said. “I’ll give you an appropriate punishment to suit the crime... if and when it arises. You have to take it, unless you use your safeword. Let’s not write them all out. We don’t have much paper.”

Laura considered this. Normally, she’d agree on punishments beforehand so that she felt comfortable knowing what would be coming her way. Somehow, though, she knew she could trust Beckett. And that he would respect her safeword. “Okay, Daddy. My safeword is bunny.”

“I love it. So... are you ready to sign?”

With her heart pounding in her chest, Laura signed the paper, sealing their agreement. She looked up at Beckett, feeling both exhilarated and vulnerable.

“Good. Now, we need to break camp and hit the road.”

Laura bit her lip. No time like the present to let her new Daddy know exactly what type of bratty Little he was dealing

with. He'd said that time wasn't an issue anymore. He was practically begging her to be a little brat, right?

She stuck out her lower lip. "Don't wanna."

Beckett looked at her, his piercing blue eyes narrowing as he caught onto her game. "Laura," he warned, his tone cool and authoritative, "this is your chance. Get ready right now, or I'll have to punish you."

A thrill ran down her spine at his words, and she found herself unable to resist the temptation to test him further. Laura crossed her arms and huffed, her gaze challenging. "Not going anywhere," she declared, digging her heels into the ground.

"Call me Daddy," Beckett replied, his voice silky smooth and laced with dominance.

"Not going anywhere, Stinkyhead," she retorted, her eyes defiantly locked onto his.

"Big mistake," Beckett murmured, a hint of a smile playing at the corners of his lips. He stepped closer, looming over her like a predator sizing up its prey.

Her pulse quickened, heat flooding her cheeks. "What you gonna do, Daddy?" Laura asked, her words coming out breathless and tinged with excitement.

"You're going to find out," he promised, his eyes never leaving hers.

Chapter 6

Laura

Why did I do it? Laura wondered as she bent over the large rock near the tent. How did I get myself into this situation?

The cold, rough surface pressed against her exposed thighs, the sensitive flesh of her sex, and her tender breasts. Her heart raced in anticipation, her vulnerability heightening her senses. Beckett had assured her that there would be no other people out here, not a soul to witness their intimate moment.

When she'd agreed to obey him, though, she hadn't known that he would ask her to strip naked and hug a rock. She had to admit, she was expecting just to be put over his knee and spanked. Had she bitten off more than she could chew?

Maybe. But still, she'd done as he'd asked. She'd taken her clothes off, one by one, while he waited in the tent. She'd positioned herself over the boulder like a good girl. She'd waited for Daddy, just like he'd requested.

"Are you ready?" Beckett's deep voice resonated from the tent, jolting her back to reality.

“Yes, Daddy,” Laura nervously replied, her voice quiet compared to his.

“Good girl. At least you’re obeying me now. Let’s make sure that things continue like this.” She heard Beckett emerge from behind her, his footsteps crunching on the gravelly ground. The snow had mostly melted now, and the cool breeze caressed her naked skin, sending shivers down her spine. “Daddy, I’m nervous,” she confessed.

“Don’t worry, little one. I’ll take care of you,” he reassured her. His warm breath tickled her ear, making her shudder even more.

“Can we... can we cancel this punishment?” she asked hesitantly. “Or postpone it? Indefinitely?” Her voice was anxious, hesitant.

“Trust me, babygirl. If it’s too much, you have your safeword. But I know you can handle this. You’ve come so far already, and I’m proud of you.” His words were firm yet gentle, and Laura found solace in them.

As the wind whispered through the trees around them, Laura steeled herself for what was to come.

“Are you ready?” Beckett asked, his hand resting on her lower back, a gesture of comfort and control.

“Yes, Daddy,” she whispered, her voice filled with determination and surrender. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, inhaling the crisp mountain air that filled her lungs with life and anticipation. Although she didn’t voice it, Laura felt grateful that Beckett was insisting on the spanking. Deep down, she knew she needed this to grow, to break free from the chains that had been holding her back in her work.

“Alright, little one,” Beckett said softly, his tone firm yet gentle. “I’m going to give you ten spanks. Hard ones. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Daddy,” Laura replied, her voice barely audible as she surrendered herself to him.

His strong fingers traced a path down her spine, each touch sending shivers through her body. The anticipation built, an electrifying energy coursing through her, as his hand finally came to rest on her buttock.

She nodded and took a deep breath, feeling the cool air fill her lungs, the scent of pine and earth grounding her in the moment. And then, without warning, his hand whipped back then connected with her bare skin. A sharp sting spread across her flesh. Laura gasped, the sound echoing through the silent forest.

“Good girl,” Beckett praised her softly. “That’s one.”

Her heart pounded in her chest, a mixture of pain and pleasure swirling within her. She focused on her breathing, inhaling deeply as she braced herself for the next blow. As the spanking continued, Laura found herself delving deeper into her thoughts, reflecting on the journey that had brought her to this point.

“Two,” he said, striking her again.

The sharp crack of Beckett’s hand against her bare skin resonated in the air, followed closely by a brief but intense sting that spread across Laura’s bottom. She let out a small gasp, and then another as the second spank landed. Each impact sent shivers up her spine, a mixture of pain and arousal that caused her to quiver with anticipation.

“Three,” Beckett counted, his voice low and steady. Laura found herself focusing on his voice, using it as an anchor amidst the whirlwind of emotions she was experiencing. “Four.”

As the spanking continued, Laura’s thoughts began to drift, her mind slipping into something akin to a trance. She felt herself regressing back to her childhood, a time when she craved attention, always needing to show off or assert her independence. The naughty, bratty side of her had been desperate for validation, for someone to notice her and take charge.

But as she’d grown older, she’d buried that part of her, stifling her confidence, replacing it with nerves. Anxiety. Shame.

“Five,” Beckett intoned, and Laura realized that, deep down, this was what she had always wanted: a Daddy who would guide and care for her while also teaching her boundaries and discipline. “Six.”

With each subsequent spank, Laura felt herself surrendering more and more to the experience. Her shame seemed to dissipate, replaced by a growing sense of trust and intimacy between her and Beckett. “Seven... eight...”

By the ninth spank, Laura’s entire being was consumed by the unique blend of pain and pleasure Beckett was administering. She no longer felt the need to be in control; instead, she embraced her vulnerability, allowing herself to truly let go for the first time in her life.

“Ten,” Beckett announced, delivering the final blow with a resounding smack. As Beckett counted out the tenth and final spank, Laura felt her entire body go slack. She was overcome with a wave of intense emotion that left her breathless and

trembling. And then, without warning, an unexpected wave of pleasure washed over her, causing her body to tense and arch as she experienced a powerful orgasm.

She gasped in surprise as the climax coursed through her veins, leaving her feeling weak yet exhilarated at the same time. The orgasm was like nothing she'd ever experienced before, the intensity of it too much to comprehend. It started in her belly and radiated outward through every inch of her body, each muscle tensing and releasing with the powerful waves of pleasure that swept through her.

As the intense feeling finally subsided, she felt Beckett's hand rest gently on the base of her spine. The warmth of his palm grounded her, and she felt a deep sense of peace wash over her as she finally let down all her defenses.

Tears began to cascade down Laura's cheeks. She wasn't quite sure why she was crying. Perhaps it was a release of pent-up emotions, or maybe it was simply the shock of experiencing such a powerful and transformative moment.

The feelings grew and grew, but the tears felt good. Like a release. Like freedom.

"Baby?" Beckett asked, with concern.

Laura felt Beckett's strong arms wrap around her as he gently helped her up from her bent position over the rock. The warmth of his embrace was a stark contrast to the cool breeze that had been teasing her exposed skin moments before.

"Did I hit you too hard?" Beckett asked, a hint of anger directed at himself in his voice. "I never meant to hurt you like this."

Laura shook her head, struggling to find her words. "No, it wasn't that. You did it perfectly. I just... I didn't expect the

emotional release,” she finally managed to say, her voice cracking with vulnerability.

Beckett tenderly stroked her hair, his eyes gazing deeply into hers as if trying to read her very soul.

“I’ve always felt so inadequate,” Laura confessed, her voice barely above a whisper. “I get nervous, and it holds me back. But when I’m Little, acting bratty... it’s like I’m finally free from all the anxiety.” She hesitated, a fresh wave of shame washing over her as she continued, “But I’ve always felt ashamed of both those sides of me.”

Beckett’s piercing blue eyes never left her face as he listened intently, his strong presence grounding her during her emotional turmoil. “You don’t need to feel ashamed anymore, Laura,” he told her softly but firmly. “You’re strong, beautiful, and deserving of love—in all aspects of yourself.”

The sincerity in his voice reached through Laura’s insecurities, and for the first time in her life, she truly believed that she could be free of the crushing weight of her shame.

At that moment, she found his eyes—so full of soul, so full of hunger. The intensity of the connection between them was palpable, as if time itself had stopped. And then, without a word, Beckett gently leaned in and kissed her.

Beckett’s lips moved hungrily against Laura’s, as if to seal their newfound understanding. His kiss was powerful and overwhelming; her entire being melting into him as their mouths danced together in a passionate exchange.

She felt herself surrendering to his touch, letting the moment take her away to a place of unimaginable pleasure. Her buttocks still tingled with the memory of pain, but the lust she felt was unstitching that pain, reforming it into something

new. She savored every second of his embrace, allowing herself to fully open up to the love she felt growing inside her. It was as if, in that moment, all her reservations melted away and she could just be free.

Beckett suddenly pulled away from her, leaving Laura feeling both relieved and empty at the same time. He smiled down at her with an intensity that made her heart flutter.

Without saying a word, Beckett cradled Laura in his arms and lifted her off the rock onto her feet. He tilted his head towards hers before softly pressing his forehead against hers and whispering quietly: “You can let go now.” When they finally broke apart, Laura was panting, her body still trembling from the intensity of their connection.

“Come on,” Beckett said softly, his voice tinged with warmth and affection. “Let’s get you wrapped up warm, have some hot chocolate, and start climbing.”

Chapter 7

Beckett

From up here on the mountain, the world below looked tiny. Trees, houses, cars—they were so small they were almost meaningless.

It made you feel outside yourself, like an observer in your own life. Beckett was a tiny speck on this mountain, too, observed by nature. Lost in it. The sky was blue, the world was white. His heart was huge, his babygirl was everything.

“Whatcha lookin at, Daddy?”

“Life,” Beckett said, grinning. He’d never get tired of her calling him that. “Sorry I stopped. I got distracted.”

“S’okay,” his Little said, “I forgive you, Daddy.”

The past three days had been heavenly. Sure, they’d been grueling, especially with the extensive foraging he’d had to do to ensure they had enough food. But everything else had been perfect.

It was hard to believe that it had only been three days since he’d spanked her over that boulder. The boulder he’d never forget.

Laura took the lead for a moment, hoisting herself over a rock, grunting with the effort.

“Nice job,” Beckett called out from below, his voice echoing off the surrounding rocks. Laura glanced back at him, her eyes alight with a self-assured determination.

“Thank you, Daddy,” she replied breathlessly, reaching out a hand to help him up. Beckett smiled. He’d come to understand that it wasn’t just about submission; it was also a term of endearment and trust. Trust he’d earned and would continue to earn through their shared journey.

Laura hadn’t broken the rules since the fateful boulder incident, but they’d done plenty of other ageplay experiments.

Beckett found himself drawn into Laura’s Little space often. They didn’t have many toys, but in his spare moments, Beckett had taken to carving dolls from wood, each one a representation of a different aspect of their adventure. And even though roleplaying wasn’t something he typically engaged in, seeing the joy on Laura’s face made it all worthwhile.

Later that evening, after they’d pitched their tent and made a fire, Laura held up a doll Beckett had carved.

“Look, Daddy!” she squealed one evening, holding up one of the wooden dolls Beckett had carved for her. “This one’s a mountain explorer, just like us!”

Beckett chuckled, taking the doll from her hands and examining it closely. “He is, isn’t he? And I bet he’s just as fearless as you’ve become.” He marveled at how this simple act of play had helped him get to know Laura in ways he never thought possible.

“Really?” Her eyes widened, and Beckett could see the genuine surprise in them. “You think I’m fearless?”

“Absolutely,” he reassured, his voice soft but firm. “You’ve faced your fears head-on and conquered them. You should be proud of yourself.”

Her face lit up with happiness, and she reached for another doll.

“This one’s Dr. Willow,” she said. “She’s a special tree expert.”

Beckett lifted up Albert, who was never far away.

“Hello, Dr. Willow,” he said, as Albert. “I’m Albert the Fearless! Conqueror of mountains and creator of rustic pancakes without compare!”

“Oh Albert,” said Dr. Willow with a chuckle, “you’re so impressive.”

“I certainly am,” said Albert. “Thank you for noticing, Dr. Willow. I see you have excellent observational skills.”

Laura’s eyes sparkled as they exchanged banter, pretending that Albert and Dr. Willow were exploring the mountain together. But as the game went on, Beckett noticed a subtle shift in Laura’s demeanor. Her laughter grew quieter, her movements more hesitant, and he could see the worry creeping into her eyes.

“Albert,” Laura murmured, her voice taking on a somber tone, “I’ve got a confession to make.”

“You can tell me anything,” Beckett replied again as Albert. “You don’t need to worry.”

“But I am worried. We’ve been searching for days now, getting higher and higher up this mountain. And we haven’t

seen a single birch tree.”

Beckett’s heart clenched at her words, understanding the weight of her fear. He knew firsthand how much finding those trees meant to her, and he wanted nothing more than to reassure her.

“I’m scared we won’t find any eastern river birch trees above the tree line,” she continued, Dr. Willow trembling in her hand. “What if they’re more endangered than we thought?”

“Hey now,” he said gently, guiding Albert closer to the wooden doll. “We still have a few days left to search, and we’ve already come so far. We can’t give up hope just yet.”

As he spoke, Beckett watched Laura carefully, searching for any signs that his words had helped ease her anxiety. The firelight flickered across her face, highlighting the vulnerability in her eyes and making him ache to hold her close.

“Besides,” he continued, his voice soft but firm, “you know as well as I do that this mountain is full of surprises. Who’s to say we won’t find those trees when we least expect it?”

Laura hesitated for a moment, her gaze flitting between Albert and Dr. Willow as if weighing their chances. Then, finally, she seemed to find a measure of comfort in his words.

“Maybe you’re right,” she whispered, her fingers tightening around the wooden doll. “We’ve come so far. We can’t give up now.”

Her fingers found his. He squeezed her tight.

As Beckett lay next to Laura in their sleeping bag that night, his mind churned with worry. The thought of not being able to find the western river birch plagued him. He knew it would crush Laura if they didn't find it, and he couldn't bear the idea of her feeling defeated.

As he gazed at the stars through a gap in the tent flaps, tracing constellations with his eyes, an idea slowly began to form. He let it take shape, hoping that Laura would be open to it. His fingers brushed against the rough fabric of the sleeping bag, grounding him in the reality of their situation.

"Morning, sunshine," Beckett said cheerfully the next day, flipping a fish over the campfire. Laura grimaced, clearly not sharing his enthusiasm for their breakfast.

"Fish again?" she groaned, rubbing sleep from her eyes. "I'm going to start growing fins soon."

"Protein is important," Beckett reminded her with a wink. "Plus, it's about the most reliable thing I can source for us up here." Then, taking a deep breath, he decided it was time to share his idea. "Listen, I've been thinking about the Western river birch and our chances of finding it."

She looked instantly worried. "I thought you said we weren't giving up?"

"We're not. I've had an idea."

"What do you have in mind?"

"Water," Beckett stated simply. "If there *are* any birch trees up here, they'd likely be around a body of water. And I

know just the place to look—Thunderhead Hollow. It's an unusual spot on the northern slope where the creek is widest."

"Thunderhead Hollow. Sounds... fine. Not scary at all."

Beckett laughed. "It's true, there do seem to be more storms than average in the hollow."

"Sounds dangerous," Laura murmured, her fingers playing with the frayed edges of her blanket.

"There are no storms forecast for the next few days." Beckett locked eyes with hers, trying to convey his determination. "Sometimes, if you want to bag the big prize, you've got to take a risk."

Laura hesitated, her eyes darting between Beckett and the fish sizzling over the fire.

"All right," she finally agreed, her voice wavering but resolute. "Let's do it."

"Great. Now, eat up." He held up their breakfast. Laura gave him a smile, yet he could see she was still nervous. He knew he was going to have to take the lead on this. It kind of made him feel good. Helping someone else feel confident made him feel better about himself.

The trail to Thunderhead Hollow was not easy. Aside from the fact that it was the steepest ascent they'd made so far, it was also riddled with loose rocks and boulders that made footing treacherous. But Beckett kept his spirits high, pushing them both forward with his infectious enthusiasm.

"Look at this view!" he exclaimed, gesturing out to the rolling hills and sheer rock faces that stretched out before

them. “Can you imagine what kind of beauty we’ll find at the top?”

Laura nodded, her face set in determination, but Beckett could see the fatigue starting to wear on her. He knew he had to keep her motivated if they were going to make it to Thunderhead Hollow before nightfall.

“You know what would make this climb easier?” he said with a grin, pulling out one of his wooden dolls. “A little company.”

Laura glanced down at the doll, a hint of curiosity in her eyes. “Who’s that?”

“This is Huxley,” Beckett said, holding up the doll. “He’s something of a mountain goat, and he’s been all over these hills. He knows the best paths and the best views.”

Laura’s face lit up with a smile as she took Huxley from Beckett’s hand. “Well, hello there Huxley,” she said in a cutesy voice, “we could definitely use your help on this climb.”

Beckett grinned and was about to use a goaty voice to say something silly when a sound stopped the two of them in their tracks. It was distant, but unmistakable.

A rolling growl of thunder, so deep and harsh it sounded like two mountains grinding against one another.

“W-was that—?”

“Laura, sweetheart, we need to set up the tent. Now!”

“I thought you said there were no storms?”

“It’s going to be okay. I promise.”

She nodded, worry lining her features. Then, the snow started.

As they scrambled to assemble the tent, Beckett couldn't help but marvel at the surreal beauty of the ethereal white flakes illuminated by lightning. He'd never seen anything like it. In the distance, they heard a crash and watched as another jagged bolt of electricity seared across the sky.

Laura jumped with fear, and Beckett stroked her forehead.

"It's going to be alright, sweetheart. Daddy's here. We're together."

She nodded, burying her face into his shirt. Through a tiny gap in the tent fabric, he could see the snow starting to fall faster and faster, until the air became thick with it, obscuring his vision altogether. The thunder boomed louder and closer, shaking the ground beneath them.

Beckett held Laura close as they huddled inside their tent, trying to take shelter from the howling wind and blinding snow outside. He felt her trembling body pressed against him and could only pray that this storm would pass soon so they could make it out unscathed.

"Daddy," she said, "I'm so scared."

Just then, Beckett had an idea. "Sweetheart," he said, his heart pounding in his chest, "I'm going to do something to take your mind off things. Do you trust me?"

"I do."

"Then just let go, and let Daddy help you."

He gently laid her down on the sleeping bag, and slowly pulled down her pants, then he unzipped her top.

She was so beautiful, her soft body trembling with each shake of thunder. Her curves were soft and gentle, gliding from her hips to her waist to her full breasts. She was adorned with freckled skin and fiery red hair that cascaded over her shoulders in waves of silky perfection. There was nothing he wanted more than to claim her, to push his cock deep into her, making her his. But now wasn't the time. Now she needed to know that this was all about her, all about taking away her fear and replacing it with pleasure.

He could feel her tension as his lips brushed against her skin, starting at her thighs, and moving upward. She let out a soft moan of pleasure as he kissed his way up her stomach, then slowly reached the base of her neck where she was most sensitive.

“Daddy,” she whispered, as thunder sounded somewhere in the distance.

He bit her ear, gently tugging the lobe, before kissing her full on the lips. As he did so, he pressed his fingers against her pussy, making her gasp as he felt her wetness.

“You're going to come with more force than this thunder,” he growled.

She bit her lip, and he made his way down her body, kissing her breast, her hip, her stomach, until finally he slipped his tongue between her pussy lips. She gasped at the sudden sensation and Beckett eagerly licked and sucked, exploring every inch of her soft flesh with his tongue.

She tasted so good. Fresh and salty. And hot. Like a woman on fire. He felt Laura's body become more tense as she moaned in pleasure beneath him. The storm outside seemed to be forgotten as he kept up his gentle, passionate assault on her sensitive core.

He felt her quiver as she reached the edge of orgasm, and he increased his speed, wanting to give her the pleasure she deserved.

She cried out in ecstasy as her whole body shuddered with the force of it. Her eyes rolled back. Her muscles jerked and spasmed and told him by their movements just how far over the edge she had fallen.

Beckett smiled in satisfaction.

You can't really tell when a thunderstorm is over. There's always a chance of another lightning strike. But there was no doubt that Laura was finished. She sighed deeply, then curled up into Beckett and held him tight.

"You. Are. The. Best." she said, kissing his cheek.

"Honey," he whispered, "you ain't seen nothing yet."

Chapter 8

Laura

They'd survived. At first, Laura had been convinced that they were going to be struck by lightning or trapped in a snowdrift.

But it hadn't happened.

Instead, Beckett had expertly, ruthlessly guided her to the most intense orgasm of her life. Then promised her she hadn't seen anything yet.

Not bad.

This morning, the world seemed different. Laura's eyelids fluttered open, and she inhaled the crisp mountain air, tinged with the scent of damp earth and pine.

She glanced over at Beckett, still asleep, his chest rising and falling in a steady rhythm. He had held her tight throughout the night, whispering stories of adventure and love, lulling her to sleep with his low, growly, voice. She hoped he wasn't too tired from staying awake to comfort her.

There was something in the air. Something special.

Get up, Laura. It's time to move.

With care not to disturb Beckett, Laura wriggled out of the sleeping bag and stepped outside. The storm had passed, leaving the world blanketed in thick, pristine snow. It was as if the mountain had been touched by magic. The nearby creek flowed on, defiant against the surrounding freeze.

Laura's eyes wandered around the scene. She hadn't had the chance to look around too much last night. The snow had been too thick.

There were pines, ferns, boulders covered with snow. And there, right next to the riverbank, was a tree.

A thrill coursed through her, electrifying every nerve in her body. Heart pounding, she stumbled towards the tree, nearly tripping over a rock hidden beneath the snow.

The tree's sturdy frame boasted a height that rivaled the nearby Douglas firs, hinting at a longevity bestowed by countless seasons.

Its bark was a symphony of shades, a palette of color that had evolved with the tree's age. It started with hues of silver-gray on the younger limbs, transitioning to salmon-pink in adolescence. As maturity set in, the bark became a glorious patchwork of creamy white and chalky charcoal. The bark peeled in paper-thin layers, peepholes revealing glimpses of its past selves, like the ancient scripts of a living parchment.

There was no doubt. It was a western river birch.

"Finally," she breathed, her fingers tracing the grooves of the bark, memorizing every detail. In a moment of pure abandon, she threw her arms around the trunk, hugging it close, feeling its strength and resilience course through her like a lifeline. This was what she had been searching for, what

she had risked everything for—the chance to make a major discovery.

“Are there more?” she wondered aloud, her eyes scanning the area. To her delight, she saw several other western river birches dotting the landscape, creating a small grove of their own. A triumphant smile spread across her face.

“Thank you,” she whispered to the tree, her breath visible in the crisp air.

As Laura scribbled down notes on the tree’s bark, she marveled at the way the sunlight caught the intricate patterns on its surface. Her fingers traced the delicate veins of a leaf, feeling its silky texture. The branches overhead swayed gently in the breeze, casting dappled shadows below. She was so engrossed in her observations that she barely registered the sound of footsteps crunching in the snow.

“Here,” Beckett said softly, offering her a steaming cup of coffee. Laura looked up, blinking in surprise. He had built a fire nearby, the flames crackling merrily as they licked the cold air. She hadn’t even noticed him approaching.

“Thank you,” she murmured, accepting the cup and allowing its warmth to seep into her chilled hands. She felt a flush of embarrassment at her earlier preoccupation. “I’m sorry I got so wrapped up in this.”

Beckett chuckled, leaning in to press a tender kiss to her lips. “Don’t be silly, babygirl. I know how important this is for you.” His blue eyes sparkled with understanding and affection. “It’s why we’re here.”

“Would you mind if I spent some more time with these trees?” she asked hesitantly, not wanting to alienate him.

“Of course not,” he reassured her. “Just stay safe, okay?” His tone was gentle but firm. “Whistle if you need me.”

“Promise,” she replied, turning back to the trees with renewed focus. She loved how into safety Beckett was.

Laura quickly set to work. She brought out her motion-sensitive wildlife camera and mounted it on a nearby tree, adjusting the settings so that it would alert her to any activity in the area. Then she put several sensor chips around the base of the trees. With these in place, she could monitor any animal activity in the immediate vicinity—who was using this grove as their habitat, and when they were coming and going.

As she worked, she couldn't help but steal glances at Beckett, who was practicing his climbing on a vertical rock surface nearby.

His topless torso glistened with sweat, and the sun highlighted every ridge and curve of his well-defined muscles. He had broad shoulders, bulging biceps, and a chiseled chest that tapered down to a narrow waist. He moved with confidence and power, each movement showcasing his strength and agility.

“God, he's gorgeous,” Laura couldn't help but think, feeling a tingle of desire course through her body. She bit her lip, considering how to channel this newfound energy. A mischievous smile crossed her face as she recalled the list of rules she and Beckett had written together. “Safety first” was the number one rule, but maybe it was time for bratty Laura to make a comeback.

“It’s not technically bad girl behavior,” she whispered to herself as she climbed a little way up a nearby fir tree. “It’s playful disobedience.”

Standing on a sturdy-looking branch, she cleared her throat and then whistled for attention. “Daddy! Daddy? I’m stuck up a tree! Help me!”

Beckett looked over at her, his eyes widening with concern before he jumped down from the rock he’d been scaling. “Laura, I told you to stay safe.”

“Being safe is boring!” Laura pouted, looking down at him with an innocent expression. She took her arms off the tree and crossed them. And that’s when it happened.

Laura felt her foot slip from the branch she was standing on, sending her tumbling toward the ground. With a gasp, she threw out her arms and closed her eyes tightly.

But before she could hit the ground, two strong arms encircled her body and eased her down to safety. She opened her eyes to find Beckett holding her close, anger etched into his handsome face as he gazed down at her.

“Safety isn’t a game, Laura,” he said, his voice resolute. Then he paused, sighed deeply. “You want to know how my watch got this scratch?”

Laura bit her lip and nodded.

“This was my dad’s. Used to wear this whenever we went climbing. He was the greatest. Always patient, always kind. And I... well, I was kind of a brat. Always pushing my luck. Always doing my darndest to get myself killed.”

“Sounds fun.”

“Maybe it was. For me.” He pursed his lips. “My dad never used to let me climb without a harness. So of course, that’s all I ever wanted to do. He took me out one day, to Pine Peak. We were climbing Frostbite Ridge, the highest point of the mountain, just below the summit. Anyway. I didn’t attach my rope. I fell. My dad caught me just the way I caught you. But... I’m heavy. My dad’s arm smashed against a rock. Got the scratch on his watch, and it broke his arm.”

Laura gasped.

“We couldn’t go up or down. We were trapped up there for a week. No food. No hope of rescue. My dad couldn’t move. Luckily, in the end, we made it down. But we nearly died. He gave me the watch when we got to safety. So, I’d never forget.”

Beckett sighed as he put Laura down. As her feet touched the ground, he furrowed his brow.

“I won’t do that again, Daddy,” she said.

“Good.”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know.”

“Well, now you do.” He put his hands on his hips. “Still, I figure a bit of correction is in order, don’t you?”

“C-correction?”

Beckett’s eyes scanned the area, landing on a slender birch branch lying on the ground. He picked it up, testing its flexibility between his hands. “Since you want to act like a brat, maybe this will help teach you a lesson,” he said, his tone firm yet caring.

Laura swallowed hard, her stomach fluttering with a mix of nerves and anticipation. She had never experienced the

sting of a birch rod before, but the thought of submitting to Beckett's discipline intrigued her. Trusting him completely, she nodded in agreement.

Beckett took a small knife from the belt at his waist, and carefully removed the rough bark from the rod until it was perfectly smooth. As Laura watched, she couldn't help but feel anticipation threatening to overwhelm her.

"Alright, babygirl. Bend over that fallen log." Beckett's voice was resolute, leaving no room for argument. Laura obeyed, draping herself over the log and gripping its rough bark.

"Pants and panties down, please."

Laura did as she was asked.

"Remember our safeword, okay?" Beckett reminded her gently, and she whispered her affirmation. "This might feel a little intense."

As the first stroke of the birch rod connected with the back of her legs, Laura winced, feeling the sharp sting spread across her skin. Beckett didn't hold back, each strike delivered with enough force to leave a mark—a reminder of their shared experience. Yet, as the pain subsided, a wave of pleasure replaced it, and Laura found herself craving more.

"Please, Daddy... more," she gasped, her body tingling with desire.

"Such a good girl, taking your punishment," Beckett praised, continuing to spank her buttocks and lower back with the birch rod. The combination of pain and pleasure sent shivers down Laura's spine, her arousal growing with each impact.

Amidst the stinging sensation, Laura's thoughts swirled, reflecting on the depth of trust she had placed in Beckett. In the wilderness, far from the constraints of society, they were free to explore the boundaries of their desires. The marks left by the birch rod would fade, but the connection they shared—the vulnerability and trust—would remain.

He'd confided in her. Told her a painful memory. Something shameful. She would never betray that trust.

"Thank you, Daddy," Laura whispered, her voice trembling with emotion as Beckett delivered the final stroke. She felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this man who challenged her, protected her, and helped her grow in ways she never thought possible.

Laura's breath caught in her throat as the last of the birch rod's strikes faded, leaving her skin ablaze with a mix of pain and pleasure. Her heart raced, feeling exposed and vulnerable under Beckett's watchful gaze. She couldn't deny the intense desire that stirred within her, fueled by the marks he had left on her body.

He'd given her so much, but she needed more.

"Please, Daddy... I need you to... take me," she begged, her voice quivering with passion. The words felt like a surrender, an admission of her yearning for him to claim her completely.

Beckett's stern expression didn't waver, his piercing blue eyes locked onto hers. "It'll be my decision when, and if, that happens, babygirl," he said firmly.

"But Daddy, I want you so badly..." Laura whimpered, the ache between her legs growing with each passing moment.

“Patience, little one,” Beckett admonished, placing a hand on her shoulder. “First, I need to show you who’s in charge here.” His touch sent shivers down her spine.

Laura’s mind raced with anticipation. She knew Beckett wouldn’t hurt her, but the thought of his dominance excited her in ways she had never experienced before. As she waited, her thoughts turned inward, reflecting on the profound transformation that had taken place within her since embarking on this journey.

“Alright, babygirl,” said Beckett, breaking through her reverie. “I want you to get on your knees and keep your hands at your sides. In front of the tree. That seems like the right place.”

Laura obeyed without hesitation, lowering herself to the snowy ground, the cold barely registering amidst her feverish arousal. She watched as Beckett stepped closer, his muscular frame casting a shadow over her.

“Look at me,” he commanded, and Laura’s eyes snapped up to meet his. The intensity in his gaze took her breath away. “Remember that you are mine, and I am the one who decides when you get what you want.”

“Please, Daddy... I’m yours completely,” she whispered, her voice filled with sincerity.

“Good girl,” Beckett praised, his voice softening. “Now, let’s see if you can handle what I have planned for you.” His hand reached out to caress her cheek, leaving behind a lingering warmth that promised more to come.

Chapter 9

Laura

Laura's knees trembled as she settled onto the thick carpet of snow. Her heart raced with anticipation, chest heaving as she tipped back her head and opened her mouth wide.

Come, she thought. Take me.

Beckett slowly stalked toward her. His boots crunched in the snow and his belt jangled with each step.

When he stopped in front of her, Laura's gaze traveled up his muscular legs to the bulge in his pants. Her mouth watered.

Beckett smiled and unbuttoned his fly. The metal clicked until finally, he tugged down his pants to reveal a thick, long, beautiful cock.

It glistened with arousal, beckoning her to touch it. Laura reached out a trembling hand, and slowly ran her fingers along the length of it. Its velvety skin was warm to the touch and so inviting that she couldn't resist pushing her lips against its tip.

A moan escaped Beckett's throat as Laura began to swirl her tongue around its length.

Beckett fisted a hand in her hair and guided her mouth to him. “Suck.” It was one word. The only one she needed to hear.

The velvet steel of his erection slid between her lips, nudging them apart. Laura opened wider, tongue lapping over the head as he pushed inside.

A groan rumbled in Beckett’s chest. “Just like that, baby. Take it all.”

She did as he asked, his shaft moving deeper into her mouth, and her body trembled in pleasure.

He thrust with a slow, steady rhythm as she sucked and licked his length, taking him as deep as she could. Beckett moaned in pleasure, his hips pushing forward to increase the intensity.

Laura felt heat pooling between her legs and her breathing quickened. She clung to the base of Beckett’s shaft as he thrust harder. His movements were becoming more frantic now, and Laura could feel his cock quivering against her tongue.

He pushed deeper, and Laura’s eyes watered. She gagged, but the discomfort only heightened her arousal. She was his, to use as he pleased.

“Christ, your mouth,” Beckett groaned. His grip tightened in her hair, hips bucking. “Not gonna last if you keep that up.”

No, she thought, squirming against the ache in her core. I want to taste you.

“None of that.” Beckett pulled out abruptly, leaving her lips swollen and empty. “I’m not finished with you yet, babygirl.”

Laura whimpered in protest, but Beckett ignored her. He gripped her shoulders and hauled her to her feet, spinning her around to face the tree.

“Bend over.” His voice was rough with need.

Laura obeyed immediately, bracing her hands against the trunk and pushing her ass back in offering. She could feel his eyes playing over her.

“I like the way those red marks look on your buttocks, babygirl.”

“They still sting, Daddy.”

Beckett made a low, approving sound, running his palms over the curve of her body. “So perfect.”

Anticipation coiled tight in Laura’s belly. She spread her legs wider, wordlessly begging for more.

Suddenly, Beckett delivered a sharp smack to her rear that made her gasp. “You want it, don’t you? My cock inside this sweet little pussy.” He thrust two fingers into her depths, emphasizing his point.

Laura moaned, rocking back to take him deeper. “Yes, please. I need you.”

“And you shall have me, greedy girl.” Beckett withdrew his fingers, replacing them a moment later with the thick head of his erection.

Laura cried out at the first slow push inside, her inner walls stretching to accommodate his girth. A burning ache lit her up from the inside, fading into sharp pleasure as Beckett began to move.

“That’s it, babygirl.” He growled against her ear. “Take it for Daddy.”

He started with long, deep strokes, pulling nearly all the way out before slamming back in. He grasped her hips, thrusting harder and faster as he drove her closer to the edge. Laura clung to the tree, nails digging into the bark as she trembled on the brink of a climax.

Just as she was about to crest the wave of pleasure, Beckett changed position, turning her around so he could see her. He kissed her on the lips as he fucked her, his taste a tantalizing mix of desire and lust.

Laura felt like she was spinning out of control.

He gripped her fingers, intertwining them with his own. She felt like they were melting into each other as he pushed farther, deeper inside her.

The pleasure was overwhelming, and she couldn't stop the cries that kept spilling from her lips. Beckett moved his strong hands all over her body, grabbing her flesh as he fucked her relentlessly.

“Come for me,” he gritted out, circling her clit with his fingers. “Now.”

Of course, she obeyed.

The dual sensations rocketed Laura over the edge with a wail. Her inner walls clamped down on Beckett's cock, pulsing in time with her release.

With a roar, Beckett followed her into ecstasy. Laura felt the hot flood of his seed inside her, prolonging her orgasm.

They stayed locked together for a long moment, panting harshly. She'd never felt so thoroughly claimed, so deeply satisfied. And by the possessive way Beckett caressed her hip, she suspected this was only the beginning.

Sandwiched between him and the tree she'd finally found, she looked at the serenity of the scene around them. She'd found him, and she'd found this place. She knew, deep down, that life would never be the same again.

“Babygirl,” Beckett growled. “I want to do that again. And again. Tens of times, hundreds of times. Fucking millions of times.”

“Practice makes perfect,” Laura said, smiling. But in truth, things were already perfect. When you find the right person, you don't need to practice at all.

The End

There's more!

Thanks so much for reading! If you enjoyed Laura and Beckett's story, make sure to read the series, Daddies of Pine Peak right here: <https://geni.us/ddJ9>.

Catch up with Laura and Beckett a few years down the line. Their Happy Ever After is a little more complicated than they might have hoped...

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I write cute, HOT age play romances. My books are full of heat, heart, and VERY satisfying happy ever afters. Oh, and I like cats, chocolate, forest walks. And a little kink on the side, obviously! OK, a LOT of kink...

Matilda And The
Firefighters by Emily
Tilton

A MFM story by Emily Tilton

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Chapter 1

Matilda

The van carrying me from the justice facility to my “new life” made the turn into a small parking area next to a building with two prominent, very large garage doors painted with diagonal red stripes. Over those doors I saw the words *SELECTA SAFETY SERVICES, UNIT 6521*.

The regular door next to the garage doors opened and two men, dressed in jeans and white t-shirts, walked out to meet the van as the driver brought it to a stop.

They weren't actually twins: when they got close enough to the side door that the guard had just opened I saw that their faces didn't really look all that similar. The one on the left had high cheekbones and a narrow chin while the one on the right had a squarer kind of face. Left enormous man had blue eyes. Right enormous man had brown eyes.

I couldn't have told anyone, though, even with a gun to my head, which of them was more handsome. Or more muscular, or taller, or had his dark brown beard more neatly trimmed.

Or made my tummy flip over more urgently.

“I’m Daddy John,” said the one on the right — brown eyes and square jaw — looking into my eyes as he spoke the words in a deep, deep voice.

I saw him shift his attention from me to the other guy. The other Daddy.

“I’m Daddy Eric,” said cheekbones, his voice higher in pitch but no less assured and attractive. “You must be Matilda.”

To my annoyance, the guard answered for me.

“Yup. This is your fuck toy, guys, name of Matilda, if you think she needs a name.”

Hot shame flooded my body as Daddy Eric chuckled, clearly appreciating the oh-so-witty joke.

Is it a joke, though? my brain demanded. Why do they need to know your name? They could just say, “Girl, suck my cock,” or, “Girl, bend over and spread your butt cheeks.”

My eyes went from Eric’s amused face to John’s more serious one.

“It’s nice to meet you, Matilda,” he said. I swallowed hard, my emotions seeming to sway violently back and forth between hope and shame, bitter resentment and nervous excitement. Despite my attempt to keep them on his face, my eyes went down to his broad chest, his huge biceps, before returning upward to see that the almost-kind expression John had worn a moment before had gone stern and hard. “But it’s important to say that this guy is correct.”

My lips parted and I felt my face flash even hotter. John’s brown eyes seemed to bore into me, as if he could notice every tiny aspect of my physical and even my mental reaction to the sight of my new “Daddies.” He continued on with the same

gravity, looking intently at my face and gauging the effect of each word.

“You’re here to serve as a sexual relief device for us. Our teammates on the night shift, Daddy Paul and Daddy Ned, have their own SRD — she arrived last week. You’ll do some minor clerical work when we’re not using you. It’s relief and pleasure for us, but it’s a punishment for you, even if we do make you feel good sometimes with our cocks or with a toy, as a reward or just because we can’t help how much you need good, hard fucking. Your name doesn’t matter. We may call you other things, sometimes, and you’ll answer and obey. If you don’t, you’ll be punished in a much less pleasant way than all the fucking we’re going to give you.”

My swallow this time felt almost painful. Daddy John didn’t say what those other things might be, but I could hear them in my head anyway: *little whore... filthy cum-slut... even naughty girl...* they all had a terrible effect on me as I imagined these huge, strong men summoning me to serve them, and then instructing me in my shameful duties, with such degrading words..

“Sheesh, John,” I heard Eric say, and I turned to the blue-eyed man. “Coming in hot, aren’t you? I thought I was the one with the mean streak.”

My eyes went back to John. His gaze had darkened a little with evident, if slight, displeasure.

“Let’s talk about it inside.” He turned to the guard. “Thanks for bringing her.”

I realized I had started to breathe so fast I had made myself a little dizzy. Daddy John returned his attention to me.

“Come here, Matilda,” he said, simply.

I shook my head, cowering back into the seat. I didn't know exactly why the panic had risen inside me to take hold of my whole consciousness, but something in the perfectly cool way this enormous man loomed over me... together with his apparent lack of concern in telling me I represented nothing but a fuck toy to him... plus the idea that I had *two* daddies, all of whom clearly intended to use me like a rag doll... the various emotional and bodily reactions it all evoked seem to amount to simple, frightened refusal.

“Eric,” he said. “Go ahead and unbuckle her seat belt, will you? I'll bring her inside.”

There didn't seem to be any actual gap in time between Daddy John's words and Daddy Eric's hands reaching into the van. My own hands reacted as if they had wills of their own: I didn't specifically *want* to try to slap Daddy Eric's huge hands away, because I already had a strong inkling what kind of consequences lay in store in this terrible new world.

My hands did it anyway. I slapped at the strong hands, and then I covered up the seat belt buckle in my closed fists, my eyes darting from Eric to John.

“Do you...” the guard started to ask, obviously about to offer help.

John's response to my resistance, though, interrupted him. He reached in and grabbed my wrists and pulled my hands off the buckle, so that Eric could unfasten it.

“Looks like you've earned your first paddling, Matilda,” he said in a voice that terrified me with its sheer matter-of-factness.

Daddy John carried me into the firehouse, over his left shoulder. I struggled, even tried to bite his back through his t-

shirt. I pounded at him with my fists, joined uncomfortably together by the plastic cuffs: it felt like punching solid rock. I kicked my feet but only felt the strength of his enormous hand, keeping my knees in place against his impossibly firm pecs.

The worst part, though, was his other hand, just as strong and just as big, on my ass, holding me atop his shoulder. He hadn't said anything when he had pulled me out of the van, and he didn't speak as he crossed the short distance to the door, carrying me like a sack of potatoes. So I didn't know if he meant his firm, almost painful grip on my bottom to serve as a reminder of the spanking he had promised. To my panicked mind, though, it seemed like this huge fireman wanted to be sure I knew that my backside would soon pay the price of my failure to obey him without hesitation.

“Stop!” I yelled, still trying to flail my way out of Daddy John's grip. “Put me down, you fucking asshole!”

“That's more paddling,” said Eric, who walked behind us, looking at me as he spoke with laughter suffusing his voice. “Your daddies aren't going to tolerate bad language from you, Matilda. We're going to turn you into a well-behaved little girl just as much as an obedient fuck toy.”

Daddy Eric's expression as he delivered this terribly confusing, horribly degrading news, came in a close second in the competition for worst part. He wore a little smile, just the left side of his mouth curling up as he looked at me. To my dismay, I felt like I knew precisely what the smile meant: he couldn't wait to watch me receive my first punishment. He liked to see girls get paddled.

Feeling my own face twist in distress, I lowered my eyes to look at the ground, trying to focus on the sound of the van driving away. Leaving me here with these... these...

Daddies. Two of them. No, four of them. I guessed that the other two must be sleeping, since firefighters had to work in shifts, didn't they?

Daddy John paused in front of the door.

"You ready to stop struggling?" he asked. "I don't want you to hurt yourself on the door."

"What the..." I stopped myself before I said *fuck*. I hated that Eric's promise of more paddling had had an effect on me. "Why do you care?" I asked instead, using most of my remaining strength to attempt escape again. All I got for the effort was Daddy John's hand squeezing my ass even harder — so hard that I yelped and, with a flash of heat to my face, felt an utterly unwelcome clench between my thighs.

What are they doing to me? How did they drive me crazy like this?

My body — its sensations, its cravings, its *needs* — didn't seem to belong to me anymore.

Daddy John had clearly felt the strength go out of me. He stepped through the door, and I found myself in a nondescript office with two desks, two chairs, and a calendar on the wall. John kept moving, towards the door at the other end.

"This is the office," Eric told me. "Paperwork, you know? You'll do your work here when we're not fucking you."

I made the mistake of turning my eyes to his handsome face again, the same arrogant little smile telling me that not only did he like seeing girls get spanked, but he especially liked it when he knew the girl couldn't help getting wet when her Daddy squeezed her ass like he was juicing an orange. When he knew that she couldn't stop thinking about what it

would feel like when her Daddies drove their huge cocks into her little body.

Daddy John carried me through the second door, into a surprisingly cozy living area. Two couches and an arm chair. A big TV. A breakfast counter dividing the living room from the kitchen. Movie posters — all from action thrillers and sci fi blockbusters — covered the walls. I caught a delicious whiff of meat sauce coming from a big pot on the stove.

“Where’s the paddle they sent?” Daddy John asked Eric, turning around and taking me with him in a lurching spin as he looked first to one side of the room and then the other. “I’m going to do this over my knee.”

That made me kick out, just at the horrifying idea of being punished that way, like a little girl.

That’s the point, said some deep, dark impulse. *You know that’s the point. Haven’t you figured it out yet?*

“I’ll get it,” Eric replied. “I think it’s in the office.” I watched him go back through the door.

“I’m going to put you down, Matilda,” said Daddy John. No sooner had he said it, it felt like, than he had tossed me onto the couch, on my back. He loomed over me like a sequoia, looking down.

“It’s time to take your clothes off,” he said, raising his eyebrows as if he felt a keen interest in how I would react to the matter-of-fact declaration. “Are you going to take them off yourself, or do we need to do it for you?”

I felt my forehead crease hard as I gazed up into his dark eyes. His beard — the way it framed his handsome face — took away my reason for a moment.

“Let’s do it ourselves,” Eric said from the doorway of the office.

I turned to look at him, and I saw that he had a pink paddle in his hand. It seemed made of leather, and its face looked about as big as a paperback book.

“Wait!” I said, my heart rate shooting up. “Can’t I... can’t I just...”

“No,” Daddy John replied, shaking his head. “It’s an important part of your program that you’ll be naked for us until we let you wear clothes again.”

“What?!” I gasped, genuinely not comprehending. “What the...” I stopped myself again, and again I felt the roiling inner conflict between my bad girl smarts and the crazy good girl impulses it felt like the justice facility people had somehow injected into me without using a needle. They had mentioned some “sensor” thing, that had gone between my legs... maybe that had done it? I bit my lip, thinking about it, down there, and my face filled with heat again. These assholes — these huge, handsome assholes — didn’t have access to that data, did they?

John kept looking down at me, his face stern but to my surprise also seemingly very patient.

“What...,” I tried again. “What *program*?”

Eric answered me.

“What program, *Daddy*,” he said. “Let’s get this started on the right foot.”

He had come over from the doorway to the office to stand next to John, gazing down at me. His face didn’t seem patient. Instinctively, I raised my joined hands as if to defend myself, shielding my chest, then lowered them again to press them

against my lap as I saw somehow in his eyes that my breasts represented only a minor concern for him at the moment: I swallowed hard and looked down involuntarily to the front of Eric's jeans. My heart jumped at the bulge I saw there.

"Daddy Eric's right," John said. "You'll call us *Daddy*. That's an important part of the program too."

I couldn't help it: my eyes went to the front of Daddy John's jeans too, and I felt my brow furrow at the sight of distended denim, the protrusion at least as big as Daddy Eric's. I looked up again with wide eyes as I realized Daddy John apparently didn't mean to say anything more about the program. I found his face a little less patient, his gaze narrower, as if he meant to see how I responded to a challenge he had given.

My heart pounding, I tried to figure out how he wanted me to respond. Even with the apparent tolerance he felt for my alarm, and the sheer impossibility of my situation, I could see in Daddy John's face that any failure to comply would earn terrible punishment.

I felt my eyes widen as I figured it out. I pursed my lips, breathing through my nose. I couldn't do it, could I? Did I really have to say it? The word — clearly, I seemed to have begun to find out — that had to represent the most important, as well as the most troubling, part of the "program"?

Daddy John lowered his chin. His eyes got a little narrower. My tummy flipped over. If I didn't... My eyes went to the horrible thing in Daddy Eric's hand. I had never been spanked in my life, and now I had already earned extra. I couldn't bear it... I couldn't bear to know I would have even *more*.

I looked up at Daddy John.

“What program, Daddy?” I whispered.

He rewarded me with a smile. Not a big one, but a very different one from the suggestive smile Eric had given me as John had carried me into the firehouse. Daddy John’s smile said that he at least believed in fairness, even to a girl who had made mistakes. It made me a little uneasy, at the same time as I couldn’t help feeling a little glow of something like pride in my chest. My smarts said, *You don’t want to get used to that.*

“To bring you here as an SRD,” John said, “we had to promise to follow the guidelines for your rehabilitation program.”

I bit my lip as I remembered what SRD stood for. *Sexual Relief Device*. Not a person — a device. *SRD*: a cute, bureaucratic way to say, quite literally, *fuck toy*.

“That means,” Eric contributed, “you call us *Daddy*. You don’t get clothes until we decide you’ve earned them. Your pussy stays nice and smooth for us. You do exactly as we say, and you get paddled regularly whether you’ve misbehaved or not.”

My jaw had fallen open, and my breath had started to come in little gasps. Eric’s suggestive smile returned to his face.

“In fact, they have a nice little rule about that. *A bad little girl only gets fucked with a very sore bottom.*”

“What?!” I demanded. “But... what... I mean... I don’t want to.... I... I’m not...”

My mind couldn’t seem to hold onto a single coherent thought. The way my body had responded to Eric’s terrible words... that... that “rule”... the idea of it, the degradation and the dark heat that seemed to rise in me simultaneously as

it unfolded in my mind, feeding off one another... to my horror I understood that the sensor between my thighs hadn't changed me: it only measured what had already existed, hidden deep inside me until I had made the fateful mistake of getting caught by a justice system equipped to detect it, and to make use of it.

“They say,” Daddy John said slowly, as if trying to calm me with the deep, soothing tone of his voice, “that you’ll need time to come to terms with your craving for sexual discipline. We’re going to help. It starts by regressing you to the naughty little girl you are inside, and teaching you to be good through the old-fashioned discipline you never got. Because you’re an adult, though, submissive sex is going to be part of your life from now on, in addition to your sessions with the paddle. And that all starts by getting you out of your clothes.”

Chapter 2

John

I hadn't expected to feel such an urgent connection between Matilda's needs and my own. I had tried ageplay a few times, with submissive girlfriends, and enjoyed it fine. I had known my inclination to dominance in bed, and connected it with my views on traditional gender roles, but not really with my paternal instincts. Matilda, though: something about the way she looked up at me... about how obviously her little girl side shone in her blue eyes, scared but still fundamentally self-willed — naughty even... about how the crimson in her cheeks revealed her inner conflict as she struggled against her own body's irresistible impulses...

I wanted to take care of her, and I knew I could. The fact that taking care of Matilda involved treating her like the naughty little girl she had on the inside, stripping her naked, teaching her the most shameful kinds of lessons, and fucking her senseless, almost seemed like icing on the cake. The icing, however, had certainly made my cock hard as iron in my jeans.

Matilda had definitely seen it, too: her eyes had gone from the front of Eric's jeans to the front of mine, and her face had gone even redder at what she had observed, there. A virgin, as verified by the justice facility, but one very ripe for the plucking — and, the experts assured us, a bad girl who stood to benefit herself as well as society if her daddies trained her well.

“This paddling is going to happen whether you choose to go along with it or not,” I told her, making my voice serious but also as soothing as I could. “It's going to be a lot worse if you don't, though.”

“And,” Eric added, “we won't let you come when we use you, either, unless you've been good.”

Matilda turned to look at him, her eyes wide. The blush in her cheeks had become too vivid red spots that pulsed slightly with her heartbeat. The mixture of arousal, shame, and fear in her expression made my heart go out to her while at the same time my cock gave a little jerk against my thigh.

I had to fight the urge simply to reach down and start tearing the pink scrubs off her. The thought that her program required us to keep her naked much of the time made me wonder, suddenly, if I would be able to get anything done in the firehouse while we had our SRD around.

Matilda's face had twisted into a pout of dismay and indecision. Without even thinking about it, I found my daddy instincts started to kick in.

“Go ahead and get up, honey,” I told her.

She shuddered, her eyes going very wide, at the word *honey*, as if she found the endearment even more alarming than Eric's coarseness. She started to sit up, though, as if

automatically, just as a reflexive response to my gentle command. Then she stopped, the struggle within her clearly getting the way of simple obedience.

“Let’s make this easy,” I said, putting a mixture of sternness and benevolence into my words.

“Come on, Matilda,” Eric said. “You know you need this.”

Matilda

I had almost done as Daddy John told me. Something about his dark eyes seemed hypnotic to me: the steady gaze that went along with his steady words. I had never met a man like that before, one who seemed able to command my body with his voice.

Daddy Eric had a different effect on me. If Daddy John tapped into some hidden good-girl part of me, Daddy Eric brought out the much-less-hidden bad girl side — the side with the smarts. It made no logical sense at all: in fact I knew I was making a huge mistake as soon as I started to push myself back into the corner of the couch with my cuffed hands up in a defensive posture. Daddy Eric’s smile, the expression that seemed to accuse me with every glance of having a filthy mind and the shameful, slutty needs to go with it, made me want to resist him with every shred of my being.

Even if it meant disobeying Daddy John. Even if it meant having to fight my own body’s responses.

“No!” I cried, looking at them as fiercely as I could. “No! You’re full of...” I hesitated, but the smug smile on Daddy

Eric's face made me throw caution to the winds. "... shit," I finished.

I had dared to say the bad word, but I couldn't keep myself from looking at Daddy John as soon as I had uttered it. What I saw in his bearded face made me quail back even further into the couch, until the wooden frame of it dug into my back even through the upholstery and the padding. His expression didn't really have anger in it, but a slight narrowing of his eyes told me that he had registered my naughty word, and he intended to make me sorry for saying it when he had made very clear that bad language would have consequences.

Worse, I felt sure I could detect in Daddy John's eyes that he had also heard me hesitate and then say *shit* anyway: at the thought that I could have stopped myself, but hadn't, I felt my tummy give a lurch. The cause of that bodily response came into my mind a split second later, the very unwelcome idea that I had disobeyed my Daddy on purpose, and proven to him just how badly I needed old-fashioned bare-bottom discipline.

I bit my lip, feeling my brow crease hard. Down below, my body responded even more urgently to the expression on John's face, with its implication of just how severe a paddling he meant to bestow on me, how very little he would take into account that I had never experienced real punishment before.

I froze as I began to understand just how badly I had messed up in refusing to take off my clothes. Daddy John and Daddy Eric did not freeze.

"I'll hold her while you strip her," Daddy John said, very simply, reaching for me with his enormous hands at the same time he spoke.

The couch offered no further room for escape. I pressed my back up against it as hard as I could, and only made the

pain from the frame a little sharper, right before Daddy John's hands seized my shoulders and pulled me towards him. Deftly and without any more force than necessary to ensure my compliance, he raised my arms over my head.

I saw Daddy Eric had a utility knife thing in his hand, and I gave a little cry of fear before I realized that he had the scissors out, and he was reaching them towards my wrists. Daddy John held my arms completely still and I watched the scissors cut through the plastic cuffs. It seemed like a mockery of freedom, because the strong hands on my wrists restrained me just as thoroughly as the plastic had.

Daddy Eric folded the scissors back into the knife, and clipped it to his belt. He didn't move quickly — I felt a flash of hot resentment as I understood he meant to take his time, so that he could fully enjoy the process of stripping me. I looked at Daddy John, who gazed down at me steadily, his eyes unreadable but clearly taking in my every move, my every reaction. The heat of my anger towards Daddy Eric became a different kind of heat as I again got the strong feeling, about my brown-eyed daddy, that he intended to take care of me — alongside the certainty that I wouldn't like how he meant to do it.

As I focused on Daddy John I felt Daddy Eric's hands at the bottom hem of my scrubs shirt. Out of sheer instinct I twisted my upper body as much as I could, but Daddy Eric had no problem, getting the shirt up over my shoulders until it covered my face. To my dismay, he stopped there.

“Look how small they are,” he said. I gave a little whimper of surprise and alarm as I felt him take unexpectedly gentle hold of my left breast. “You like that, John, don't you?”

“I think they’re very pretty,” I heard Daddy John’s deep, deep voice say. “I like your little nipples, especially, Matilda.”

Daddy Eric’s fingers caressed the little mound, barely a b-cup. I swallowed hard, my breathing passing roughly in and out of my nostrils. I felt his fingertips close in, towards the pink, dime-sized areola. I bit my lip hard, trying desperately not to move my hips in the lewd, beseeching way I suddenly wanted to do.

I cried out in discomfort then, though, because Daddy Eric pinched my nipple hard. I bucked against the restraint of Daddy John’s hands, but he held my wrists absolutely still.

“Very sensitive,” his deep voice pronounced, and to my dismay I heard satisfaction in his tone. “We can discipline her that way if we want to.”

The fingers on the poor tiny berry squeezed harder, and I yelped even louder. Daddy Eric relented, and I felt the blood rush back into my nipple, and I couldn’t help making another noise — a terribly ambiguous whimper, much more of arousal than of discomfort.

“That’s it,” I heard Daddy Eric’s lighter voice say. “There’s our little slut.”

I felt his hands return to my scrubs top, and then Daddy John released my wrists for just a moment as the shirt rose over my face and then over my arms. Instantly he had his grip back, my arms still held above my head. Terribly self-conscious, I looked down at my bare chest, at the, yes, very small breasts that it seemed Daddy John found attractive.

“Let’s get the pants off,” Eric said. “I want to see that sweet, shaved pussy.”

I heard Daddy John grunt, and I had a strange, out-of-time and even out-of-body, moment when I felt like I could read his mind. I felt like I knew — absolutely *knew* — that his colleague's degrading treatment of me turned him on, but that he didn't really like it. The grunt had acceptance in it, but also a bit of disapproval mingled in: I could hear it, somehow, as if Daddy John and I had some kind of connection that had arisen just in the last five minutes and yet seemed old, and durable.

Even more distressingly, I could tell, just from the grunt, and the quick glance Daddy John had given Daddy Eric, that Daddy John had every intention of degrading me, humiliating me, and treating me like a sex toy just as the other man did. He would do it very differently, though: not like an overgrown frat boy — a streak Eric definitely seemed to have, one which, to my dismay, I found my pussy responded to in a completely involuntary and unwelcome way. Daddy John would degrade me patiently and calmly and with complete authority: the way a parent must sometimes humiliate a naughty girl to teach her to be ashamed of herself.

The nanosecond of mind-reading and the sense of a connection with my brown-eyed daddy made me feel lightheaded, detached from my body. I looked up at these huge firemen who had made no secret of their lewd intentions for me. As if in slow motion I watched them see me topless for the first time and I saw the lust grow in their eyes to strip me even more, to inspect every intimate part of their new sexual servant.

Daddy John still held my wrists above my head. Daddy Eric had dropped the scrub top on the floor, and he reached for me, his hands going low, towards my midsection. I tried again to twist away, sheer reflex overwhelming any better judgment

I might have had, any rational impulse to try to soften the coming punishment.

The enormous hands on my wrists tightened a little: enough to warn me that I could hurt myself if I struggled too hard. I let out a whimper as Eric's fingers touched the bare skin of my waist, then worked themselves downward into the elastic top of the scrub pants. A split second later he had pulled them to my knees and then, though I tried to kick and keep them there, he took them off completely.

Then Daddy John confirmed what I thought I had understood from his little grunt: that he meant to degrade me just as Daddy Eric did, but in a very different way.

“We'll inspect her before I paddle her. I want to make sure she remembers her first lesson.”

Chapter 3

Matilda

What Daddy John said really didn't differ very much from what Daddy Eric had said a few seconds before, about seeing my *sweet, shaved pussy*. It *felt* very different, though.

Both of them had a dismaying ability to command my body's arousal. I couldn't pretend anymore that the justice facility had injected me with something, or zapped something in my brain. This... this daddy bullshit... wasn't bullshit. Not in the sense of being a lie, anyway.

"Matilda, honey," Daddy John said, "we're going to take a good look at you now, whether you like it or not."

He spoke slowly and patiently. His massive hands relaxed their grip slightly as he explained, as if to assess whether I would try to free myself, given a little bit of wiggle room. I didn't struggle: despite feeling horribly ashamed of my nakedness in front of these enormous, super-handsome firefighters, despite the undoubtedly bright red color of my face, something about Daddy John's voice, his way of handling me, let me think over my options — really, *made* me think them over. I could settle on the only rational option,

given the humiliating situation. I had to obey: I had already gotten myself into terrible trouble, and I would learn the awful consequences. I had no choice, but I could definitely start not making it worse.

I looked up into his dark eyes, pursing my lips tightly. I gave a little nod, feeling tears form at the corners of my eyes.

“Can I trust you to show your daddies what we want to see, honey?” Daddy John asked. “Or do Daddy Eric and I have to take turns holding your legs apart so that we can both inspect you properly?”

I felt my forehead crease hard as I felt him loosen his grasp even further, as if in a gesture of growing trust in me. He lowered my wrists at the same time, and I felt a silly rush of gratitude at how it eased the discomfort in my shoulders.

“But... but *why*?” I whispered.

Daddy John’s eyes narrowed a little, and I felt mine go wide. I swallowed hard.

“Why, Daddy?” I added very quickly.

His lips curled into a smile, his eyes crinkling, and the bit of thankfulness that had risen in my chest a moment before turned into something more.

“Because we want to see,” Daddy Eric said in a hard voice. “And we get to see, and touch, whatever we want, whenever we want.”

My eyes went to his face. I bit my lip at the uncompromising lust in those blue eyes.

Daddy John spoke again, “Daddy Eric is right, honey,” he said. “That’s all you really need to know. But it might help for you to think about how you got here, how if you had learned

respect for authority and shame about breaking the rules you might have stayed out of trouble.”

I felt my blush spread further into my scalp and down my neck.

The strong hands on my wrists tightened again, just a little.

“Answer my question, honey,” Daddy John said. “Can you show your daddies your sweet pussy and your little bottom hole, where we’re going to put our cocks very soon?”

A tiny, moaning whimper emerged from between my tightly closed lips. My hips gave a jerk, my bare ass moving on the fabric upholstery of the couch as I felt my pussy clench at my daddy’s dirty words.

“I...,” I started. I had to swallow down all the saliva that had just gathered in my mouth. My heart raced. “I don’t know?” Then, when I remembered. “Daddy.”

I saw Daddy John glance over at Daddy Eric. The blue-eyed man had an expression of impatience on his face, his mouth slightly twisted to the side and his chin angled down. Daddy John’s brow seemed to set a little bit more firmly, as he turned back to me.

“Daddy’s going to help you get started, Matilda,” he said. “Then we’ll see if you can learn to show us on your own.”

He used his grip on my wrists to lower me down, onto my back. He transferred my left wrist into his left hand, along with my right one, so that he could reach under my left knee and raise it. He hooked my left foot over the back of the couch. His hypnotic power over me seemed to turn me into a rag doll: when he put his hand under my right knee and started to raise it up towards my chest I simply let it happen.

“There we go,” Daddy Eric said, stepping around behind Daddy John so that he stood at the end of the couch, looking down with his eyes fixed low, taking in the lewd sight Daddy John had presented him with.

With every little breath out of my nostrils I emitted a tiny whine. I tried to close my eyes but I couldn't seem to stop taking peeks at Daddy Eric's face as he bent closer and closer to my bare pussy. He had an alarming smile on his face, a look of anticipation that meant beyond any doubt that he couldn't wait to put his hardness in my virgin sheath and my cringing anus, and enjoy himself there, to the full.

“Matilda, sweetheart,” he said, “I'm gonna need you to reach down and open yourself up so I can see inside.”

My whole body shuddered. My eyes darted up to Daddy John's, and I found him gazing down steadily into my face, as if wanting to gather every little detail of my expression. Silently I beseeched him for mercy, and he gave it to me, a bit of it anyway.

“I'll help, honey, at first.”

He moved my hands down, apart, around. Gently he worked my left hand between my upper thigh and the couch, the fabric a little scratchy against the back of my hand. Holding my right knee up with his left hand, he steered my right hand around and under my bottom cheek. He put my fingers where they needed to go, to do the terrible, naughty thing.

My mind seemed to shift gears, as that thought rose to its surface: *the terrible, naughty thing. The kind of thing a good little girl doesn't do, because if she does...*

If she does, her daddy paddles her bare bottom, to teach her to behave herself.

But if it's her daddy who makes her do it...

I swallowed very hard. I had to close my eyes so that I wouldn't see Daddy John looming over me, still holding my right knee up, still helping me present my pussy and my anus for inspection. I let out a wrenching sob as I felt my fingers trembling where he had placed them. I could feel that movement in the nearby places where it made my lower body want to move — to respond in a way that a good little girl *definitely* didn't do: thrusting her hips upward as if begging to have her pussy deflowered.

“Open it,” Daddy Eric said. “Show Daddy where you need it.”

With a humiliating, needy cry I obeyed my daddy. I tugged at the sensitive skin, smooth from the nurse's razor, where only that morning I had still had my grown-up curls. I felt my pussy's warm pink flower spread open. I felt the air wafting where it shouldn't go. I bit my lip and kept my eyes tightly shut as a new wave of heat crested in my face.

“What a pretty pussy,” said Daddy Eric. “So nice and girlish. Let's see what Daddy's finger can do to help teach our little girl obedience.”

That made my eyes fly open, and go straight to my blue-eyed daddy's face as he peered down at my private parts. I couldn't see his hand, but I watched in horrified fascination, conflict raging in my body, as Daddy Eric's eyes followed the finger until it pressed, very gently against my clit. I let out a little whimper, and then a moan as my back arched, helplessly, as my daddy began to rub little circles over the hood of the tingling bud.

“Oh, no,” I whispered. “Please... please, Daddy. Please... don't...”

Daddy Eric raised his eyes to mine. The smile that curled his lips was wicked: I didn't have any other word that might apply. I could see in his expression that he had no intention of stopping, which made the question that had come into my mind — did I mean *don't* or *don't stop* — completely irrelevant. He lowered his eyes again. I felt the finger move downward, between my inner lips, until it found the opening.

“You should probably go get a dishtowel to put under her ass,” Daddy John said, his voice a low growl, as if watching my other daddy fondle me had aroused him a good deal, too. “She's dripping wet.”

Daddy Eric didn't follow Daddy John's suggestion immediately. Instead, I watched him take a deep breath through his nose, his chest swelling distractingly and his nostrils flaring a little with the intake of air. I felt like my forehead would crease so hard it stayed that way as he raised his eyes from my pussy to look straight at me.

“I've never smelled a sweeter, needier pussy,” he said.

I chewed on my lower lip. I took a breath of my own, involuntarily, and the heat flashed into my face as I caught the scent myself: the naughty, musky smell of my own arousal.

Daddy Eric bent his head down, moving his eyes in the same direction.

“Oh, no,” I whispered. “Oh... please...”

I didn't know why the idea seemed so embarrassing, really. Was it because of the way I knew I would cry out, the way my back would arch and my hips would jerk as I felt my daddy taste my pussy, kiss me there where he had made very clear he

meant to put his hardness? Or was it because my upbringing had taught me, despite my bad-girl smarts, to feel ashamed of my private parts... to keep them hidden from masculine eyes, their lewd fragrance away from masculine nostrils... which must go double, at least, for masculine tongues?

Whatever the psychology that made my whole body go as hot with mortification as it did with sexual need, I cried out and I raised my hips, trying to get Daddy Eric to do more than taste, more than kiss me gently there. I looked at the top of his tousled brown hair and I wanted to put my hands on his head and keep him there, make him pleasure me. That bad-girl desire sent a thrill of shame through me even stronger than the last, and suddenly for the first time I thought that perhaps my daddies *should* paddle me.

Bending over me, holding me open with his huge right hand behind my knee, I heard Daddy John make a soft tscking sound with his tongue against his teeth. I whimpered as I felt Daddy Eric's mouth depart from between my legs and watched his head rise again.

"Now you really need to get that dish towel," Daddy John instructed. "Look at that."

I couldn't see, and I didn't want to see... except that I wanted to see. With a sob, I closed my eyes. I heard Daddy Eric stand up and walk in the direction the kitchen lay.

I felt the wetness, then. It trickled down, and out, onto my bottom-cheeks and even onto my fingertips as I obediently held myself open. With a tiny moan, I felt my hips jerk again, and to my horror I found that I couldn't help tugging more firmly with my fingers, opening my pussy up even more wantonly, offering it to my daddies just as they so clearly wanted me to do.

My eyes still squeezed tightly shut, I felt Daddy Eric slide the towel under my backside. Daddy John lifted me a little, so his colleague could get it all the way under my tailbone. I felt another wave of the detachment that I had first sensed in the doctor's office: these enormous men could simply do as they pleased with my body, it felt like. I didn't even have to think about it.

"You hold her knee," Daddy John said. "I want to take a look."

Chapter 4

Matilda

Whatever they please... whatever they want... I felt my lips separate as if the movement had happened to another young woman, a different one, a girl who liked having two tall, muscular daddies. I felt her breathing with my lungs. She liked knowing Daddy John's fingers would soon touch her down there.

Did I — Matilda Jacobs — have any opinion on the matter? It seemed not... and I didn't mind, because I could let the other girl make the decisions, couldn't I?

I felt Daddy Eric's hand replace Daddy John's on the back of my knee. My eyelids seemed to pulse up and down as I fought to keep myself in the darkness, despite the strength of my urge to peek. Something in me, or maybe in the other girl who looked like me, the one who was going to get paddled and fucked by her daddies very soon, needed to see that handsome, bearded face at the moment Daddy John got his first good look between my legs and between my bottom cheeks.

My fingertips clutched convulsively at the sensitive, but not sensitive enough to satisfy, flesh of my ass and my upper

thighs. I felt the hidden flower — *both* hidden flowers, the orchid and the rosebud — open a little with the movement, reminding me of the doctor’s exam room... and reminding me that I *wasn’t* in a medical facility now.

She’s in a firehouse, my mind narrated, about the girl who looked like me, the one who had no choice about her punishment and her defloration. *The men looking at her aren’t medical professionals... they aren’t nerds in white coats.*

Firefighters. Firefighter daddies... huge, with dark beards and enormous hands with strong fingers.

I opened my eyes to look at Daddy John the very same moment he touched me, one finger entering my warm, wet sheath very gently, moving up and down, then around, then in and out.

“So wet,” my daddy murmured, his eyes fixed downward on the naughty thing I couldn’t see: the naughty thing it seemed he liked to do to naughty girls. He had his paternal smile on his lips, so different from Daddy Eric’s wicked grin. I had no idea how it could work this way, but despite the hot-faced embarrassment of having Daddy’s John’s finger inside me his satisfied, benevolent smile brought a warm glow to my chest.

“Oh, God,” I whispered. “Daddy, I...”

Daddy John raised his eyes to look into mine.

“Shh, honey,” he said in a deep, deep murmur that seemed to shake my body in sympathy with the rumble in his chest. “Daddy wants you to teach yourself how to be a good girl for me. When Daddy inspects his little girl’s pretty pussy and her sweet bottom, she should learn to be nice and quiet.”

“Except when a daddy asks a question,” Daddy Eric added. “A little girl should only speak when spoken to, once her daddies take her clothes off. Do you understand, little Matilda?”

I swallowed hard, my eyes traveling upward to where my blue-eyed daddy now leaned over me. His fingers behind my knee, holding me open, rubbed a little on the taut skin there, as if to soothe me and help me absorb the latest degrading detail of my new life. Between my legs, I felt Daddy John’s finger withdraw from the virgin sheath of my pussy and glide slowly downward. I bit my lip over the grunt of mixed arousal and shame that rose in my chest as my hips jerked once again, and worst of all, I felt another, terribly strong clench — not only inside my vagina but even in the pull of my muscles against the pressure of my fingers, where I had to hold myself so degradingly open.

“Answer Daddy Eric, honey,” said Daddy John in that same low murmur. Then, in a different voice — the sort of companionable masculine voice daddies use with other daddies, “Did you see that clench? Our little girl is ready for her paddling, I think. I just want to...”

I cried out. Daddy John had pushed the big finger inside my tiny place. I could feel how slippery he had gotten it with my pussy’s need. The wanton wetness, my own assistance in the violation of my untried bottom hole, made the intrusion into my anus that much more embarrassing.

“Answer Daddy Eric,” he repeated, twisting the finger a little, then moving it in and out. “Do you understand about speaking only when you’re spoken to?”

“Yes, Daddy!” I squeaked. “Oh... oh...”

Could I get away with *oh*? It wasn't really a word, was it? My daddies said nothing, but what Daddy John did next left me in doubt: he pulled his finger out of my ass and said, "Hold her there. We'll start her paddling right here."

Suddenly, even as I started to try to twist away, out of sheer reflex, I felt Daddy Eric's other hand take hold of my left knee, while his right hand tightened its grip. Both of them pulled forcefully, bringing my knees almost to my chest.

"Oh, no," I pleaded. "Wait... wait... you... you said..."

But as I struggled and begged, I watched Daddy John pick up pink leather paddle. I saw him shift his stance so that he stood beside my spread legs, and I saw his left hand come towards me, reaching around my thigh to settle firmly on my belly. Spread wide, his fingers and his palm pressed down, pinning me in place. At the same time, he raised the awful thing to shoulder height.

"You said... you... over..."

My brain — suddenly no longer in much doubt as to the identity of the girl who would now be spanked for the very first time — had fastened for some reason on what Daddy John had said about punishing me over his knee.

"I thought you said you understood," Daddy John said slowly, "about not speaking unless spoken to. Put your hands under mine."

He lifted his left hand from my tummy. My own hands clutched at my backside, my fingers moving inward, trying to defend my ass more thoroughly.

"Eric," said Daddy John. "Little help."

Daddy Eric's hands left my knees and grabbed my wrists.

“No...,” I pleaded weakly, turning my head side to side in denial. “No, please... please... Daddy?”

They ignored me, even when I said the magic word, and the even more magic word... *Please... Daddy...* to my horror, I felt a lurch of need down below where Daddy Eric had just forcibly placed my hands, one on top of the other. *Please, Daddy... Please, Daddy...* it echoed in my mind, each repetition seeming to have the same unwelcome effect on my body, much stronger, it seemed to me, because my daddies had ignored my begging. Intent on teaching me my first lesson in sexual discipline, they simply went about the business of punishing a bad girl.

Daddy John lowered his left hand. He covered my little hands with his enormous grip, and he held them tightly.

So that she can't get in the way of her paddling, said the detached part of my mind. *She mustn't interfere, when her daddies spank her.*

He brought the pink blade down. I shrieked even before it made contact, before the sharp slap rang off the walls of the firehouse living room.

I let out a puff of air as I felt the pressure of the paddle's stroke against my bottom, and I had a moment's confusion — just long enough to think, *Wait... it doesn't hurt?* before it *did* hurt. I bit my lip hard and heard a little whine come out of my nose as I felt the sting take hold, and spread. Then, only an instant after that, I became terribly aware of how close my bare, defenseless pussy lay to the place where the paddle had struck. The warmth spread there, too, to my dismay. I gave a cry, even as I saw Daddy John raise the paddle again.

My body bucked against my daddies' restraining hands: Daddy Eric spreading my legs and Daddy John holding me

down. I felt a millimeter or two of movement, maybe, but, much more urgently, I felt bound, held firmly in place... utterly at the disposal of these enormous men. The paddle began to descend. I let out a whimper that had so much more of need than of pain in it that my face flashed as hot as the sun at the sound.

Then the paddle cracked on my bottom again, and Daddy John raised it even more quickly, and brought it down fast.

“We need to paddle away that wetness, don’t we, honey?” he asked, and I realized that the floating feeling, the feeling of observing another girl, had come back to engulf me. Daddy John’s deep voice seemed to come from lightyears away. “Let’s get you over my knee.”

“Oh, please...” I whispered. Tears had formed in the corners of my eyes. I tried to blink them away. “Please... no...”

But Daddy Eric picked up the girl on the couch as if she weighed nothing, while Daddy John sat down, spreading his massive thighs so that my blue-eyed daddy could flip me over and lower me, putting my bare feet on the wall-to-wall carpet just before he draped me over my brown-eyed daddy’s left leg. My face ended up in the couch cushions.

I moved my arms in some kind of feeble protest, and I tried to kick. Daddy Eric, standing to Daddy John’s left took hold of my wrists and stretched them out in front of me, while Daddy John put his right leg over the backs of my knees.

It all happened in silence, except for my faint pleading, every *Please, Daddy*, seeming to come from somewhere further and further away as even the pounding of my heart didn’t feel like it was occurring in my own chest, but in the other girl’s — the bad girl who knew her daddies would only

give her what she had coming, no matter how cruelly they punished her or how hard they fucked her.

I couldn't stop struggling. It made not the slightest difference, but somehow that seemed to make the refusal more important: I... she... absolutely had to show that she wasn't lying over a man's denim-covered knee by her own choice. Daddy Eric gripped my wrists a little more tightly. Daddy John put his left hand on the small of my back and pressed firmly, pinning me in place. Over my knees, where his terribly solid leg kept me prisoner, and beneath my belly, I could feel just how well-worn my daddy's jeans had gotten over their years of faithful service.

They weren't *much* older than me, I knew. I thought both Daddy John and Daddy Eric must be in their late twenties. Those few years, though: I couldn't help thinking about them, wildly, in the split second I waited, and struggled. They made a big difference. These men had a real, serious job. They had saved lives. They knew things I didn't know, and some of them, it seemed, had everything to do with me. The softness of the denim that covered my new daddy's legs seemed to confirm that he understood what it took to teach a bad girl to behave herself.

My smarts, though... my idea of my independence... my rationality — they reared up against that thought. Sure, "Daddy" John's jeans had gotten well-worn over the course of a few years, and sure he and "Daddy" Eric had a few years on me. That didn't give them the right to do *this*, though. To... to...

To paddle away my wetness. Daddy John's mortifying words rang in my mind.

My strength had almost failed, but I needed to show how thoroughly I rejected their authority over me. A stab of fear, too, about how much paddling would suffice to satisfy my daddies that my pussy had learned its lesson, gave my body's vain movements even more urgency.

They didn't even need to tighten their restraining hands. In fact, Daddy John even let up on the pressure from his right leg, as if to tell me wordlessly that nothing I could do would get in the way of my punishment.

"I'm going to paddle you until I'm satisfied with the color of your bottom and the state of your pussy, honey," he said, very simply, and then he started.

Chapter 5

John

It only took ten or twelve swats before Matilda started screaming. Her struggling continued, though it got weaker and weaker. Desperately she tried to move her bottom atop my thigh, as if some primitive, instinctive part of her mind thought she could somehow get her delicious, quickly reddening, little cheeks away from the paddle.

She couldn't, obviously. Eric and I held her securely, and I kept paddling her sweet ass, doing my best not pay attention to how Matilda's writhing parted her thighs and showed me the glistening pout of her pussy. I didn't feel any need to question how incredibly arousing I found that view, any more than I felt a need to second guess the guidance we had gotten from Selecta on how to train our gorgeous young sexual relief device.

Selecta's research division has verified over many years of study that bad girls like the one assigned to your unit benefit greatly from truly severe corporal punishment, above all when their disciplinary sessions are explicitly linked to their deeply submissive sexuality. Don't hesitate to arouse your SRD before

punishing her, and then dispel that arousal via the discomfort of a strict session with the paddle.

Your bad girl's arousal will return almost immediately upon the cessation of the spanking, and if you use her at that point she will find both consolation and a very important stimulus to her rehabilitation in your sexual dominance over her body. This beneficial effect will grow even stronger for her should you allow your SRD to orgasm, though you must be careful to grant that reward in case of good behavior: your bad girl may in fact not earn her first climax for several days, but you will notice that her behavior improves markedly once she understands that her orgasms depend on it. If you are diligent about not allowing her the release she craves so badly, her first climax as your SRD will represent a very special, very important moment in her journey to responsible adulthood.

All the jargon we had gotten from our corporate overlords, as far as I could tell, really only amounted to a confirmation of instincts I already had — ideas about gender roles and loving discipline that seemed to me simply natural. I certainly didn't mind having Selecta's science to back me up, but the idea that I should paddle away Matilda's arousal, to teach her to obey her new daddies, had come to me through mere, everyday common sense. When a bad girl gets wet from an inspection and a spanking, you have to spank her harder if you want her to learn.

“Oh... oh, please...,” Matilda sobbed. I brought the paddle down steadily, from just below shoulder height, and with a flick of my wrist at the end of the stroke to make sure that every swat rang out against the walls of the living room. I didn't spank her with much force, but I could tell from the deepening red color of her pert little bottom-cheeks — as well

as from the screaming, though the guidance from Selecta had warned us that some bad girls scream to pretend the pain is worse than it actually is — how uncomfortable the girl was finding her first paddling.

Her screams fell to a soft sobbing, her back heaving up after each resounding stroke of the paddle against her rosy backside and a piteous little wail emerging from where her face lay buried in the couch.

I paused, laying the surface of the pink paddle against the middle of Matilda's bottom, ignoring the pang of disappointment I felt at covering up the sight of her virgin pussy. I rubbed the blade very gently, in a circle, against the hot skin of her well-spanked ass.

She let out a moan that, as if to confirm Selecta's science, had at least as much of need in it as it did of discomfort.

“Are you ready to obey your daddies, honey?” I asked, keeping my voice stern but low.

Matilda

“Yes,” I sobbed. She, the other girl, had no choice. *I* had no choice. My bottom hurt more than I had ever though I could bear. The pain, though, to my astonishment seemed... well, I would never have said *bearable*, because even though I was definitely bearing it, it didn't *feel* bearable. My detached mind did know, as of that moment, that it wouldn't kill me — it wouldn't even hurt me, really. I could take it.

The burning in my backside, however, didn't represent the worst part. No, the worst part came from a direction I hadn't expected, one that made *that* part feel truly unbearable: the shame. My face seemed to blaze as hot as my ass, and the intensity of my mortification only grew — exponentially — as I felt the leather of the paddle's face rubbing gentle circles over the cheeks and the upper thighs where it had just disciplined me with such severity.

I moaned again. That second one had even less ambiguity to it than the first. For some inexplicable reason — unless it was happening because I had lost my mind completely — the heat in my backside had spread forward not with pain or even discomfort but with a very different kind of fire. My hips did that embarrassing, almost obscene thrusting thing, my body struggling suddenly not to escape Daddy John's attentions but to beseech him to do exactly as he pleased with me.

I heard Daddy Eric chuckle. I felt the heat surge in my cheeks and I thanked God that at least they couldn't see my face, pressed as it was into the scratchy fabric of the couch's upholstery.

“Was any of that punishment, really?” Daddy Eric asked. “Let's see how wet she is now.”

“Oh, it was punishment alright,” Daddy John answered, very calmly. “You heard her scream. You can see the color of her ass.”

“Oh, God,” I whispered, remembering. Something about the idea that this huge man, the one I had to call my daddy, had drawn those helpless screams from me as he brought the paddle down over and over and over, seemed to have changed something. A mixture of embarrassment and anger and fear and, worst of all, some warm feeling of connection, filled my

chest. I had a daddy who wouldn't hesitate to put me over his knee and hold me down and teach me the lesson I had earned, even while I shrieked in pain.

“But,” Daddy John continued, “from the sounds she’s making, I think you’re right about what our bad girl is feeling now.”

I felt the paddle leave my ass. I felt Daddy John lay it on my back, like a reminder of what he had done, and what he could do again any time.

Her ass belongs to him, I heard my brain say, as if I had become a far away storyteller, narrating the other naughty girl’s story from a distant galaxy. *She’s starting to learn that.*

Then my new daddy, almost as if he could hear that interstellar voice, made it even clearer that from this moment forward he would be in charge of my backside — and that he meant me to understand also how my butt cheeks only represented an important symbol of his ownership.

I felt his enormous hands on my bottom and my upper thighs, opening and spreading. He raised his right leg a little, easing the restraint there, so that he could part my thighs an inch. I let out a wrenching sob at the utterly humiliating sensation as he stretched my ass and my pussy open. I could feel the cool air of the firehouse moving in places that I had been taught must never show themselves, must always stay hidden, in the dark, inside the modesty of my panties.

“Take a look,” Daddy John said. “Or a sniff.”

“Oh, God,” I whispered. “No... oh, no... please...”

“Oh, yeah,” Daddy Eric said, inhaling audibly through his nose. “Our girl needs it bad, doesn’t she?”

I couldn't help it. *She* couldn't help it, the naughty girl whose daddy had just punished her so sternly. I took a sniff, myself. I smelled the cloth of the upholstery, mostly, but to my horror I also caught a whiff of the musky, naughty scent my daddies had discovered.

I sensed Daddy Eric bending over me: something about the way his huge, hard body moved the air around me, changed its flow over my bare skin, told me my blue-eyed daddy had decided to take a closer look. I let out a whimper, and then that pitiful noise drew itself out into a long, desperate moan, because he had added his own strong fingers to Daddy John's down there. Daddy Eric put two fingertips against the opening of my virgin sheath, gently at first, but, almost immediately, with more pressure, more force, until they entered me and came up against the place where my hymen blocked the passage.

I cried out as I felt Daddy Eric push, his fingertips gentle again, now, as if he wanted to make absolutely certain not to take my virginity before he and Daddy John could do it with their hard cocks. Hot blood rushed to my cheeks at the sound of that cry: I could hear so very clearly that the noise represented not pain, nor even surprise, anywhere near as much as a plea to my new daddies to get it over with, to fuck me right this instant.

"Our little girl needs cock, doesn't she?" Daddy John said. The depth of his voice, the way it seemed to rumble through his body, made my hips react, pushing my burning bottom up with a sob, offering it to the firefighters who Selecta had made my keepers.

"Answer Daddy John," Daddy Eric said, his words strict and admonishing though I could hear a paternal quality too, as

if he couldn't help feeling at least a little of the same urge to take care of me Daddy John did.

"Please...", I whimpered. "Please..., Daddy... please."

I wasn't asking them to deflower me. *She...* the other bad girl, the one talking through my throat... she wasn't even asking for that, for fucking, was she? All she had said was *please*.

I should already have known Daddy John well enough to predict that my *pleases* wouldn't satisfy him. Still, his reprimand sent a jolt through my nervous system, fear and need so closely intertwined that I could hardly tell them apart.

"That's not good enough, honey," he said. "Daddy Eric, see if you can help our girl find her words."

"Oh... oh, no...", I moaned, as the fingers inside me withdrew from the entrance to my vagina and moved forward to touch the place where his touch made me ride Daddy John's huge, denim-covered thigh like a rocking-horse. My pussy clenched so hard it made me gasp with arousal.

"Those aren't the words I mean, Matilda," Daddy John murmured. "You know the ones. And you may use dirty language, too."

"Actually," Daddy Eric corrected, a chuckle lurking just behind his words, "I'd say you *must* use dirty language. Tell us what your little pussy needs, sweetheart."

I bit my lip. My cheeks flooded with heat. A moment before, I would have gladly let out a string of angry curses that could make a sailor blush: *You fucking assholes can take your horse cocks and shove them up somebody else's ass, or even better each other's*. Or something like that. After Daddy Eric's instruction, I felt like the most demure young lady imaginable.

I felt Daddy John's hands let go of my sore bottom-cheeks and my even sorer upper thighs. The paddle suddenly rose from my back. I let out a cry of fear, but Daddy Eric's fingers stayed on my clit, rubbing firmly. The fear turned into an electric thrill of wanton need.

"I'm pretty sure Daddy John wants to spank you some more," my blue-eyed daddy said, softly and teasingly. "You don't want that, do you, Matilda?"

"No," I sobbed. "No... please, Daddy."

Chapter 6

Matilda

Daddy John spoke, rubbing my bottom with the face of the paddle in a little circle as if to emphasize his words.

“I can see you’re having a little trouble asking for what you need, honey. Let’s see if we can make it easier for you.”

He took the paddle away. He didn’t put it on my back this time, though. I felt a moment of gratitude, but that emotion vanished immediately into a new haze of embarrassment, when he said, to Daddy Eric, “Let’s put her on her knees in front of us. Go ahead and take your cock out, if you want — I’m definitely going to.”

He gave me what felt like a microsecond to understand his intention before he simply began to make it happen whether I wanted to comply or not. He had told Daddy Eric that he wanted to “put” me on my knees, and he did just that: Daddy John spilled me off his lap, using his powerful arms to control my fall, as if a female body were some kind of bendy toy he had played with so often he didn’t even have to think about how to arrange it. Suddenly, I knelt in front of him, and he

stood before me, towering over me, his hands going to the zipper of his faded jeans.

I heard myself breathing, each exhalation emerging with a pathetic little whine. I hadn't ever seen one. Despite all my smarts, which I had often supposed usually meant a girl got her first fucking over with as soon as possible, I had never laid eyes on a man's penis, unless you could count the vague, but still mortifying, drawings in Wellness class. I had even refused every offer from another girl to "take a look at this," when *this* clearly meant porn.

As I watched Daddy John unzip his fly, and realized that Daddy Eric had already gotten his all the way down and had started to reach inside his own, less faded jeans, I understood why I had never seen a man's cock. I had thought I had avoided it for so long because sex didn't really interest me. That, I realized for the first time there on my knees before my enormous firefighter daddies, didn't have the slightest bit of truth to it.

I had somehow managed to convince myself that the way my body reacted, when I heard a friend say, "Take a look at this," and I knew from something in the tone of her voice that she must be looking at porn, indicated disinterest. I had learned to push down my real response by sheer reflex, because of the stab of fear that accompanied the beginning of the tingle. I had called it disinterest because I *wanted* it to be disinterest, so that I would never have to confront the fear.

Now, though, my strict, brown-eyed daddy had decided I would face up to my fear, much too literally for my comfort. I closed my eyes and squeezed them very tightly shut.

"No, Matilda," said Daddy John, his tone suddenly very severe. "Open your eyes this instant."

But I shook my head. A little sob escaped my throat.

“I’m scared, Daddy,” I said in a tiny voice that I had never heard myself use before.

“I know, honey,” Daddy John said, his voice much gentler, though I could hear a sort of husky thickness too, and it made my heart skip a beat. “But I don’t think that’s all you’re feeling, is it?”

My forehead creased so deeply it felt like I had pleated it, as if the skin had become fabric. I almost giggled at the image, and the little jolt of mirth brought me abruptly up against my new daddy’s question. I remembered the little voice that had come out of me, and I understood that it, and my fear, came from the same place: my idea of myself as a little girl — a naughty little girl who should know how to behave better.

“No, Daddy,” I said, shaking my head. I felt heat fill my face, my neck, the roots of my hair, because as I heard myself agreeing with Daddy John like a good little girl answering her daddy’s question my body gave itself over to the other thing I had inside me: the shameful, dirty, wanton urge to see my daddies’ hard penises.

I opened my eyes, and I let out a little cry: my fear came back, because my daddies’ cocks were so much bigger and so much harder than I had thought they could be. I had had my hands at my sides after Daddy John had put me on my knees, but at the sight of the two jutting, menacing manhoods, pointed right at my face and swaying slightly, throbbing with each beat of their enormous owners’ massive hearts, I put them down in front of my pussy.

I couldn’t... I just couldn’t. How could I... how could that naughty girl’s little virgin vagina accept something that big, that rigid. The floating detachment came back: I saw her

kneeling there, covering her untried private part with both hands, her face a pout of reluctance, but...

My mouth twitched, because it had begun to water, as if my daddies had offered me two pieces of the most delicious candy I could imagine: I saw it happen to her, and I felt it happen to me. I swallowed. I chewed my lower lip, trying to make it stop.

They had them, their huge, stiff cocks, in their hands. They stroked them gently, and I watched, fascinated despite the terrible naughtiness of kneeling in front of two men with their penises out.

With his other hand, Daddy John reached out to take hold of my chin, to tilt it up and to the left, so that I could look into his chocolate eyes.

“Do I have to paddle you some more, honey?” he asked. “Is that the only way to get you to tell us what you need?”

I tried to shake my head, but Daddy John held my chin so firmly that I only managed a tiny wiggle.

“No... Daddy. Please... no.” My words came out in the little voice again.

I sensed Daddy Eric bending over me a little, and then I felt the flat of his huge hand against my bottom, the two things happening in such close succession that I had no time to react. As the sharp slap echoed in the room, I cried out with the sudden, flashing pain, my hands going from front to back much too late.

I put them over my burning ass-cheeks, trying to defend myself, not only too late but also in the wrong location for what my blue-eyed daddy did next. His hand came back, not with a spank to my butt but with his fingers between my

thighs, under the spot where I had covered my bottom. My cry of pain became a moan of terrible need, the connection between punishment and pleasure making itself so plain that I felt my cheeks blush crimson as I gazed up into Daddy John's patient yet stern eyes.

“Kiss Daddy John's cock,” I heard Daddy Eric say, his voice now coming from almost directly above me as he leaned over my head, his fingers rubbing firmly at my warm, aching pussy. The slippery ease with which he forced the pleasure on me made it much too clear just how needy I'd become — just how correct my daddies were about the desperate state of my virgin sheath.

I tried to shake my head again, and again Daddy John held my face in place. I lowered my eyes, helpless not to look, and I saw it again, the big, hard penis that only seemed to have gotten bigger and stiffer in my daddy's hand since the last time I had looked.

“Kiss it,” Daddy Eric repeated, “and tell him where you need him to put it.”

“Oh... oh, God,” I whispered as the fingers in my pussy moved back and forth, up and down. I held my bottom-cheeks in my hands. I squeezed them gently, and the sensation of discomfort, to my distress, added to the arousal Daddy Eric had found and increased between my thighs. Without meaning to, without wanting to, I pulled the little roundnesses apart, so that I could feel the air against my tiniest place.

There, too? whispered a voice in my head — the other naughty girl's voice. *No, please,* another part of me said. *Please... not there.*

Daddy John's right hand let go of my chin. He moved it around, to the back of my head, and twined his big fingers in

my hair. I let out a little gasp of alarm, sure that he would force my face forward towards his hardness, but instead he merely held me steady as he shifted forward an inch or two, until the tip of his rigid erection hovered a millimeter from my lips.

Daddy Eric took my entire backside into his broad, strong hand, covering my little hands. His middle fingers pressed into my vagina and he squeezed my thoroughly punished ass. I cried out in discomfort even as I felt a rush of arousal like nothing I had felt before, even on this day when it seemed I had already learned so much more than I wanted to learn about my body's dark desires.

My forehead creased deeply, and I bit my lip, tears of shame pricking at the corners of my eyes. Then, trying not to think about it, I leaned my head forward and pursed my lips in a little girl's delicate kiss. I touched my daddy's huge cock with my lips, and a sob broke from my chest.

"Please fuck me, Daddy," I whispered. "Please... I... my... my pussy needs it so bad."

"Good girl," Daddy John rumbled, the depth of his voice seeming to make his penis vibrate before my eyes. "Go ahead and open your mouth, now. Daddy Eric, I'm not sure her bottom is quite sore enough yet. Why don't you paddle her while she learns to give head?"

"Oh, God," I sobbed. "Please, Daddy? Please... no more..."

The way he said the dirty, degrading things he said... the raging need between my thighs simply responded, as if my brain had nothing at all to do with it. When Daddy Eric said those things, as he seemed to do even more often than Daddy

John did, they made me blush, and they got me hot, yes, but my brown-eyed daddy seemed to take it to a different level.

Maybe because most of what Daddy John said in that deep voice of his had less of that raunchy, naughty quality, when he did say something like *while she learns to give head* it seemed to speak directly to the dark, shameful things inside me. I could tell, though I didn't want to admit it even to myself, that this firm-handed man had my rehabilitation in mind — even when he decided it would involve teaching me to suck a daddy's rigid cock.

“Open that mouth, Matilda,” Daddy John repeated, as Daddy Eric removed his hand from my bottom and picked the horrible paddle up from where his fellow daddy had left it on the couch. “And take those hands away from your little bottom. You can hold onto my knee with one of them and jerk me off with the other.”

I clutched at my already-so-sore ass-cheeks, feeling my face twist into a piteous, theatrical, little-girl pout. I felt again the way the movement exposed the wrinkled button of my anus.

“Please?” I tried again, my eyes going up to meet Daddy John's. “Please, Daddy?”

“Take them away, sweetheart,” Daddy Eric warned. “Don't make me hold them for you. I'll just paddle you harder.”

My mind focused on the tiny lesson Daddy John had given... not even a lesson, actually: just an instruction, or two instructions, about what to do with my hands. With a whimper, I let go of my bottom.

“There we go,” Daddy John said. “Good girl. That's it. Put them where I told you.”

Chapter 7

Matilda

My left hand found the back of Daddy John's right knee. The denim felt soft under my fingers. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Daddy Eric, the pink paddle in his right hand, and his hard penis in his left, had moved around to my other side. He bent over a little. I couldn't see it, but I knew, with a thrill of fear, that he had raised the paddle behind me.

My right hand, instead of obeying Daddy John's command, the dirty one, the one that would mean touching his stiff cock, went to my brown-eyed daddy's left knee instead. Something in me felt desperate to hold onto him that way, to cling to him while I received my punishment.

"Why?" I whispered in the little girl voice, looking up into that dark, serious gaze. "Why, Daddy?" Suddenly the idea that I was a bad girl who should only be fucked with a sore bottom seemed to sink in, in a way I hadn't imagined it could. It seemed so right and so wrong at the same time. And the expression on Daddy John's face turned the idea into a question.

Daddy John's fingers stroked the back of my head, sending a thrill of anxiety and need coursing through my veins. His eyes flicked up from my face, to his right, where I knew Daddy Eric stood waiting. "Paddle her," he said simply. "Nice and slow."

I cried out. I clutched my daddy's denim-covered knees. Just as I felt the puff of air pushed against my bottom by the face of the paddle Daddy John used his grip on my hair to turn my head and bring my cheek up against his lap. He lifted his cock with his other hand, so that at the same moment the crack of the leather against my ass rang out and I felt the first hint of the pain I felt the hardness of his rigid penis against the soft skin of my face.

"It's not fair, is it, honey?" Daddy John asked slowly and calmly.

I let out a sob, and it became a cry as Daddy Eric spanked me again.

"You did a bad thing, though, didn't you?" said the deep voice from far above me. "Or you wouldn't be here with your new daddies."

The paddle came down, and I yelped. Daddy Eric didn't strike as hard as Daddy John had, and the long waits in between the swats meant that the burning in my backside seemed to go straight to my pussy.

"Yes, Daddy," I sobbed.

"But that's not all, is it?" the huge firefighter asked me, his voice so paternal that it made my hips jerk with need.

Daddy Eric struck again with the paddle. I let out a pitiful wail.

“You’re just the kind of girl who should get paddled by her daddies before they fuck her, aren’t you?”

“Oh, God,” I whimpered. The cock against my cheek felt so big and hard, but my mouth had started to water again. I let go of Daddy John’s knee with my left hand and I raised it up. Daddy John pulled my face away from his penis, so that it jutted straight out at me, and I could put my trembling fingers around it.

“Gently, now, sweetheart,” said Daddy Eric in an approving, condescending voice. “Up and down, the way you saw us doing.”

The skin felt so silky it took me by surprise. I followed Daddy Eric’s instruction simply on instinct, my cheeks growing warm as I watched my fingers going up and down the rigid shaft. Daddy John let out a little growl of satisfaction.

My eyes went up to his again, my brow creasing hard. I moved my hand gently along the hard length of him, hoping my compliance in touching a penis for the first time would make him lenient. I took my lower lip between my teeth, sending a wordless plea up into his brown eyes, *Please don’t make me suck it, Daddy?*

But I knew Daddy Eric would never tolerate that.

“Now open your mouth,” he told me. “Put your tongue out so Daddy John can lay his cock there.”

I bit my lip harder, my eyes going up and down, back and forth between Daddy John’s face and his huge penis. The idea that one of my daddies could teach me how to please the other’s manhood, that my crime had brought me to a firehouse where I had to serve two strong men as a helpless fuck toy, made my whole body burn.

Without another warning, I felt the puff of air against my bottom, and then I heard the crack and felt the sting at nearly the same moment.

“You need more paddling, don’t you, honey?”

Daddy John’s voice seemed to come from miles above me. I shook my head, desperately, feeling tears trickle onto my cheeks. My fingers started to clutch at my daddy’s hardness, but somehow I managed not to disobey Daddy Eric’s command to handle it gently. I hardly knew why, except that I felt sure they would paddle me so much harder if Daddy John decided I had failed to touch his cock the right way. My bottom felt like my daddies had made me sit on a hot stove, and I knew I just couldn’t bear any more.

My mouth opened. A sob burst from my chest, and my breath came in tiny pants. I stroked the huge thing in my hand, and I put my tongue out. I tried to move my head so that I could lay the shaft there, but Daddy John held me in place with his grip on my hair.

“No hands, now, honey,” he said. “Hold onto my knee again. Daddy will be in charge.”

I heard a little whining noise come through my nose as Daddy John’s big hand took my little one away from his penis. For a moment, just out of confusion, I resisted, my hand struggling in his. Daddy Eric brought the paddle down again. I cried out, my body tensing up like a violin string. Then, suddenly, I felt Daddy Eric’s other hand on my ass, fingers between my thighs, heightening the tension in my muscles and changing it so drastically that I felt an orgasm starting, the foreshock of it jerking my hips and a whimper of need coming right after my cry of pain.

Daddy John's enormous, rigid cock hovered right in front of my face, a millimeter from the end of my tongue, which I could just barely see where it extended as far as I could push it out, like a little girl desperate for a taste of something sweet. Daddy Eric kept moving his fingertips inside my pussy, making me move lewdly with his demanding rhythm. Suddenly I wanted to suck my daddy's hard penis so much that a burst of saliva came into my mouth and I had to close it for a second to swallow all the moisture. Desperately, anxiously — because I felt certain Daddy Eric would paddle me more for closing my lips, I opened them again, pushed my tongue out again.

“Take your hand away, Eric,” Daddy John said. “She's not allowed to come right now.”

Not right now... but maybe... later? I felt a pathetic surge of gratitude burst in my chest.

I whimpered as Daddy Eric followed Daddy John's suggestion. I looked at the long, thick cock right in front of me. Maybe if I did a good job with my mouth... maybe if I was a good girl for the penis... maybe Daddy John would let me come?

“Look at me, honey,” I heard his voice growl, as his hardness seemed to vibrate with the depth of the tone.

I felt my hands clutch at the muscular backs of his knees, though the soft denim. My cheeks filled with hot blood at the very notion, that I would have to meet his eyes while he used my mouth for his pleasure, but the idea that he might let me climax if I obeyed seemed to rob me of all my shame. I looked up, into his serious face, where his eyes had narrowed and his brow seemed to have taken on an intense hunger that sent a

thrill of alarm, mingled with need, racing from my tingling clit to my stiff nipples.

I couldn't see my tongue anymore, but I felt something... something very warm and very firm, and I let out a little sob as I understood that my daddy had just laid his huge, hard cock on the moist, pink surface.

“There we go,” he murmured. “So pretty that way.”

I felt my forehead crease as a new surge of heat came to my face. Daddy John's eyes held the reflection, I suddenly saw, and I could see it: the bad girl with the penis on her tongue.

His fingers' grip tightened in my hair, holding my head exactly where he wanted it. He leaned forward, and I saw the girl in his eyes receive her daddy's manhood for the first time, deeper and deeper in her pink little mouth. I had too much daddy there: the hard penis pressed against my tongue. I had to work very hard to keep my lips and my teeth as far apart as I knew I must, if I didn't want my brown-eyed daddy to tell my blue-eyed daddy to paddle me again.

A growl came from Daddy John's chest, rumbly and wordless. It sounded like a bear... not just any bear, though, but the kind I'd read about in a picture book that lived long, long ago when everything was bigger, just like my daddies. *A cave bear*, my distant mind helpfully told me. My daddy growled like a cave bear, when he felt good.

I didn't know how I could tell that this growl meant my body had provided my daddy's cock with the pleasure I owed him, as his little girl fuck toy, but I didn't have the slightest doubt. I thought maybe the rigid shaft in my mouth, pushing deeper and deeper, might have gotten even bigger and stiffer. That made me whimper around Daddy John's cock, and down

between my thighs I felt my hips buck, as if in search of Daddy Eric's absent hand.

Slowly and evenly, with both hands now around the back of my head, Daddy John began to fuck my face. The sensation had such a lewdness, such a wanton shame to it, that an equally mortifying thought rose in my brain, along with an aching need between my waist and my knees. Suddenly I wanted the paddle.

I had never to that moment suspected I could think that thought and feel that insane desire. I wanted to shove the knowledge away, the very idea that such a thing could exist inside me. To my horror, I realized that it matched much too well with the terrible things my daddies had told me about myself.

Even as I found myself pushing my bottom out a little, furnishing it for Daddy Eric's painful lesson, I managed to press the idea into the furthest depths of my psyche. That didn't change my body's response to the way Daddy John had stated to use my mouth for his manly pleasure, though: again my hips moved, and again I presented my ass for punishment, my cheeks burning as I begged for the thing I insisted to myself I didn't want, not in a million years.

"Mmm," Daddy John said, turning his cave bear growl into an almost-word, his enjoyment even more obvious from the slightly more meaningful sound. Then he spoke, every word bringing a new wave of heat into my body. "That's nice, honey. You're going to make a great little cocksucker."

Going to. My mind couldn't help interpreting it, maybe overinterpreting it. It made me sob around the enormous daddy-thing surging in and out of my mouth, making my jaw start to ache. *As in, you're not a great little cocksucker yet, but*

your daddies will train you very thoroughly. You're going to suck their cocks very, very often.

Chapter 8

John

How had I gotten by without a gorgeous nineteen-year-old to suck my cock? I couldn't remember, right now, as I watched my hardness move in and out of Matilda's sweet little mouth. The sheer animal instincts of my sex drive pushed me towards claiming her as hard and as soon as possible: the thought that she belonged to me and Eric from this moment on threatened to turn me into a horny teenager.

Another pleasure, though, a better and longer-lasting one, had started to take hold. It rose in me alongside the simple enjoyment of fucking Matilda's face, of having my thick shaft inside the soft recesses of a bad girl's mouth... making her take me deep even though she had never sucked cock before... holding her gaze as she blushed with little-girl modesty at what I required of her as her new daddies' fuck toy. Those things made me want to throw Matilda on the couch and bury my rigid manhood in her virgin pussy. The happiness that came from being Matilda's daddy, on the other hand, told me I must take my time.

The idea that had more or less come at the top of the instruction book Selecta had sent with Matilda, that a bad girl should only get fucked once her daddies had paddled her ass with the greatest possible thoroughness, had worked its way deep into my mind. It had seemed strange, at first: I had never daddied a bad girl before, after all. Watching Matilda's reaction to her first old-fashioned lesson, though, had converted me to Selecta's way of thinking very quickly. Our gorgeous, naughty SRD absolutely needed taking care of — and she needed this particular kind of care most of all, though she had obviously only just begun to understand that deep, dark part of herself.

I kept my left hand on the back of Matilda's head and bent down a little so I could hold her delicious little bottom in my big hand. I felt my cock give a little jump inside her warm mouth at the lovely, possessive feeling. To have those pert, sweetly rounded cheeks in my fingers' grasp sent dominant fire through my nervous system.

Matilda let out a soft whimper around my erection as I pressed my middle two fingertips between the taut little globes of her backside and pressed them against the wrinkly button of her anus. I rubbed the shy, virgin hole gently, and then with a little more pressure, feeling her whole body respond despite, I felt certain, her wishes: she pushed back against my fingers as if her hips, at least, knew she would have to have her anus trained and used, just like the rest of her.

“I'm not sure you got this ass warm enough,” I said to Eric, lifting my hand up and then bringing it down hard once on the right, then once on the left, then once right in the middle.

Matilda cried out around my cock. I held her face firmly in place and thrust in and out, the drives of my animal pleasure and my firm intention to teach our bad girl about her needs coming together to make me a very demanding daddy. United, the two gave me another idea as well, and both sets of instincts told me the idea would work.

I bent a little further, and I picked Matilda up off the floor and flipped her around. I made her spread her legs and rest her knees on my shoulders, even as I kept her mouth on my rigid cock.

“A little more inspection, I think,” I said, addressing Eric rather than our bad girl. “At closer range.”

Matilda

I felt for a moment like I would pass out. My head spun and my breath came and went much too rapidly through my nostrils. The feeling that none of this was actually happening to me, but instead to that other bad girl, got stronger than ever. *She* had just gotten flipped end over end, with her mouth full of her daddy’s huge erection, her face buried in his denim covered lap. *Her* entire world was the seam that led down from her daddy’s open fly and between his strong thighs.

“Look at that,” her daddy said from up there, where he had so easily exposed her shaved pussy and her paddled bottom to his assessing gaze. “I think we *did* get this ass red enough. But...”

I heard him take a deep, deep breath through his nose. I sobbed around the rigid shaft that filled my mouth much too full of him.

“I don’t think we managed to spank this pussy dry, did we? You can smell her from over there, can’t you?”

I tried to please the penis inside me. I moved my tongue over the shaft, bobbed my head a little in imitation of the movement my daddies had shown me with their hands. I felt so controlled, so overpowered that I couldn’t do anything but try to please my daddy. Some deep, unnamable instinct seemed to know that if I did my best for him, he would take care of me.

“Sure can,” said Daddy Eric from behind me. “How does she taste?”

I wanted to make words, but they came out as little moans, one with each movement of my head as I tried desperately to give pleasure to Daddy John’s rigid manhood in my bizarre inverted position. I wanted to say, *No, please, Daddy. Please don’t do that.* I wanted to say those words even though I knew they weren’t true, or rather they were something like ten percent true and ninety percent an utter lie. But part of me needed my daddy to know that I knew good girls didn’t let huge firefighters taste their pussies, no matter how much their pussies needed it.

I screamed around the thick, hard shaft when I felt it: Daddy John’s probing tongue and then his soft lips. My body bucked against the arm around my waist with which he easily held me suspended in mid-air, so that he could enjoy me that way, as shameful as it was.

My daddy tasted me fully. With his right hand he stroked my back gently as his tongue seemed to go everywhere I most

and least wanted it to go. I couldn't think... I couldn't do anything to please his cock besides hold it, as gently as I could, inside my moaning, sobbing mouth. My whole body writhed in Daddy John's grasp as the moment of forbidden pleasure stretched on and on.

Again I nearly came, but again my daddy seemed to know the signs much too well to allow me that release. Just when I thought the next jerk of my hips against his restraining arm would bring the orgasm crashing over me like a tsunami, Daddy John pulled his mouth away. I let out a despairing cry, and at the mercy of a new good-girl instinct I tried to make my mouth as soft and enjoyable a place as I could.

Maybe I could give my daddy's big penis so much pleasure that he would have no choice but to reward me. I knew my daddy was a kind person — somehow I already had not the slightest doubt about that, maybe just from the way he looked at me. A nice man like my daddy would always show his gratitude when his little girl did something so very naughty for him, wouldn't he?

"She tastes like a bad girl," Daddy John told Daddy Eric. "And she's as wet as the ocean."

I couldn't help it: I pulled my face away from Daddy John's lap. I had to deny it... some of it, at least.

"No, Daddy," I wailed in my little girl voice. "Please... I'm trying to be good!"

I could never have imagined those words coming out of mouth, in any tone at all, let alone that yielding, almost cutesy one.

"Get your mouth back where it belongs," Daddy Eric told me sternly. "Good girls don't stop sucking their daddies' cocks

until their daddies take them away.”

Daddy John gave me a kiss right on my clit. I whimpered softly.

“Do as your daddy says,” said my brown-eyed daddy.

Back where your mouth belongs. A wave of crimson shame traveled from my chest to my cheeks, then, worse, to my pussy. I looked at the huge, hard shaft, so close, shining with my saliva. I opened my mouth, whimpering again, and I took my daddy’s penis inside it again.

He kissed again, and I moaned, bobbing my head, trying to please him, trying to show I really was a good girl.

“That’s it,” Daddy John said, in a voice that sounded thick with his dominant masculine pleasure. He gave me another kiss, and my hips bucked against the arm that held me aloft. “That’s it, honey. I know you’re trying to be a good girl. Your pussy is always going to taste like a bad girl’s pussy, though, I’m pretty sure.”

He flicked his tongue against my clit. I cried out around the rigid length of him, the need inspired by his words and the need rocketing out from my pussy coming together to make me desperate for something more... something deeper and harder and even more shameful.

“And that’s a very good thing,” Daddy John added softly. “Because that means it’s time for your daddies to fuck you.”

He lifted my mouth off his cock, and he turned me around, lowering me and turning himself at the same time so that he could set me down on the couch, on my knees, facing away from him.

“Put your hands on the back of the couch, honey,” Daddy John said, his lips against my ear, his beard tickling the bare

skin of my neck.

I obeyed, leaning over and supporting my upper body on my bent arms. Time seemed to have stopped meaning anything: I didn't see Daddy Eric moving, even out of the corner of my eye, but suddenly he was there in front of me.

My blue-eyed daddy had taken off his shirt, at some point: I hadn't noticed that either, but I couldn't take my eyes off what he had revealed: six-pack abs like I had never, ever seen, let alone had right in front my face, with a line of brown hair leading down from his belly button into his jeans, so suggestive that it made me swallow down all the saliva that instantly gathered in my mouth.

His abs did that all by themselves, but when my eyes went even further down, my cheeks hot at the terrible naughtiness of it, I saw my second daddy's huge, hard cock only a few millimeters away from my nose. Maybe I should have found the obscene sight less shocking because Daddy John had just made me suck his own penis. Daddy Eric's manhood, though, looked longer and thinner. It was also just different enough in color — a little redder, I thought — that it made me realize, with a new flood of blood to my face and my pussy, that I really did have two daddies, and they were both going to fuck me now.

That girl is a fuck toy. A sexual relief device. No, not that girl... me. I'm... I'm a bad girl... they're going to fuck their bad girl sex toy. I honestly couldn't tell, at that moment, as Daddy Eric reached out his right hand almost casually and took hold of the back of my head, whether the girl whose daddy was brushing the tip of his rigid penis against her lips was Matilda Jacobs or not, or even whether I was Matilda Jacobs.

“Open up, sweetheart,” Daddy Eric said in a soft, teasing voice. “Show me what Daddy John taught you.”

I meant to shake my head. Whoever I was, I couldn't just suck another man's penis, could I? Right after my brown-eyed daddy had made me into his little cocksucker? I felt my forehead crease and my chin jerked slightly to the left. But then I felt Daddy John's hands on my ass, one on each of my padded cheeks, squeezing them firmly, pulling them apart, making me open my mouth with a cry of desperate need and discomfort.

I didn't think he meant to warn me about the possibility of even more punishment: I thought he simply intended to make sure I understood that my bottom belonged to him, that as of today he owned everything between my waist and my knees... all of me. My mouth opened with the wordless noise of shame and arousal, and then because I knew Daddy John wanted to share me with Daddy Eric, I opened my lips further and put my tongue out.

I looked up at Daddy Eric, suddenly feeling like a good girl — the kind of good girl who gets a treat. He put his hardness on my tongue, a smile on his face, and I let out a tiny whimper of acceptance and beseeching, asking my blue-eyed daddy to use me gently.

“There you go, sweetheart,” Daddy Eric murmured, holding my head firmly and thrusting slowly inside my mouth. “There you go.”

Chapter 9

Matilda

Behind me, Daddy John took his hands from my backside and laid one of them on the small of my back. Gazing up into Daddy Eric's eyes I pictured the daddy I couldn't see: I knew what his other hand must be doing, how it must have hold of his enormous penis, guiding it towards my untried pussy.

“You're going to lose your cherry the way a bad girl does,” Daddy Eric murmured from high above me. “Two cocks in you at the same time.”

The sobbing moan that came from me... I knew it was me, Matilda, who to her shame was also the bad girl trying to be good for her daddies so they would let her come, make her come... it started so deep in my chest... it came out around the hard daddy thing that moved in and out of my mouth, that I had to make feel good... it started to happen even before I felt Daddy John's cock, rubbing up and down, teasing me... against the entrance to my virgin sheath... then forward, along the seam of the tingling petals, the secret lips of my naughty little private part...

The moan became a cry around Daddy Eric's thrusting cock as the head of Daddy John's penis touched my desperately needy clit. Two cocks... *oh, no...* two cocks... only a bad girl would take two cocks. I shuddered at the thought, the words, the feelings.

Daddy John moved his hardness again, back along me, back through the hidden flower of me, even further back to where I knew he must go. He would do it... he would claim me, take me, fuck me. I would have to take the thick, rigid shaft of his manhood, even though I had never had a penis inside my pussy before. He would make me take it, so that he could turn me into his good girl and teach me to please him with my body the way I should.

The hands on the back of my head held my face against my blue-eyed daddy's lap, my nose buried in the denim that covered everything there except his long, hard penis. All I could see was the faded blue of the sturdy fabric. My brown-eyed daddy — I imagined with a thrill of shame how that chocolate gaze must be focused on the place where he meant to thrust his cock inside me — pressed the head firmly up against the virgin barrier of vagina.

With a whimper, unable to do anything else, I arched my back and pushed out my bottom to tell him that I wanted to be that good girl for my daddies, wanted to be their fuck toy. I knew that a bad girl only gets fucked with a sore bottom, so I offered that sore bottom to my daddy, hoping he would make my desperate pussy feel good in return, if only to train me properly as his sexual plaything.

I felt his hands on my hips. Daddy Eric pulled his cock out almost all the way, until only the head stayed inside my lips.

“Use your tongue, sweetheart,” he said, his voice so dominant, so filled with his animal instinct to take all the pleasure he could from my body, that my heart skipped a beat. “Look at me. Keep breathing while Daddy John pops your cherry.”

I felt my forehead crease hard as I moved my tongue back and forth under his cock, at the place I had already figured out gave a daddy so much pleasure. I raised my eyes, my face flooding with heat to see how Daddy Eric gazed down at me with such degrading dominance. I heard him let out a deep, soft grunt that told me I had learned at least a little bit about how to fulfill my new duties as a sexual relief device.

A split second later, though, I answered Daddy Eric’s grunt with a cry of alarm and another shameful jerk of my hips, because Daddy John’s strong hands had gripped me more firmly around the waist. He had to do that, I understood, because I couldn’t be allowed to escape my defloration now. He meant to warn me, too, I thought: to tell me that he intended to fuck my virgin pussy until he found his satisfaction inside me, and I should prepare myself to take his manhood the way a good little girl fuck toy must.

My daddy held me in place, and he thrust his rigid penis through my virginity. I let out a scream around my other daddy’s cock, my hands gripping the fabric upholstery on the back of the couch so hard my fingers ached. The huge hard thing surged into my untried vagina. I could feel how the heat and wetness there made the passage of Daddy John’s manhood easier, but it still seemed like he had shoved a red hot bar of iron inside me as he opened me for his use and his enjoyment.

I felt the soft, worn denim of his jeans against my paddled bottom cheeks. I gasped, panting around Daddy Eric’s penis as

I understood that I had taken all of my daddy's penis into my little pussy. To my astonishment, the pain of my defloration had already begun to dull and to fade, It gave way, second by second as Daddy John held the thick shaft of his manhood at full length in my vagina, to a sort of pleasure I had never dreamed of.

It didn't just have to do with having something big and hard and strong there, in my most private place, and with having another daddy's cock in my mouth, too, at the very same time. It had to do with what that *meant* — especially what it meant for a bad girl who would have to learn to behave herself from this point on, because she had two strong firefighter daddies. My daddies had begun to claim me, to own me, to master me. The hard daddy thing Daddy John had thrust inside me served as a reminder, a symbol, of his role as my daddy and my sexual trainer, and that gave nearly as much pleasure to my body as the simple, animal delight of having a penis where a girl should have a penis, whether she was bad or good, in her hot, wet vagina.

But... she *shouldn't* have a man's hard cock there, should she? I felt dizzy for a moment as the contradictory thoughts took hold in my mind. A good girl didn't do that... didn't do *this* — not one, but two men's cocks, one in my mouth and one in my pussy. Surely I needed to be punished... paddled... whipped even.

Daddy John held me firmly around my waist, though under the influence of the sudden wave of hot shame I had begun to struggle a little. Daddy Eric held my head still, though I cried out at the way he began to move his hardness gently in and out between my lips. That cry got louder: I had thought my brown-eyed Daddy's cock had already impaled me fully and he already gone all the way into my no-longer-virgin vagina,

but now he pressed his strong, denim-covered lap more firmly against my punished bottom and filled my sheath even more deeply and uncomfortably.

I *had* been punished. Hadn't my daddies paddled me to teach me about proper behavior? A properly behaved little lady didn't let two huge, muscular firefighters with abs like washboards put their manhoods in her at the same time — I knew that... I had *thought* I knew that, anyway.

It sent a thrill of heat coursing through my veins, just as Daddy John began to fuck me, softly and gently at first, moving his hard shaft in and out just an inch or two and then easing it back into my sheath. I still felt some of the pain, but the red-hot iron bar seemed to have changed to a soothing, warm presence, too.

“Oh, that's nice, honey,” I heard my brown-eyed daddy murmur from behind me. “Just hold still for daddy, now. You're so tight on the cock... daddy's going to come very soon.” His voice sounded so husky with his masculine arousal that it made me moan around Daddy Eric's mobile manhood as my blue-eyed daddy started to thrust in and out more rapidly, the look on his face so severe, suddenly, that my eyes went wide... surely he wouldn't paddle me for having his penis in my mouth, when he clearly needed it so badly — as badly as a bad girl needed to make her daddies feel good when they used her body as their personal fuck toy.

“They gave you your shot, right?” Daddy John asked, pulling my mind back into reality for a moment.

Daddy Eric pulled his penis from my mouth so I could answer.

It took me a moment to remember, and then another wave of heat came to my cheeks. The birth-control shot. At the

doctor's office, at the very end.

“Yes, Daddy,” I sobbed.

“That's good,” he said, his voice so warm that it made my whole body seem to glow, as if I should be proud that my daddy thought so highly of my pussy that he wanted to come there. “That's so good. Daddy's going to come real soon, and let Daddy Eric have his turn.”

“Oh, God,” I whimpered. Daddy Eric had his cock a millimeter from my face, stroking it in his big left hand, his right still around the back of my head. It glistened with my saliva, and it seemed too big, and too hard, but I couldn't help it: I had to press my face forward so that I could kiss it. I didn't know how I could want it in my pussy so badly, even though it was so big, and I kissed it over and over as if to beg it, and the daddy who would thrust it into me, to be somehow both gentle and rough at the same time, when he fucked me.

Meanwhile Daddy John had started to get rough, as if to teach me what it feels like when a daddy fucks hard. The soreness in my ass from the paddle came back to life, and that glow joined the all over glow from Daddy John's evident enjoyment: I didn't have any doubt that my daddy liked fucking me, because he held me so tightly around my waist and slammed his hips into my backside like a jackhammer.

“Oh...,” I said, as the pleasure inside me seemed to grow so rapidly my nervous system could barely handle it. “Oh... I'm...”

Daddy Eric moved the head of his cock, offering it to my lips, and I opened them to receive the rigid shaft again.

“Go ahead and come, honey,” Daddy John said. “You're being a good girl for us, and good girls get rewards.”

But they don't stop being bad girls, do they? The ones who aren't allowed to have a penis inside them unless they have sore bottoms? The wild thought rose in my mind as I felt Daddy John's cock seem to get even harder inside me, his thrusts even more urgent.

The sensation pushed me over the edge into a kind of orgasm I'd never experienced before. Daddy John had to grip my hips very tightly to hold me in place for his deep invasion of my vagina, and Daddy Eric had to keep my mouth still for his surges into my mouth. My whole body seemed to spasm, my muscles tensing and releasing wildly as I screamed out the pleasure that radiated out from every inward movement of my daddy's cock in my newly-opened pussy.

I felt Daddy John's hips jerk in an irregular rhythm, then, and I felt his hardness pulse, and with a deep blush I understood that he was coming too, that my climax had brought on my daddy's. He growled deep in his throat, and that animal sound seemed to make me come again, all on its own, screaming around the other cock in me, the one filling my mouth that would soon take the place of the penis that had just pumped a man's seed into me for the first time.

"So nice," I heard Daddy John murmur. "Thank you, honey." Then, louder, "Eric, come around here and try this sweet pussy for yourself."

Daddy Eric gently pulled his hard cock from my mouth.

He's going to try my sweet pussy. As if I were a new piece of equipment, or a slice of pie, shared between friends.

Daddy John's firm grip on my waist eased and he started to pull his cock out of my pussy. I let out a helpless cry of loss, a sound that brought an instant blush to my cheeks with its

wanton, forlorn note: the noise a little girl makes when her daddy takes away a beloved toy.

My brown-eyed daddy chuckled, and stroked my bottom softly, then held me there, possessively on his fingertips, for a moment.

“Don’t worry, honey,” he said, his voice so patronizing that it sent a new wave of heat into my face. “Daddy Eric’s got what you need.”

My blue-eyed daddy hadn’t moved, yet: he gazed down at me, with his rigid penis in his hand, shining from its time in my mouth. He pumped his left hand slowly up and down its length.

“Yes, I do,” he confirmed, stroking my cheek with the thumb of his other hand. “Are you going to come for me, too, naughty girl?”

I swallowed hard, my forehead creasing. *Naughty* and *bad...* the same, and yet somehow very different. Both somehow the opposite of *good*, but *naughty* seemed to respond to the part of me that had just started talking in a new voice, a little voice — and I answered my daddy in that voice.

“Yes, Daddy,” I said, just as Daddy John moved his hand down and forward to take hold of my whole pussy, his thumb pushing just inside the sheath whose virginity he had claimed. My answer to Daddy Eric became a moan, in the same little-girl voice, high-pitched and so very naughty that it made me arch my back and try to work my pussy rearward onto my brown-eyed daddy’s thumb.

Daddy John made a clucking, tsking sound with his tongue. I bit my lip and closed my eyes, overcome with shameful need. In the darkness behind my eyelids I heard my

daddies moving, changing places. I kept my eyes shut, suddenly very bashful, as if the good-little-girl voice had stirred up a good-little-girl modesty to go with it.

A good little girl doesn't have two cocks in her after her spanking, does she?

I took a breath in through my nose, and the scent I caught made my heart skip a beat with alarm and arousal. I could feel the warmth of Daddy John's lap, too, on my face, adding to the blush in my cheeks. I knew my brown-eyed daddy had taken his stand in front of me, but I didn't want to open my eyes because I knew how lewd a sight I would see.

A moment later I felt Daddy Eric's hand on my tailbone, and then the head of his cock against the opening to my vagina. The hand spread wider, nearly spanning my waist, controlling me and holding my pussy in place for his first deep thrust, so quick and hard that I cried out, rearing my head back.

I felt Daddy John put his hand on my neck, fingers curling around the base of my skull and thumb against my cheekbone. The sensation of my daddies' strong, dominant hands, together with Daddy Eric's hardness moving in my pussy, fast and deep, drove me instantly so close to orgasm that I couldn't help opening my eyes in wonder and anxiety at the sheer urgency of the pleasure. I looked up into Daddy John's face, fearing, crazily, that my daddies meant to rip my body apart with the shocks of arousal and the helpless ecstasy they forced me to feel.

Daddy John gazed down at me with eyes that seemed to glow with his own desire. I gasped as I saw how much he liked having a bad girl to fuck and to train. My heart seemed to swell with an answering emotion, an utterly illogical

affection for the man who had just used his legal rights to make a woman of me with his stiff manhood, only a few minutes after meeting me for the first time.

“Look at Daddy’s cock,” he said, his voice somehow a mixture of authority and care. “Look what you did.”

“Oh God,” I moaned, obeying not so much because my daddy had commanded it but because my body did. I saw Daddy John’s penis, not jutting now but still very, very big, hanging down out of his jeans, with the signs of what he had done to me on it: my helpless wetness and the evidence that my daddy had taken my virginity. That naughtiest possible sight, as it seemed to me, made me push back against Daddy Eric as he fucked my pussy, desperate for more bad-girl pleasure. The soreness from my terrible paddling had definitely started to fade, and the warmth that lingered in each hard thrust from my blue-eyed daddy added itself — no, multiplied itself — into the pleasure his hardness brought. I came instantly, and I kept coming as I looked from Daddy John’s cock up into his stern-but-caring face then back down at his re-hardening cock, over and over.

Finally Daddy John stepped forward a little and held my face against his midriff, so that my cheeks pressed on his rock-hard abs. I closed my eyes, and my body kept climaxing on Daddy Eric’s cock until with his hands around my waist to hold me still, he too came, shooting a second load of semen into my increasingly sore pussy.

“That’s it, honey,” Daddy John murmured as Daddy Eric finished inside me, his voice seeming to rumble all the way through me. “You’re doing so good. You’re learning so fast.”

I breathed in and out, very deeply, a wave of exhaustion suddenly seeming to crash over me. Daddy John carried me to

my new bedroom, but I hardly noticed it. He stroked my hair.

“Daddy,” I whispered. “Daddy.”

“Yes, honey,” he said, softly. “What is it?”

“Was I... was I good?” I felt my cheeks get hot and I closed my eyes. Sleep seemed to rise up like warm bath around me.

“Yes, honey,” Daddy John murmured. “You were very good for your daddies. I think you’re going to do very well in your special program.”

The End

About Emily Tilton

USA Today bestselling author Emily Tilton, whose books have hit number one on Amazon in six different erotica categories, is a professor who lives in New England and has two wonderful children. Her stories are what she wishes her real sex-life could be.

To receive Emily's newsletter, with free reads and sneak peeks of upcoming titles, go to <https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/k8d6a9>

Delighting Dolores by Allie Belle

A MF story by Allie Belle

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Chapter 1

It had been a long time since Dolores had been as excited and nervous as she was when she and her husband of twenty years drove through the huge iron gates of Rawhide Ranch.

“Ready for this, doll?” Vincent reached over and gave her hand a squeeze.

“I am and I’m not,” she answered honestly. He would know instantly if she didn’t. She swore sometimes he knew her better than she knew herself. “I’m prepared to meet with Derek and ask all of the questions, but I don’t know if I’m prepared for the answers. Rawhide has been around for generations and its success might be impossible to mimic.”

“You might be right, but you’re not looking to mimic its success. You’re looking to create your own. Your house won’t be a huge resort. It won’t have tons of full-time staff, and while I know you want to be able to take in some Littles who may need a safe place to get on their feet, you’re not looking for them to stay permanently. Plus, you have your brothers and me to help you. This is not a solo endeavor, my love.”

“I know it’s not.”

It was true. The mansion Dolores inherited from her parents had once been a foster home for boys who were

looking for their last chance to make something of themselves. They needed tough love and a firm foundation to finally be given the chance to grow and thrive before going out and truly fending for themselves in the real world. But the foster system had changed so much. It had become extremely political, and as her parents got older they were unable to keep up with the demands of the legal responsibilities of fostering. When they'd passed the year before, they'd left the mansion to her, and everything else to her thirteen foster brothers. Hundreds of boys had come through their doors. Some stayed a day, some a year or more, but some simply became a permanent fixture in the family, and even when they'd aged out of the system they never left, and her parents never asked them to. Aside from Apollo, she was older than every single one of her brothers, but that had never mattered. They were her support, her protectors, and she loved them with everything she had inside of her. Nothing about this endeavor would even be close to coming to fruition without them and her solid rock sitting next to her.

Resting her head against the headrest, she closed her eyes and forced in a few slow, deep breaths.

Ever since she had met Apollo's girl, Charlotte, and heard her story, the ageplay lifestyle had called to her. Charlotte was one of the sweetest, purest souls she'd ever met, and she and Littles like her deserved a safe place to call their own. Dolores had traveled all over with Vince, who'd been active military for their entire marriage. She'd been to BDSM clubs of all kinds, but she'd never found a place that was specifically for Littles and the Caregivers who loved them. She'd begun to dream that her childhood home could become just that, but until she'd had the deed transferred to her, it had never felt like a possibility. Now it wasn't only a dream, but a reality, and she

was at Rawhide Ranch to make sure she did everything right straight out of the gate. She hoped, at least. The tenseness and pressure started to creep back into her body as they pulled up to the front steps of the world renowned BDSM Ranch and Vince turned off the car. The giant doors of the main building opened and a petite woman and a hulking man approached as she and Vince climbed out of the car.

“Hi, welcome to Rawhide Ranch, Mr. and Mrs. Esposito. I’m Erika, Ranch manager and Master Derek’s personal assistant, and this is Moses. He’ll take care of parking your car and getting your belongings to your room while I get you checked in and take you to meet with Derek.” She smiled brightly as she spoke.

“Please call us Dolores and Vincent. It’s nice to meet you both.” Dolores stuck out her hand as she introduced herself and her husband. Vincent might be her Dom, but she had always been the more outspoken one. He always stood like a silent sentry at her side as a source of constant love and strength. He was the perfect opposite of her in every way, and she was deliriously thankful he’d walked into her life at such a young age.

“It’s nice to meet you, too.” Erika shook her hand and Moses did the same.

The large man had a kind smile, and as he turned to shake Vincent’s hand Dolores couldn’t help but notice his beautiful hair as it cascaded like a black curtain down his back. He was a gorgeous specimen of a man, that was for sure.

Vince handed his keys over and took Dolores’ hand as they followed Erika up the steps and into the oversized double doors of Rawhide Ranch.

“I can’t believe we’re finally here. I feel like we’ve been planning this trip forever.” Dolores’ heart pounded in her chest. She’d heard so many amazing things about the Ranch. She felt like a kid in a candy store, and she couldn’t wait to dive in head first. She wanted to learn everything, experience everything. And she wanted to do it all now.

“It’s only been a month since we made the plans, doll,” Vince reminded her, squeezing her hand.

With a sigh and a subtle eye roll she shrugged. “A month is a long time for an epic vacation that’s helping to set up the future of my dreams.” She knew she was being a little dramatic and that her tone left little to be desired, but really, didn’t he understand the magnitude of what was happening?

Vince gave her hand a tighter squeeze, a warning about her attitude. He was a stickler about respect in public, and while they were functioning as equals outside of their suite during this trip, he was her Daddy Dom, and he wouldn’t hesitate to remind her of that at any point if he thought it was what she needed from him. And not that she would admit it, but boy, did she need it. Her mind was going a million miles a minute and she could feel the stress and tension take her over like a permanent fixture. She needed a good, long, hard play session with Daddy.

“Master Derek tells me you’re starting your own home for Littles?” Erika chimed in as they made their way across the expanse of the Rawhide lobby.

“Not so much a permanent home, but I do hope to help some of those that are lost, and to also create a safe community for those of us in the lifestyle to congregate and play. My house isn’t as big as the Ranch, though, not by a long shot. I’m not looking to poach anyone or anything. I just

respect what you all have built here and hope to bring just a tiny bit of it to the south.” She scrambled to explain, wanting to be sure that everyone understood why they had come to the Ranch. She didn’t want any ill will or to burn any bridges with any of the people she encountered.

“We’re glad to have you and to answer any questions you might have for us. No one is worried about poaching or anything of the sort. This isn’t the first time Master Derek has had guests at the Ranch for research purposes. There can never be enough safe spaces for lifestylers, that’s for sure.”

Derek had told her almost the exact same thing about not being worried about any kind of competition, but it was nice to hear it from staff, as well. She didn’t want anyone to think her intentions were not pure and genuine.

Taking a few deep breaths, she took a real look around the lobby for the first time since they entered. It was warm and inviting, with an understated opulence that should have contradicted the western style. The massive windows brought in a ton of natural light and people buzzed about with smiles on their faces. It was everything she’d imagined and more, and they’d only been there for like five minutes.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d think I was in any other resort on the planet,” Vince mused.

Erika laughed. “We hear that a lot, but stick around long enough and you’re liable to see a Little running through here covered in glitter with a Top hot on their heels, or even the occasional submissive on a leash. While we are vastly known for our Littles’ Program, we welcome all kinks here as long as everyone is practicing RACK.”

“Risk-Aware Consensual Kink. Not enough people use that term, if you ask me.” Vince nodded in approval. He wasn’t an

overly difficult man to impress, but Dolores was still filled with warmth that he seemed to be so happy.

“Agreed. BDSM can be extremely dangerous if everyone isn’t fully aware of the risks. That’s why we offer an array of training programs from professionals all over the world, and our employees are very-well versed in any and all different kinds of play that could occur under their watch.” Erika nodded as she showed the couple into a small office.

Dolores made mental notes of things to add to her employee and visitor handbooks. She didn’t know if she would be able to offer the education the Ranch could, but she now knew exactly where to send her people for the necessary training if it seemed like they needed it.

“We’ve heard great things about the dungeon. I’m eager to explore it.”

While Dolores was excited about every aspect of the Ranch, Vince was all about the dungeon. He couldn’t wait to get her down to the fully stocked, top-of-the-line, play space. She was in charge of mostly everything about their house, but he would be taking all of the notes for the dungeon they were going to eventually put in their basement. She wanted to cater mostly to the ageplay community, but she knew that a lot of the players had other kinks, as well, and she wanted them to be able to explore those in a safe place. Plus, they needed a space to have their own needs as a couple met.

“I’m kind of partial to it. It’s one of my favorite places on the whole Ranch,” Erika endorsed with a tiny blush creeping up her cheeks. “My husband and I play there as often as we can. We have a private play space in our house on Rawhide Ridge, but it’s nothing compared to here.”

“I remember reading about Rawhide Ridge. It’s a housing development, right?”

Typically, Vince was a man of few words, but he kept the conversation going, which surprised her. He must have been more excited than she realized.

“Yep, Master Derek purchased the land a few years ago and has transformed it into a kink-friendly housing community. People tend to visit the Ranch and decide to stay, so we needed to expand the opportunities for those who wanted to do so. Almost all of our employees now own homes on the Ridge, as well.”

“That’s fantastic. Is there any need that can’t be filled by this place?” Dolores teased.

A door opposite the one they’d entered through opened and who she assumed to be Master Derek walked through. “If you can think of one, I’d love to hear about it,” he answered jovially as he put out his hand to her. “Derek Hawkins, and you must be the Espositos. It’s good to finally meet you.”

“It’s nice to meet you, as well. We’re excited to be here,” Dolores answered.

“Let’s go into my office and have a chat, shall we?” Master Derek opened the door wider and indicated they should precede him. “Erika, Sadie is going to come bursting through your door any minute asking about our date. Please tell her that I haven’t forgotten, and we’ll be leaving at the time we already discussed this morning.”

Erika giggled. “I’ve got your back, Sir.”

“Thank you. I’d be lost without you, darlin’.” Derek chuckled as he shut the door and turned toward them. “First word of advice I can give, get yourself a type-a-personality

assistant you can count on, because no matter how organized or on top of things you think you are, you're going to need help, lots of it."

"Noted." Dolores gave a small nod. "What's the saying? It takes a village..."

"When you're talking about managing rambunctious Littles, that saying takes on a whole new meaning. Trust me." He sat down behind his desk. "Please make yourselves comfortable." He swept his hand in front of him, indicating the two empty chairs across from him.

"You've built an impressive place here," Vince said as he sat down and pulled Dolores down onto his lap.

She didn't mind the closeness at all. With him being in the military they spent a ton of time apart, so they took every advantage of the time they had together. Plus, she knew she would be doing most of the talking, and with the nervous butterflies invading her insides, she was grateful for her husband's physical reassurance.

"Thank you, it's certainly an ever-growing, ever-changing labor of love. So, tell me about the plans for your house." Derek leaned back in his chair, his relaxed demeanor allowing her to let go of some of her nerves.

"There isn't much to tell yet. We're at the very beginning stages," Dolores reminded him.

"Yes, I remember seeing that in your emails, but a lot can change in a few weeks' time. It will also help me point you in the right direction if you give me a refresher of your vision of what you're trying to create."

Dolores took a deep breath. "Well, where we live there isn't really a place for age players and I want to create one."

Derek nodded. “It can be difficult, for sure. There are some amazing BDSM clubs around with accommodations for age players, but some that still don’t recognize AP as acceptable under the BDSM umbrella. Do you have experience with ageplay or age regression?”

“Not a whole ton, which is why I wanted to spend some time here. The oldest of all of my brothers has been with his girlfriend since junior high. She’s a Little and their dynamic has always fascinated me.”

Dolores knew it sounded strange that she was so passionate about ageplay and Littles when she barely had any interaction with them, but she couldn’t help it. The lifestyle called to her, even if she wasn’t a part of it. Apollo and Charlotte were the closest she came to the dynamic. She’d listened to them complain about how hard it was to find a place for them to be who they were, and they had friends who felt the same. She knew more than one of her younger brothers had the same proclivities as Apollo, and she really just wanted her entire family to have a safe space to grow and explore.

“You’re not a Little then?”

Dolores laughed. “No, Sir. Before I met this man, I didn’t even identify as a submissive.”

“A lot of people only feel submissive to one person. There’s nothing wrong with that. Are you interested in looking for a Little of your own?”

She wasn’t a Little, she knew that for sure, but did she want a Little of her own? Did Vincent? He’d never expressed a need like that to her, but what if he did? Those were some questions she would definitely need to ponder and talk to her husband about.

“I’ve not really considered that as an option, honestly. I guess I’m not opposed to the idea if something should happen organically, but we’re not here seeking anyone out right now.”

“Understood. Well, any experience you would like to garner while you’re here can certainly be arranged, and we have classes on all sorts of aspects of the dynamic available. Do you have any specific questions for me right now, or would you like to see the rest of the Ranch?”

“If it’s okay with you, maybe we could go to our room and rest for a bit before we take a tour? It’s been a long day,” Vincent interjected, before she could jump at the chance to see the whole Ranch.

She was exhausted, but they only had so much time and she didn’t want to waste a second of it. Apparently, her husband had other plans.

“Absolutely. Just call down when you’re ready and we’ll set you up with a guide. I’d also like to invite you both to my house for dinner during your stay.” He paused, his eyes lighting, and grinned. “Not tonight, though, because as you may have heard, I have a very important date tonight.”

“Oh, that’s not necess— Ouch!” She rubbed the spot on her thigh where Vincent pinched.

“We’d love to come to dinner. Thank you,” Vince accepted.

Derek smiled knowingly. “Great. Sadie loves to play hostess and she will have some insights for you that I wouldn’t necessarily think of. Her perspective of the Ranch is basically the opposite of mine. I’ll let you two get settled. Erika has your room information for you, and I’ll be in touch about

dinner as soon as I let my Little wife know we're going to have company."

Dolores forced a smile as they said their goodbyes and got their key from Erika. She didn't listen to anything the woman told them as she planned the angry rant she was going to deliver to her husband as soon as they were alone. She stomped out of the office ahead of him. Unfortunately, she was forced to slow her gait because she had no idea where she was going. Maybe she should have listened better, dammit.

Chapter 2

As soon as they walked into the room and Vince shut the door, she turned on him. “Why did you pinch me? And why do we have to wait to tour the Ranch? We’re only here for so long, Vince. What gives?”

He stood quietly while she flailed her arms and paced in front of him. Sometimes his unwavering calmness pissed her off even more. Stopping in front of him, she planted her hands on her hips and stomped a foot. “Are you going to say anything?”

“Are you finished?”

She widened her arms, “When someone stops speaking that usually indicates they’re finished, doesn’t it?”

Vince’s jaw ticked and that simple gesture made her stomach flip. “Strip.”

“What? No, I don’t want to. We have a tour to get to and I’m hungry.” She crossed her arms over her chest and looked away. She wanted to drop the sass and do exactly what he’d instructed, but her mood wouldn’t allow it. If he wanted her naked, he was going to have to work harder to get her that way.

In two steps, he closed the distance between them. Hooking his finger under her chin, he forced her gaze back to his. Her heart hammered against her ribs as their eyes met.

“I didn’t ask what you wanted. It’s been a long day and you’re tired and more stressed than you’re letting on, but you can’t hide from Daddy. I know you better than you know yourself, doll.”

Shit. He was right and she hated that he was right. She was working so hard to appear calm and professional, and she thought she’d been doing a good job. Apparently not.

“Stop fretting, baby. No one else can see it.”

She sighed but stayed silent.

“I want you to stand right here and take your clothes off. I’m going to go into the bathroom and start the tub and then I will be back. Be a good girl and say, ‘yes, Daddy’.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she replied without thinking. No matter what she told herself about her mood she didn’t want to fight with him, and a bath sounded pretty damn amazing.

“Good girl.” He leaned in and placed a chaste kiss on her lips before letting her chin go and leaving her to do as she’d been told.

Closing her eyes, she sighed as she toed off her black pumps, then unceremoniously took off the rest of her clothes. Dropping everything in a pile at her feet, she felt a peace wash over her. Something about being completely naked was so freeing. She loved it and her Daddy knew that, big jerk.

“That’s my good girl,” Vince praised as he came back into the room. “Now, one more thing before you get in the tub and I order up some dinner.” As he spoke, he was undoing his belt.

Her nipples tightened in excitement as the sound of it being pulled from his belt loops reached her ears.

God, she loved that sound.

“Over the bed, baby. Daddy is going to give you some stripes to help calm your mind.”

“I don’t need stripes. The bath will calm me enough,” she lied even as she made her way to the bed and draped herself over the side.

“Don’t lie to Daddy unless you’d like to be wearing a plug every time you leave this room for the remainder of the trip.”

“Yes, Sir. I mean no, Sir, I don’t want to have to wear a plug.” That would totally screw with her mind when she was trying to focus and be professional, and he knew it.

“No Sirs tonight, baby. Only Daddy.”

She rested her cheek on the cool comforter, relishing his words. Her Daddy was a lot softer than her Sir, and as much as she loved his sadistic side, the idea of being taken care of in his special way for the remainder of the evening sounded lovely.

“I’m going to give you just enough to remind you that you’re not alone in all of this. I know this trip is very important to you, but you are not alone. You hear me?”

“Yes, Daddy.” She squeezed her eyes closed to stave off the tears that threatened to escape. She was putting too much pressure on herself and she needed to remember to lean on the people around her. The house was her vision, her dream, but it didn’t mean she had to make it happen all on her own.

Vincent stepped up beside her and placed a stabilizing hand on the small of her back. That was the only warning she

got before the first line of fire whipped across her backside. She hissed in pain just in time for the next strike to land. She didn't try to keep track of how many times the leather bit into her flesh, she just needed to feel the pain of the sting. Absorb it and hold onto it as the reminder her Daddy had meant it to be. The heat built and built until she thought she was going to cry, then it stopped. Vince laid the belt on the bed next to her and rubbed her scorched skin with his hand.

“How's that feel, baby?” he asked, giving her ass a squeeze.

“It hurts.” She went up onto her toes, pushing herself toward his touch.

“Yes, that's the point.” He kept kneading her ass until she all but purred at the attention. Then he scooped her into his arms and took her into the bathroom, where the giant tub was just about full.

“Good timing, Daddy.” She smiled up at him when he set her on her feet so he could check the water temperature before helping her in.

“I'm pretty well known for my timing,” he teased as he held her hand so she didn't slip.

The tub was deeper than she'd expected, and the water was hot, but not too hot. “Mmmm,” she moaned as she sank down into the engulfing heat. Her ass stung like fire, but she couldn't care less. The hot water seemed to seep into her muscles, forcing the remaining stress completely out as she laid her head back against the cool porcelain.

“Relax for a bit while I call us up some dinner and then I'll come back and see to you.”

She let her head fall to the side and smiled up at him. “Are you going to get in with me?”

“Not this time. I want you to relax, but I promise you’ll get plenty of special Daddy time later if you behave.” He winked as he left the room, and a shudder of excitement went through her. Letting Daddy take complete control for a little while was exactly what she needed.

Dolores was gently woken by Vince’s hands roaming her body. She gasped in surprise to find herself still in the tub. She’d never fallen asleep that soundly while in a bath before.

“Hi.” She smiled up at the kind eyes of her husband.

“Hi, sleeping beauty.”

“How long was I asleep?”

“Long enough for your skin to prune and the water to begin to chill. You needed to rest, but dinner will be here soon, and I didn’t want to let you sleep too long and mess up your night.”

“Thank you for taking care of me,” she sighed dreamily.

“Always and forever, doll. Are you ready to get washed?”

“Are you sure you don’t want to get in with me?” She bit the side of her lip and smiled suggestively.

“Of course I want to, but there are other things I want to do more, so your needy little body is just going to have to wait.” As he spoke his hand traveled to her nether region. Her legs fell open of their own accord as he got to her perfectly

manicured mound and slid his fingers through her pussy lips and straight to where she wanted to feel him most.

“Daddy.” She moaned, arching up toward his touch.

“Shh, I’m just going to make this fire burn for me.”

“It’s already burning. It’s been burning all day,” she whined.

He hadn’t let her come in almost seventy-two hours and she was over it.

“Think about how your body is going to explode for me when I finally allow it,” he teased as he pumped his fingers in and out of her, curling them so he hit that magical spot inside of her. He drove her wild as he took her so close to the brink that she had to fight with all her might to hold herself back. If she came without his permission there would be hell to pay, and she was in no mood for that level of punishment from her deviously creative dominant. Especially at a place like Rawhide, where the possibilities were endless.

“Daddy, please,” she begged. She needed him to give her permission or stop the delicious torture, or she was going to lose it.

Slowly, Vince pulled his fingers out of her and tears pricked her eyes as her body sagged. “You’re mean.” She pouted up at him through tear-filled eyes.

“I know, but I promise it will be worth it.” He leaned in and took her mouth with his. The searing kiss did nothing to help calm her down. If anything, it made things worse, but at least she wasn’t in danger of coming as long as he kept his hands away from her.

“I love you,” he growled as he stopped the kiss and rested his forehead against hers.

“I love you, too.”

“This isn’t easy for me either, you know.” He stood to get a towel and she could see his erection pressing against the front of his dark jeans. He made no show of trying to hide as he adjusted himself into a more comfortable position within the tight confines, and Dolores couldn’t help but smile at his suffering. At least she wasn’t alone. Whatever he had planned was going to be absolutely amazing, and she couldn’t wait.

Vincent helped her stand and wrapped the giant fluffy towel around her just as the knock on their door came announcing that dinner had been delivered.

“I’ll get the door while you dry off a bit.” He kissed the tip of her nose and left her again.

Looking around, she tried to spot her clothes, but there were none, which meant he was going to keep her naked. Shaking her head, she rolled her eyes.

“You want to play, Daddy? Okay, let’s play,” she said to herself as she dried off and went to the mirror. Quickly, she undid the tight bun she’d put in her hair that morning to feel more serious and professional. As she’d hoped, her dark wavy hair fell perfectly down her back in a sexy, albeit messy cascade. She took a few minutes to fluff it out a bit the way she knew Vince loved before peeking out the door to make sure they were alone. With all the confidence in the world, she sashayed out to where Vince was setting out their food, but before she could get too far, he looked up at her and grinned.

“Stop right there, doll.”

“You didn’t leave me any clothes, so I figured this is what you wanted.”

“It’s exactly what I wanted, but I can tell by the look on your face that you think you’re going to get a leg up on me somehow. So to prevent any more ideas about that, I’m going to nip it right now.” He pointed down at the floor. “Crawl.”

Surprised at the command, she tried not to let it show as she sank down to her knees as gracefully as possible. Neither of them were spring chickens anymore, so he didn’t usually ask her to spend a lot of time on her knees, but if Daddy wanted her to crawl right then, that’s exactly what she was going to do.

Keeping her eyes locked on his, she slowly made her way toward him on all fours. She moved her body slowly, allowing her generous breasts and hips to sway. She was determined to gain as much ground as she could in this little game of tug-of-war they were currently engaged in.

The side of his mouth turned up in a smile and he shook his head slowly. “Oh, baby. Daddy can’t wait to bring you down a peg.”

She knelt up at his feet and let her eyes travel down to his groin. She shivered at the idea of taking him in her mouth and sucking him dry, but as she reached for him, he caught her hands.

“You’re not in charge here, doll. I know you’re going to spend a lot of this trip asserting yourself, but when it comes to us, especially in this room, Daddy is the boss. If you want something, you’ll remember to ask nicely, or Daddy will make you beg.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

She swallowed past the tight lump in her throat as her entire body responded to his threat. Vince was not in the mood

for games. That meant she had two choices: she could continue on as planned and push him to unleash the sadistic side she loved to hate, or she could obey and let her Daddy lavish her body with pleasures beyond her comprehension. Okay, they would both get pleasure either way, but one way was a whole lot less agonizing than the other.

“I can see the battle in your eyes, baby. What’s it going to be?”

She allowed herself a moment to think before settling on her choice. “I’ll remember to ask nicely.”

For now.

“Good girl” He leaned down to growl in her ear. “But I might still make you beg later.”

“I’ll look forward to it, Daddy.”

Chapter 3

Dinner went a whole lot like bath time had: with teasing touches between bites and him driving her wild. It was fun and maddening all at the same time. The best part, though, was that Dolores didn't have to make any decisions. Not one. Vince fed her each bite and even handed her drink to her sporadically. Her only job was to receive and feel.

“We should do this more often,” Vince mused as he used his fingers to torment her some more.

“Yes, please.” Dolores sighed as she relaxed against the backrest and let her head lull backward. She couldn't lie. Even though her body was burning with need and all she wanted to do was come, she loved every minute of the salacious torture he was putting her through.

“It's almost time to go see the dungeon, baby. You ready for that?”

“Tonight? We didn't even have our tour yet.”

“I don't need a tour to show me how to play with my submissive, but if you're too tired...” He let the words hang.

“I'm not. I'm just surprised.”

“Good, that means I've got you on your toes.”

“Currently I’m on my butt,” she sassed.

Vince pushed his chair back from the table. “Well then why don’t you get down on your knees and suck Daddy’s cock like a good girl so I can focus on you when we get downstairs?” He spread his legs and raised an expectant brow at her.

He didn’t have to ask twice. Dolores sank to her knees in front of him and presented herself, just like he’d taught her to so many years ago.

Shoulders back, hands clasped behind her, she looked straight into his eyes. Vince was not the sort of Dom that exerted his dominance by having her avert her eyes. No, he always wanted her to look at him. He told her that her expressive eyes made it easy for him to garner information without either of them having to say a word. She didn’t mind. Well, except when she did. He read all of her moods, even the ones she didn’t want him to. It was impossible to hide from him in any way.

“Daddy, may I please suck your cock?”

“You may.”

He smiled as he undid his belt and the button on his jeans, and then laid his hands on the armrests of the chair. She finished the job by pulling down his zipper and freeing his erection from the confines of his boxers. Licking her lips, she once again made eye contact with him as she stuck out her tongue and licked him from his balls to the tip before taking him fully into her mouth.

“Good girl,” he groaned.

Hollowing her cheeks, she sucked harder and took him all the way down her throat. She swallowed, letting the muscles

of her throat tease him.

“Keep that up and I’m only going to last a few minutes,” he warned.

That was just fine with her. She loved pleasuring him, and the better she did, the sooner he would reciprocate, and she really needed a release. Doubling her efforts, she lavished him with every attention she knew would drive him wild, paying special attention to the sensitive folds just around the head of his rock-hard cock.

“Daddy’s going to come, baby, and you’re going to swallow every last drop.” His voice was deep and raspy, like it took every effort to get the words out before he exploded in her mouth.

She slowed her actions, swallowing his offering and gently milking him until she was satisfied he was indeed finished. It wasn’t until she let him slide from her lips that she recognized the twinge of pain coming from her knees. Slowly, she lowered herself onto her hip and snuggled against his thigh as she stretched her legs in front of her. It sure was hell getting older. In her prime she could have stayed in that position for hours.

Vince’s hand brushed the side of her hair gently. “You okay, baby?”

“I’m fine,” she lied.

He caught it instantly and tightened his grip on her hair in warning.

“My knees were hurting a little bit, but only after I was done, and they’re okay now.” She amended her answer, not wanting to ruin the tender moment.

He released his grasp and went back to petting her. “Good girl,” he praised.

“Thank you, Daddy.”

They stayed like that in a peaceful, companionable silence for a few minutes until Vince announced it was time to head down to the dungeon.

Her stomach danced in excitement as he fixed his pants and went to their special suitcase that contained all of their club items and pulled out her long silk robe.

“You won’t be needing anything other than this.” He winked. “And I’m only offering it because I’m not sure about parading you naked down the hallway.”

She wasn’t afraid to be naked, and wasn’t ashamed of her body in any way. It probably didn’t hurt that Vince absolutely loved showing off what was his. His pride in her always bolstered her confidence.

“It’s a BDSM resort; I doubt anyone would bat an eye.”

“You’re probably right, but you know how much I love unwrapping you like a present once I get you where I want you.” He draped the robe over her shoulders and she put her arms inside as he nibbled and kissed her neck. “Are you going to be a good girl for Daddy?” he asked, wrapping the tie around her waist and cinching the robe closed.

“Do you want me to be your good girl?” she teased, pressing her bottom into his groin.

Vince chuckled, a deep, almost sinister, sound. “Your choice, doll. I get to have my fun either way.” He nipped her ear.

She knew he wasn't lying. He would be happy to continue taking her cues and responding as he saw fit. She loved how easy and comfortable their relationship was. Even with all of the time they spent apart due to his career as a soldier, they very rarely missed a beat.

Grabbing the toy bag, he held out his hand to her.

"I'm sure the Ranch dungeon is stocked. You might not even need that."

"I like using our own stuff for certain things; you know that. But don't worry, baby, I plan to take every advantage of the resources here. We'll have plenty of new experiences together." He led her out of the room and down the hall toward the elevator as he spoke.

"I'm not worried, Daddy."

Everything about the trip down to the dungeon put her into a more excited and aware headspace. The walk down the hall in only her robe, the long elevator ride down to the lowest level of the Ranch, the big scary guard in front of the heavy doors that looked like chains on a St. Andrew's Cross: it was perfection.

The doors seemed to open slowly and as soon as they did, they were greeted by the sounds only a BDSM dungeon could provide. Dolores' blood hummed as it pumped through her veins.

"You're vibrating," Vince teased in her ear.

"And you're not? Look at this place, it's amazing!"

They couldn't see any of the play from the door, and if it weren't for the slapping sounds and the noises that could only be made by a human in the throes of pleasure, it would have seemed like any normal club/bar scene. Well, that wasn't

totally true. Upon looking around, the erotic art would be totally inappropriate for an everyday bar, but she loved it, and wanted to go around and study the unique beauty of every piece.

“It’s pretty spectacular, that’s for sure. Let’s get a drink and observe a little, shall we?”

“A glass of wine sounds fantastic.”

They ordered drinks and found a spot to sit along the railing that overlooked the vast play space. It was an armchair with an ottoman in front of it. Vince sat in the chair and pulled her to sit on the ottoman between his legs. She rested back against him as she sipped her wine and checked out what was happening on the play floor. There was more than one scene going on and it was fun and interesting to just sit and watch them all from a distance.

“You thinking about what you’ll look like to all the observers when Daddy has you all tied up and on display?”

He knew her so well. She had replaced herself with every submissive below in her mind and imagined what they were thinking and feeling as their dominants engaged in all sorts of play.

Vince’s hand slid over her shoulder and slowly pulled the robe to the side, revealing one of her breasts. Her nipple instantly tightened as excitement coursed through her. It seemed Daddy wasn’t going to wait to play any longer. He rolled her nipple between thumb and forefinger with the perfect amount of pressure. Arching back against him, she moaned. She was so primed for his touch that everything sent electric shockwaves straight to her clit.

“Here, doll, hold my drink so I can use both hands to play. Just make sure you don’t spill or Daddy will have to punish you for making a mess.”

He set the drink in her hand and she glared at it. Like her wine glass, it was almost completely full. It was going to take a lot of focus and willpower not to allow any of the liquid to slosh over the side. Her husband was a devious man when he wanted to be. He slipped the other side of her robe down so the entire top half of her was exposed to him and anyone that should care to look over at them.

He began to play with her nipples as he kissed, licked, sucked, and nipped at her exposed neck and shoulders. She held her arms as still as possible as she reveled in the attention he was bestowing upon her.

“I bet your pussy is dripping with your sweet honey even though Daddy hasn’t touched it yet.” He trailed his hand to cover her mound but made no move to touch her where she craved him most.

“Please, Daddy,” she begged.

“Please what, baby? What do you want Daddy to do?”

“Touch my pussy,” she answered obediently, knowing if this was the mood he was in then she wasn’t going to get anything she wanted unless she fell in line and did as she was told.

His hand disappeared from her mound for a moment, but the one at her nipple continued to play, which kept her mind occupied. He took the drink from her hand and took a sip before replacing it and leaning to the side. She heard a zip and instantly knew he was retrieving something from their toy bag. A blindfold was set over her eyes, the elastic pulled around the

back of her head and shrouding her world in darkness. Taking away senses was one of Vince's favorite things to do to her. She absolutely loved to hate it when he did, because she never came harder than when he took away her sight and hearing abilities.

He didn't put headphones over her ears, though, and she kind of liked that she could still hear the play going on around her as he did whatever he wanted to her willing body. He undid the belt of her robe and opened it completely, then his hands were back at her breasts for a moment. She heard the vibrator before it touched her skin, but it surprised her nonetheless. She jerked when it made contact with her nipple.

"Careful, baby. Remember what I said would happen if you spilled our drinks," Vincent growled in her ear, making her shudder and shake the cups even more. A drop sloshed out of her wine glass and slid down the side. She gasped when she felt the moisture hit her hand. "Should I be nice and let you take another sip to reduce the danger?"

"Please, Daddy."

He was still holding the vibrator against her nipple and it was driving her wild. Then he added a second vibrator to the other breast. Years ago they had found mini vibrators that slipped over the tip of your finger and they had quickly become a go-to toy. Vince had eight of them he could use at once if he was really trying to overstimulate her. She hoped this wasn't one of those times.

"You've been such a good girl, go ahead and take a sip, but not too much. Daddy is going to keep playing." He flitted the vibrators across the tips of her nipples, and as she brought the cup closer to her lips, he increased the pressure. She hissed as he pressed harder and harder against her sensitive peaks.

Taking a quick sip, she moved the glass away from her mouth again and Vince backed off a little bit.

With his evil little vibrators on each hand—she wasn't sure how many he was using, but it was definitely more than one—he roamed her body, getting close to sensitive spots and then pulling away, only to return to the spots and holding the vibrators in place for so long it set her teeth on edge. It went on and on until he'd had her drain her entire glass of wine and he had done the same, and she had still not been permitted to come. She was about ready to castrate him when the vibrators finally stopped buzzing and he closed her robe around her. The satin stuck to her sweat-dampened skin.

“Okay, baby, time for me to put you out of your misery. What do you think?” He slid the mask from her eyes and kissed her temple.

“Finally,” she sighed.

Chuckling, he helped her to her feet and made sure she was steady before standing up himself. Her legs felt like jelly as they walked hand in hand back to the bar to return the glasses, then went down the steps onto the play floor.

Vince stopped her in front of a spanking bench with a “reserved” sign on it. She'd been on plenty of spanking benches before, but this one was something special. It was covered in black leather with slightly raised metal studs all over it, and had the usual set of wrist, leg and ankle cuffs, as well as a body strap. But it also had a second set that she could see had tiny spikes on the inside of the bands and cuffs. Just thinking about what that would feel like made her shiver with fear. Would Vince use the spiked ones? She had no idea. The man was always full of surprises.

Coming up from behind her, he took the robe from her shoulders. She shivered as the air of the room wafted against her damp skin. He hung the robe up on some kind of rack that was next to the bench, then patted the black leather padding in silent instruction. Dolores climbed up on it and rested her head against the cool surface as Vincent secured her with straps to her wrists, waist, knees, and ankles. She let out a relieved sigh when she realized he was ignoring the spiked straps. For now, anyway. Testing the bindings, she deduced she was definitely going nowhere until Daddy decided he was finished with her. Then came the blindfold again.

“I want all your attention on me, baby. No one else even exists.”

He was a damn liar, but she wasn't about to tell him that. She knew how packed the dungeon was, and how many people were simply lounging in different areas enjoying the scenes around them, but that was the best part about public play. She knew everyone was watching her man give her a special kind of attention that no one else could ever give her, and in turn, they were going to watch her take it and fly.

“I'm going to warm you up. I want you to relax.”

Dolores took a deep breath and let it out slowly, letting the bench absorb her weight completely. The studs were cool compared to the leather, but she only really noticed them when she shifted slightly.

“Good girl,” Vince praised as she felt the falls of her favorite flogger brush against her skin. As spontaneous as her husband could be, there were tiny things that gave away his plans. The flogger was one of them. As he began to let the falls flick against her, she knew this was going to be a long session. The kind that she loved. The slow build that ended

with fireworks. The kind of play she needed more than anything else.

The flogger fell more times than she could count as it kissed her from shoulder blades to upper thighs. Every once in a while, a strand would sneak in and flick against her pussy, making her moan. Soon it was obvious that those strikes were more intentional than not, and she was soaring toward the peak of the climax that had been withheld from her for days. Her skin burned hot and she shook with the effort it took to hold back the orgasm that was right below the surface.

“Come for me, baby,” Vince commanded, striking her pussy hard, then shoving something inside her soaked channel.

Almost instantly everything inside of her coiled tightly, then exploded as she came, screaming out in pleasure as he pumped the dildo in and out of her. The orgasm seemed to last forever as wave after wave of pleasure washed over her. The tight ball of need inside her released slowly, creating a never-ending stream of pleasure, and then she was floating in a black pool of bliss.

Chapter 4

After the night she and Vince had, Dolores was feeling relaxed and rejuvenated, and completely empowered as they met with Erika in the lobby for their complete Ranch tour.

“Good morning! I asked my husband to come and meet you before we tour. He’s an attorney and takes care of all of the legal stuff for the Ranch and the College.” Erika smiled proudly as she introduced them to an older man. “This is Dolores and Vincent Esposito.”

“Jared Stark, nice to meet you.” He held out his hand and smiled. “My wife has filled me in on some of your plans. It’s great to see another property being made available to lifestylers, and I’m happy to give you my contact information if you run into any questions as you get underway.”

“That’s so kind of you, thank you.” Dolores beamed. Everyone at the Ranch was so kind and supportive of them, even though they were complete strangers. She could only imagine the level of support they showered on each other. Dolores couldn’t wait to build that kind of community around herself and her family.

“I’ll meet you for lunch when you’re done, little squirrel. No more work after this, hear me?”

“Yes, Sir.” Erika accepted a chaste kiss from him before he walked away.

“Are we keeping you from something?” Dolores asked in concern.

“Oh, no.” She waved her hand in her husband’s direction. “It’s supposed to be my day off, but I had to take a half day earlier in the week so I’m just making up the time. He just knows I have a habit of getting lost in my work.”

“We know how that goes.” Vince chuckled. “We won’t keep you too long.”

With that settled, Erika began to show them around. Dolores jotted down notes in her planner of things Erika said and things she herself saw that she might want to include in her house. Being in the Littles’ wing and seeing all of the men and women freely being themselves without a care in the world brought her a level of happiness she never even knew existed. The Little boys and girls engaged in classes, games, arts and crafts, and various other activities, just as they would if they were in an actual school setting. Even the staff all seemed happy and content. It was such a positive place to be. Even when Dolores witnessed the short correction of an out-of-sorts Little, it was obvious there were no hard feelings or ill will coming from either party.

“This place is magical,” Dolores said in amazement.

“Thank you,” Erika replied. “We work really hard to keep a positive environment where everyone feels welcome and can get their individual needs met.”

“It’s evident,” Vince agreed.

Next they saw the ageplay-themed rooms, the movie theater, and dorms before they headed down to the basement.

“The only problem this tour is creating for me is that we don’t have as much space to work with, and I want to provide all these things.” Dolores nibbled her lip and Vince wrapped his arm around her.

“We also won’t have the volume of visitors and we’re not running a hotel. The Ranch needs to have options for its residents and visitors, but our house is something different,” he reminded her.

“You’re right. I just need to keep perspective.”

“We have a lot of space, doll. It’s going to be amazing and everyone is going to love it.” He kissed the side of her head and she closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

She really didn’t want to start getting overwhelmed and stressed again. Especially over things she couldn’t control. She didn’t have hundreds of acres in the Montana mountains to work with; she had a mansion with a little bit of land. Granted, it was more land than a lot of their neighbors because of the location of their property. After the playground and pool went in, there would be room for some picnic tables and a large outdoor kitchen. Then they would have the gardens for people to stroll around in and enjoy.

“It is going to be great,” she agreed.

She nodded as the elevator doors opened and Erika continued the tour. She explained how the security for both entrances to the dungeon worked to make sure no Littles got in there if they were not in the right headspace. Then they saw the arcade and indoor playground and pool. It seemed the Ranch had two or more of everything. She reminded herself that it all made sense with the volume of people they catered to.

Even so, she was in awe as they visited each new area and Erika explained everything that went into the day-to-day tasks of running a place like Rawhide Ranch. The more she thought about it, the more grateful Dolores was that her project would be on a much, much smaller scale. She couldn't even imagine developing anything as huge as the Ranch, nor did she want to. She took her notes diligently as she thought about questions she'd need to ponder. The questions were more for her brother Apollo, who was heading up the construction on the house. She wasn't completely sure what was possible for a few of the ideas she had jumbling around in her brain and in her notes.

The last stop on their tour was Chef Connor's kitchen. It was the end of breakfast clean up and there were only a few workers bustling about, getting things prepared for lunch.

"This kitchen is the heart of the whole Ranch, I swear." Erika smiled widely as they approached a man in a chef's coat. "And this is the man that runs it all. Chef, this is Vincent and Dolores Esposito. They're here to see how the Ranch runs so they can open up their own house in the south."

"Oh, great! It's nice to meet you." The large man smiled kindly.

Dolores was just about to open her mouth and compliment the gorgeous, top-of-the-line, industrial kitchen when she was cut off.

"Daddy!" An adorable curvy brunette came from a back room carrying a laptop and looking close to tears. "I can't make it work. This is supposed to be a living room! Does it look like a living room to you?"

Connor turned all of his attention to the woman as she all but shoved the laptop in his face.

His brows furrowed and he tilted his head to the side. “Is that a television on the ceiling, jellybean?”

It must have been the straw that broke the camel’s back because the girl’s lip began to quiver and the tears began to fall. “That’s it. I quit. I can’t do it. I’m never going to learn this stupid program and then I’m never going to get my degree and I’m never going to be able to start my business. I should just give up now and become a shut-in and adopt twenty-seven cats.”

Her meltdown was adorable and heartbreaking all at the same time, but Connor didn’t miss a beat. Gently taking the computer from her, he closed it and set it on the stainless-steel countertop next to him. Turning back to her, he cupped her face between his hands and spoke calmly but with a confident authority that Dolores could recognize and respect. He sounded like her own husband on the rare occasion when she found herself spiraling out of control and in need of his gentle Daddy side.

“Listen to me, little girl. You’re going to get it; you just need someone to show you how to work the program and then you’ll be unstoppable.”

“Daddy, I can’t even think of names for twenty-seven cats,” she cried out, obviously way past the point of his consoling words.

Using the pads of his thumbs, he swiped away her tears. “You’re not adopting twenty-seven cats, jellybean. The only kitten allowed in my house is you, and since you’re also not listening to a word I’m saying, I want you to go lay in your kitty bed and close your eyes for a few minutes. I’ll be in to take care of you as soon as I’m finished here, and after that we can figure out a plan of action.”

The look in her eyes completely changed as the tension melted from her shoulders. “Yes, Daddy.”

“That’s my good girl.” Kissing her forehead, he turned her back in the direction she came from and sent her off with a swat to the bottom. “Close the door. I’ll be in as soon as I can,” he assured her.

They all waited in silence for the door to shut and Chef to turn his attention back toward them.

“I’m sorry about that. That’s my wife, Hayleigh. She’s taking some interior design courses and the computer programs have not been the easiest to learn. Unfortunately, I can’t help. Chefs aren’t really known for their technological skills.”

It was obvious by the slight tinge of blush staining his cheeks that the situation was difficult for him to handle. Like any good Daddy, he would want to swoop in and help his girl, but he didn’t have the skills or knowledge to do so.

“I’m a licensed interior designer,” Dolores offered. “Do you know what program she’s using?”

“No, but I can look.” Grabbing the computer, he opened it and typed in the password before passing it to her.

“No wonder she’s so frustrated. This is a terrible program. It’s the one they use in all the schools, but once a designer is out in the world, they immediately find something better. I can teach her the basics to get her through, and when she’s ready I can recommend better programs for her to use.”

Connor sighed in relief. “That would be a huge help. Do you have that kind of time, though? We don’t want to impede on your visit.”

“Actually, it would be helping me out, too.” Dolores admitted. “I want to start my house, but I don’t have a ton of interaction or access to very many Littles to bounce ideas off of. One of the things I’m hoping to do while I’m here is find a Little or a group of them that would allow me to spend time with them and pick their brains so I can make sure my house fills all of the needs it possibly can. Do you think she would know someone who would be willing? Or even someone who might let me stretch my Toppo skills a little bit?” Her stomach danced with butterflies. She’d always wanted to top a Little, but she’d never been brave enough to seek it out. She had topped a submissive a few times, but if she was opening a house that catered to mostly ageplayers, she figured she should get some hands-on experience with Littles, as well.

“In that case, let me discuss it with her after I give her the attention she needs, and maybe we can set something up for tomorrow?”

Tomorrow seemed so far away, but from what they’d witnessed of Hayleigh’s frustration level, she knew time with her Daddy was more important.

“Tomorrow would be great,” Vincent chimed in when she failed to respond. She felt bad for getting lost in her thoughts and she was glad Vince took over. “We have plenty more to see and do today.”

Taking a step back, she joined him at his side and slid her hand into his. Their fingers laced together, and he gave her hand a squeeze. Just that simple gesture told her so much. He was there for her, right beside her every step of the way, and he would support her in any and every way he could, just like he had since the day they started dating. He was her peace and calm.

“It’s a date, then. I’ll get a good breakfast in her and have her meet you at nine.”

Nine was a perfect time. It gave her time to wake up leisurely and enjoy breakfast with her husband. Maybe she could even goad him into spanking her before the tutoring session so she could feel more at ease. They said goodbye to Connor and went back to the lobby with Erika, who showed them where to find the list and times of available 101 education classes they could choose to attend.

Master Derek emerged from his office just as the couple were thanking Erika for her time. “Jared just called the office looking for you. Better go meet him before you find yourself in some hot water.” Derek winked at her.

“I was just putting in my hours from the other day, Sir,” Erika explained.

Derek rolled his eyes. “I told you you didn’t owe me any hours.”

“I know, but... wait you didn’t tell him that on the phone, did you?”

“No, I told him that when he came to my office this morning, madder than a puffed toad.”

Erika sighed and her shoulders drooped. Dolores knew the position. Apparently, Erika had landed herself in some trouble she hadn’t banked on. That was never a good feeling, especially for a submissive.

Derek spoke gently. “Go on, take the rest of the day, and next time maybe you’ll heed my words.” Erika nodded and gave them a half-smile before heading in the opposite direction they’d just come from.

“How’s your stay so far? Did you enjoy the tour?” Derek pulled their attention back to him.

“Everything has been great. The staff, food, amenities; everything has been top notch,” Vince assured him.

“Glad to hear that.” Derek smiled proudly. “I was hoping to catch up with you before you made more plans for the day. I spoke with Sadie and we’d like to have you up to the big house for dinner this evening if you don’t already have plans.”

“The big house?” Dolores asked, confused.

Derek laughed. “That’s what the staff and Littles call our house.”

“Oh, yes. We’d be delighted,” Dolores responded, remembering that Vincent had already accepted the unofficial invite the day before.

“Great. We’ll see you this evening, then. Enjoy the rest of your day.”

They thanked him and parted ways.

“What do you say we go to lunch and then check out some of these classes?” Vince asked, holding up the class schedule.

“And maybe the hot tub?” she added suggestively, curling her arms around him in a tight hug.

“That sounds perfect.” He leaned down and took her mouth in his.

After a long day of some pretty spectacular classes and then four orgasms in the private hot tub just outside their suite, Dolores and Vincent headed up to Master Derek’s home. She

was excited to spend some time getting to know Sadie, as she'd heard a lot about her from Erika, but hadn't had the chance to meet her yet.

The bubbly girl did not disappoint. She answered the door in baby-pink overall shorts with a rhinestone crown on the front, a crisp white t-shirt underneath, and her brunette hair in two high pigtails on either side of her head. She bounced on her toes as she showed them to the dining room, chattering on about how much she loved having company. It wasn't until Master Derek gave her a look that she stopped talking long enough for anyone else to get a word in edgewise. And then she pouted adorably as the adults talked about things Dolores imagined were pretty mundane to an excited Little.

That was, until Dolores mentioned tutoring Hayleigh, and how she was going to be looking for some Littles to spend time with to help her come up with some plans for her house.

"I might even need help coming up with a name for my house." Dolores shrugged. "Think you might know anyone who would want to help me with that?" she asked Sadie.

The Little girl nodded emphatically. "I know lots of Littles with lots of great and creative ideas for something like that. Maybe we can have a big playdate or somethin'?" Sadie looked at Master Derek in question.

"That's a great idea, Angel."

Just as they began to discuss plans, Vincent's cell phone rang. He furrowed his brows as he looked down at the screen.

"Excuse me, I have to take this." He pushed away from the table and walked quickly out into the hall.

Dolores' heart squeezed in her chest as all of the anxious, worst case scenarios went through her head. Were her brothers

okay? Was it something about the house?

Her worry must have been evident because Sadie got up from her spot and walked around the table to sit next to her.

“Are you okay? Can I maybe give you a hug? When I feel yucky sometimes a hug helps.”

Dolores half smiled and nodded, allowing Sadie to give her an awkward sideways hug since they were still sitting at the dining table.

“Thank you, sweet girl. I’m sure everything is fine.”

Only, the second Vince came back into the room she knew that wasn’t the case. “I’m really sorry to have to cut my visit short, but that was the colonel, and they need me on base as soon as possible. I’m being called back to duty.” He looked at her as he spoke, disappointment and frustration written all over his features.

She was disappointed, too. She really wanted to spend more time with him on the Ranch. There was still so much more she wanted to explore.

“That’s too bad,” Derek stated, “but we absolutely understand.”

“Are we leaving tonight?” Dolores asked, standing.

“I doubt there are any flights out tonight,” Sadie added, her voice sounding much more grown-up than it had just a few minutes prior. “Daddy, should I call Luna and have her book flights for the morning?”

“Just one ticket.” Vince shook his head. “I want you to stay here, doll. There’s no reason for you to go home just because I have to leave.”

“But...”

“No buts. You’re staying. Hear me?”

Tears filled her eyes and guilt filled her stomach. She was so glad he wanted her to stay, but staying without him just felt so wrong.

“Dolores is welcome to stay as long as she’d like,” Derek assured them.

“Thank you, sir. And yes, if someone can get me the earliest flight home, I would appreciate it.”

“On it.” Sadie jumped from the table and ran out of the room.

“Why don’t we cut our visit short so the two of you can spend the rest of the evening together?” Master Derek offered.

Dolores was thankful for the help and compassion. She hated the times that led up to her husband having to leave her, but times like this, where it was an unexpected blindside, were even more difficult to stomach. She just wanted to hold onto him tight and absorb him completely before he had to leave.

“That would be great. Thank you for understanding.” Vince grabbed her hand and pulled her to his side. His grip was tight, almost painful, and Dolores swallowed back tears. She hated this so much. She knew she had to be strong for him, but the second he left she was going to fall completely apart.

The trip back to the resort was shrouded in a heavy silence. By the time they got back to their suite, there was a full flight itinerary waiting for them with a note that said it was done and paid for, thanking them both for their service and dedication to the country. A lot of people did that: thanked her for her sacrifice. Sometimes she could take it, but times like this it felt like a punch to the gut, and she couldn’t be strong anymore.

Tears leaked from her eyes as she looked up at her husband's handsome face.

"I don't want you to leave," she whispered.

"I know, baby. I don't want to leave, either."

"Can we just run away?" she asked knowing it was ridiculous, but unable to stop herself.

Vince's lip twitched up into a half smile. "I wish we could, but we can't. That's not what either of us want."

"I just want you." She sobbed into his chest.

Lifting her into his arms, he took her to the bed and laid them side by side. She clung to him as she cried, and he rubbed her back. His snuffle almost broke her completely. This was hard on him, too.

"Vince?"

"Yeah, baby?"

"Will you please make love to me?"

She didn't have to ask twice. They took their time undressing one another and exploring each other's bodies as they made sweet, slow love to each other. It was the complete opposite of the experience the night before. There were no rules, no power dynamic, just two people connecting, coming together as one.

They spent the entire night in each other's arms memorizing each curve, each muscle, each sound and smell. She committed everything she could to a memory she could hold tight to until they could be together again, and by the time he left in the wee hours of the morning, she was too exhausted to do anything other than cry herself to sleep.

Chapter 5

Dolores had no idea what time it was when the knock on her door came. Opening one eye, she looked over at the clock. Twelve-fifteen. Had she really slept past noon? When was the last time her body and brain had allowed her to do that? Even if she had been up all night, she was surprised.

Another knock and she was forced into action. Flipping the blankets off, she got up and found her robe. She hadn't bothered to get dressed after Vince left. He hadn't wanted her to get up to go with him; it would have just made everything harder.

She didn't bother to look in the mirror, already knowing she looked like hell when she answered the door. Erika was there with a rolling tray and a look of pure pity.

"Please don't look at me like that," Dolores all but begged.

"Sorry." Erika pasted on a smile. "If you don't want people to look at you like this, then you might need to do something." She gestured toward her and Dolores knew instantly what she meant.

"I just woke up!" she defended her current appearance. "Can I help you with something?" She really wasn't in the

mood for company. She just wanted to sleep the day away. Maybe tomorrow she wouldn't feel so raw.

"I'm teasing." Erika pushed the cart forward, forcing Dolores to take a step back and give her space to come into the room.

"Master Derek asked me to bring you some food and to check in. And since he's my boss and all..." She let the words hang.

"Do you always do everything your boss tells you to do?"

Erika raised her brow and silently walked over to the armoire in the corner of the room. She flung open the door and stepped out of the way so Dolores could see the contents. She didn't bother to tell her that she knew what was there already.

"This is just a small sampling of the implements Master Derek keeps in his office."

"So you get a spanking for messing up at work?" Dolores hadn't really thought about that, but she guessed it made sense.

Erika pressed her lips together and nodded her head. "Yes, so how about you have something to eat and let me keep you company for a little while so I can happily report back to him that I am doing my job well?"

"Fine." Dolores fell into the seat at the table where Erika was unloading the cart.

"Thank you. Also, we told Chef Connor that you might not be feeling up to that tutoring session today, and he said to contact him if you had time later."

"Oh my gosh, I completely forgot. That poor girl. Is she okay?"

“Who? Hayleigh? I’m sure she’s fine. Chef Connor has a gruff outer shell, but he really is a big marshmallow on the inside. Don’t tell him I said that,” she added with a laugh.

“Of course not.” Dolores smiled, but on the inside she felt like complete crap. She wanted to create a safe place for Littles in her house, and here she was letting down the first one she’d ever made a commitment to. It was a tough pill to swallow. “Do you think it would be okay to go down to the kitchen and talk to Connor about rescheduling?”

“You could, or you could save yourself a trip and just give him a call. They’re in the middle of lunch service right now, but maybe in an hour or so when things slow down. I’ll leave you the direct number to the kitchen when I go.”

“Thank you, Erika. Seriously, everyone here is just so....”

“We’re family, and everyone that walks through our doors just becomes a part of the family whether they like it or not.”

“Sounds a lot like how I grew up.” Dolores felt the first genuine smile since they’d gotten the news of Vince leaving. She loved her family, and thinking about her childhood made her feel warm inside. Even though her parents had both passed away, the happy memories were bigger than the feeling of missing them.

Erika chuckled. “It’s the polar opposite of how I grew up.”

They settled into a conversation about their pasts as they got to know one another a little bit better, and before Dolores knew it, she’d eaten the plate of food Erika had made for her.

“I guess I was hungrier than I thought.”

“That happens a lot. Now you should take a shower and get yourself feeling fresh. I know there were more classes you were hoping to take. There’s a Creative Punishment course

this afternoon that I've heard good things about and have managed to keep my husband out of." She rolled her eyes. "The man doesn't need any help being creative."

"Well, I can't say I'm sorry that Vince is missing that one." Dolores sighed.

Erika loaded the plate back on the trolley and pulled another container off. "This one is for later." She put it in the refrigerator. "If you need anything else, you can always call me, okay?"

"No more pity-face?"

"As long as you clean yourself up and take care of yourself, I promise no more pity-face, but if you don't, all bets are off, and I will absolutely tattle on you faster than you can say 'red.'" She put her hand out to Dolores with an expectant look on her face.

"Deal." Dolores shook her hand.

Saying goodbye, they hugged, then Dolores was alone. She looked around and decided she needed to take Erika's advice and shower. Then she would call Connor and see where the rest of the day took her. Sitting in the room alone would not be on the agenda.

"Jellybean, this is Miss Dolores. She's going to help you learn the computer program so we stop having meltdowns." He raised a brow at Hayleigh and she gave a little huff before averting her eyes.

"I'm sorry for throwing a fit in front of you when you were having your tour yesterday, Miss Dolores," she apologized,

still not making eye contact.

“That’s okay. I understand getting frustrated, and I remember how hard design school was.” Dolores infused her voice with as much kindness and understanding as she could muster. Design school had been tougher than anyone actually gave it credit for.

“You do?”

The surprise in Hayleigh’s tone made her smile.

“Yep. I got my degree ten years ago, but from what I’ve heard, not much has changed.”

For the first time since they’d entered the room Hayleigh met her gaze, and the relief was almost palpable. Perhaps she’d been as nervous about this tutoring session as Dolores was?

“Master Derek said no one is going to be using this room today, so you two have the time and privacy to get as much work done as you think is necessary, Dolores. I have to get back to the kitchen.” Connor kissed the side of Hayleigh’s head. “Come see me when you’re all done, okay? And be good.”

“Yes, Daddy.” She rolled her eyes, but from their positions, Connor wouldn’t be able to see her face.

“I heard that eye roll in your tone, Hayleigh Ann,” Connor warned, turning to Dolores. “If she gives you any trouble you can absolutely respond how you see fit, and then she and I will be having our own conversation when we get home tonight.”

Hayleigh scrunched her brows and pushed her lip out in the most adorable pout Dolores had ever seen. She didn’t think she’d be able to resist a look like that if it was turned on her.

“I’m sure everything is going to be fine,” Dolores assured him.

After one more kiss and a sharp swat to Hayleigh’s butt, he finally left them alone.

“Should we sit down?” Dolores gestured toward the table.

Hayleigh nodded and picked a seat. Dolores didn’t want to crowd her but sitting across from a visibly nervous Little felt a little bit awkward. She almost felt out of place, but she was the tutor in the scenario, so she was the one in charge. She needed to figure it out or the whole session would be a waste of everyone’s time.

“Do you want to show me what your assignment is, and then we can start from there?”

Hayleigh nibbled her bottom lip and nodded. She slid a piece of paper across the table. “I hand drew it because I can’t work the stupid computer program.”

“That’s because that program is ridiculous. No one in the industry even uses it once they graduate.”

“Really? So why do I have to learn it?” Hayleigh threw her hands in the air.

“It’s one of life’s many mysteries, but let me show you.”

Getting up from her seat, she moved next to the adorable girl and they got down to business. Once Hayleigh warmed up, Dolores found herself drawn to her. She was smart and funny and sassy as all get-out.

“You’ve got a really good eye for design,” she complimented, and Hayleigh beamed.

“Thank you. I really like it and I want to learn to be better, but I was *this close* to throwing it all away and...”

“Becoming a shut-in with twenty cats?” Dolores teased.

Hayleigh giggled. “Yeah, something like that. But you changed all that. I’m really thankful for your help.” She turned in her chair and threw her arms around Dolores.

“You’re welcome. I’m having fun. I’ve never tutored a Little before. I don’t have a whole lot of experience with Littles at all, actually. I’ve always admired the dynamic from afar, but never really had a chance to interact with anyone other than my brother’s girlfriend.”

“Yeah, my Daddy said something about that. You do a good job, though. You talk really nice and encouraging and stuff.”

“Well at least I’m doing something right.” Dolores laughed. “I have a feeling I need a whole lot more experience if I want to open an ageplay-friendly house of my own, though.”

“You’re opening a house for Littles? That’s so cool! If you need an interior designer, I might know one who is up and coming and might specialize in all things Little.” She smiled proudly.

“I might take you up on that, actually. We’re restructuring the whole mansion to make it kind of like a Little paradise. Maybe I can have the plans sent over, and you and your friends could take a look and give me your thoughts?”

“That would be so fun! We would love to.” She was quiet for a second as she worked on a little bit of her assignment. Hayleigh gasped loudly and practically sprang out of her seat with the biggest smile plastered across her face. “Oh my gosh I just came up with the best idea!”

Dolores raised her brows in surprise at the sudden announcement.

“You want more experience with Littles, right? And you want our input on your house? Why don’t we have a playdate? Or even better, a sleepover! We can kill two birds with one stone and have lotsa fun doing it.”

Nerves overcame her, but Hayleigh was so excited about the plan, she didn’t want to turn her down. “Um, how many Littles are we talking about?”

“Oh I don’t know... me, Sadie, Wren, Heaven Leigh, Haven, Everly, Quinn, maybe Blake, too, so you can meet a Little boy? But he probably won’t stay the night; he doesn’t really like to be away from his Mommy if he doesn’t have to. Then there is Eloise, but she is a very young Little, so maybe you’re not ready for that?”

“Maybe.” Dolores nodded, her head spinning.

“Hmm, where could we sleep?” Hayleigh tapped her chin. “Oh, I wonder if Master Derek would let us use the family room. It would be perfect ‘cuz there is lots of space and games and a TV and couch and stuff. Daddy could set us up a dinner and—”

“Maybe you should study to be an event planner?” Dolores cut her off before her head exploded from everything that was being thrown her way.

“Sorry, I can get kinda carried away when I get excited.”

“I would venture a guess that trait comes with the Little label.”

Hayleigh shrugged. “Maybe.”

“I’ll make a deal with you: you finish this project, and then I’ll have a chat with Master Derek about your sleepover idea, okay?”

“Yay! Yes! Deal!” Hayleigh stuck out her hand to shake on it.

“Don’t get too excited; I’m not making any promises. I need to make sure I know what I’m potentially getting myself into.”

“I know, but I’m not worried, Master Derek will think it’s a great idea.”

Chapter 6

Master Derek had in fact thought it was a great idea. A few of the Littles Hayleigh had mentioned were unable to attend for reasons Dolores was not privy to. She'd hunted down Erika and all but begged her to join them. Even though she knew Erika was deeply submissive and wouldn't assist in wrangling a naughty little, it was comforting to have the moral support. She looked at her phone again, willing Vincent to call, text, email, or *something* to ease her growing worry. It was always like this when he was gone. She would be able to keep herself busy for a while, but if a day or two passed with no word from him, the anxiety began to build. Usually she was surrounded by her family, but she was a long way from home. Hopefully the sleepover would be enough to distract her.

“You ready for this?” Erika asked as she wheeled a large cart piled with mats, sleeping bags, and pillows into the room.

The Family Room really was the perfect setup for a slumber party, with its games, toys, huge television, and oversized, comfy couch. There was even a dining table they could all sit at to enjoy the dinner Chef Connor had put together for them.

After filling out the Dominant paperwork so that each Little knew her limits, and reading over the files of the five

Littles she was going to be in charge of for the evening, she was as ready as she could possibly be, but it didn't feel like enough.

"I'd be a lot more ready if I had a pep talk from Vince." She couldn't keep the disappointment out of her voice.

"Can I give you a hug?"

"Yes, please," Dolores sighed gratefully as she accepted the tight squeeze from her new friend. Fighting back the tears was hard, and just as she was sure she was about to lose it, the door opened, and Connor and Hayleigh walked in with Master Derek and Sadie hot on their heels.

She smiled at them as they entered, trying to put on a facade that said she had everything completely under control.

"How's the set up going?" Master Derek asked.

"I got all of the bedtime things." Erika pointed to the cart she'd pushed over to the side. "I just need to run and grab a few more pillows. I'll be right back."

"There isn't much to do since you've pretty much got the perfect set-up going here already," Dolores told him.

"Dinner will be delivered at six," Connor added. "We'll leave the cart so all you'll need to do is stack the used dishes and cutlery on it and put it in the hall for us to collect later."

"It seems like you all are doing most of the hard stuff. I just have to play and supervise." She shrugged. It certainly seemed easy enough, although there was a tiny voice in the back of her head telling her she shouldn't get too comfortable.

"Well let's hope our little darlings behave themselves." Derek looked pointedly at Sadie and Hayleigh, who were doing their best to pretend he didn't even exist.

“I have been dying for a Chutes and Ladders rematch against you, Sadie. I still think you laddered when you should have chuted last time.” Hayleigh pouted.

Sadie rolled her eyes. “We can rematch all you want. I’m still going to win. I’m undefeated.”

“No cheating and no fighting,” Master Derek warned as the two girls continued bickering as they made their way to the game corner.

“Okay, Daddy. Bye,” Sadie threw over her shoulder.

Both men stood watching for a second before they turned their attention back to Dolores.

“If there are any problems, don’t hesitate to call us,” Connor told her.

“Erika has all our contact information, but should she step out again or something and you need one of us, here are our cell numbers. Heaven Leigh, Quinn, and Everly will be here soon. Their Daddies’ numbers are on there, too,” Derek said.

“Great, thank you. I’m not anticipating any problems, but I will call if I need anything.”

“They’re a spirited bunch,” Connor warned, never taking his eyes off of Hayleigh.

“Everything will be fine. We’re going to have fun; how much trouble could possibly come of it?” She sincerely hoped those were not the ‘famous last words.’

After a round of goodbyes, the men left and Dolores joined Hayleigh and Sadie at the game table. Sadie was wearing a smug smile as Hayleigh angrily flicked the game spinner.

“This game is rigged,” she cried as the spinner landed on one.

“It’s not rigged; you’re just not lucky like me. Sorry.” Sadie shrugged and flicked the spinner, landing on a six that took her up another ladder.

Hayleigh squinted her eyes and glared at Sadie.

“How about you two help me set out the plans for my house so we can talk about them together?” Dolores decided maybe Chutes and Ladders was not the best idea for the duo.

“We can when we’re done. It should only take a couple more turns for me to win,” Sadie responded.

“Don’t be so cocky. There are still a lotta chutes till you get to the top.”

Hayleigh flicked again and landed on one. Dolores didn’t know whether to cringe or laugh, but she didn’t figure the former would go over really well. It was pretty ridiculous how Hayleigh was having such bad luck at a game made for preschoolers.

“Crap on a cracker!” Hayleigh yelled as she aggressively moved her cute little game piece, which made the board slide and knocked over Sadie’s piece.

“Hey!” Sadie shoved the board back into place, making both pieces fly off the side.

Dolores was a little taken aback by how quickly things were escalating, and she wasn’t exactly sure what to do. It was Vince’s voice in her ear that told her to follow her gut.

“Okay, that’s enough of this game.” Swiping the two game pieces, she tossed them in the box and folded the board up before adding, “Sadie, put the game where it goes, please. Hayleigh, I need your help over here.” She gestured toward the dining table.

“But we didn’t finish!” Sadie pouted.

“You can try again later. Maybe everyone will feel better after some dinner.”

Sadie sighed and rolled her eyes, but Dolores decided it best to just continue on and ignore the little bit of bratting. She didn’t care how much they huffed and puffed and rolled their eyes, honestly, as long as they did what she asked them to do.

She and Hayleigh worked side by side putting together the fragmented floor plan of her house that Erika had printed out for her. Taking a step back, she looked over the work in progress and smiled. She loved the vision she was building and the fact that her brothers could basically do anything she wanted with the available space.

When she looked at Sadie and Hayleigh, though, her heart dropped to her chest. The looks on their faces were... unimpressed.

“What’s wrong?” she asked cautiously.

“It’s boring.” Sadie shrugged. “I don’t know what any of it means.”

Sadie wasn’t wrong. It was a basic looking blueprint, but if you looked close enough you could see how amazing it was going to be.

Hayleigh nodded, but Dolores could tell her wheels were turning even before she opened her mouth. “I know!” Darting from the table, Hayleigh went to the shelf full of coloring books and other art related items and grabbed a big box. “Let’s make it pretty!”

“Yes!” Sadie bounced on the balls of her feet and grabbed a marker as soon Hayleigh had the box on the table.

“Wait!” Hayleigh threw herself bodily over the blueprints. “You said yourself you don’t know what you’re looking at. You can’t just scribble all over it.”

“I’m not going to scribble, I’m going to make it pretty!”

The door opened and the rest of the girls and their Daddies came in with Erika bringing up the rear with an armful of pillows. The girls were chattering excitedly. As much as Dolores didn’t want to leave Hayleigh and Sadie alone with markers, she didn’t have much of a choice; she needed to greet the rest of the guests.

Hurrying over, she tapped Erika’s shoulder. “Can you please go over to Hayleigh and Sadie? I feel like the two of them are going to have some sort of explosion at any minute and I have to say hello to everyone else.”

“Sure, but just so you know, I don’t dole out any kind of discipline.”

“If it comes to that, I’ll... uh... step in.”

I guess.

She didn’t say the last part out loud. As she headed to the door, though, she wondered if she had just bitten off more than she could chew. Hayleigh and Sadie had both been so sweet when she’d met them separately, but now they both seemed like they were on the cusp of some kind of meltdown. Taking a deep breath, she greeted the new guests. After Quinn and Everly shook her hand and introduced themselves, they were off like a shot to a corner of the room where there was a play kitchen. Heaven Leigh hung back for a second, a flat plastic container in her hands.

“I brought a veggie tray!” She smiled proudly.

Angel, her Daddy, rolled his eyes and shook his head. “Stop fibbing, little girl. She likes to make realistic looking desserts to try to fool people. Those are sweets of some sort, I promise you that.”

Heaven Leigh gasped and put a hand to her chest in what could only be described as mock outrage. Pulling open the corner of the box, she picked out an object that looked like a carrot stick and took a bite of it. It crunched in half and she showed Angel and Dolores. “See? Veggies! Now if you’ll excuse me.” She took the container from Dolores and stomped off toward the table.

“Unless you want a room full of Littles on a sugar high, I would test a few more of those ‘veggies,’” he said with a laugh, shaking his head.

Chapter 7

Just as all the men had left, Dolores heard a crash and what sounded like a million things hitting the floor. Turning, she saw the plastic container that had held the markers in the grasp of both Hayleigh and Sadie. Both girls stood with open-mouthed surprise for a second before Sadie yelled.

“See what you did!”

“Me? I was just trying to get a blue one and you were hogging them,” Hayleigh fired back.

“I was not! I was trying to find a red and you snatched it from me!”

Dolores could feel her blood begin to boil as her frustration reached its peak.

“That is absolutely enough.” She raised her voice enough to be heard, but not enough to be called a yell.

Both girls turned to her wide-eyed with surprise.

“You two will clean up that mess, and then you’re both going to stand in the corner.” She all but shuddered at her own threat. Vince didn’t put her in the corner often, but when he did, she hated every freaking second of it. Neither girl moved. “If I have to count to three you can both stand with your

naughty bottoms on display. One.” She didn’t waste any time. Apparently, the girls were going to test her straight out of the gate, and she had a new determination to rise to the occasion. “Two.” She spoke a little more sternly, holding up two fingers. That must have been enough, because both girls started cleaning up. They moved at a snail’s pace, which Dolores immediately registered as more testing. “If it’s not done in five minutes, I’m going to take a wooden spoon to both your bottoms.”

She wished she could take the threat back the second it left her lips. What business did she have spanking a Little? Just because she had played as a Top in the club didn’t mean she was qualified for all of this. She really wished she could talk to Vince. Looking down at her phone screen, she checked the time and to see if she had any missed messages. She didn’t.

Thankfully, when she looked up from the screen Hayleigh and Sadie were both scrambling to get the job done. *Thank goodness.* She turned to see Quinn and Everly happily engrossed in play, and she smiled. How freeing it must be to just relax and let go like that.

“They’re besties,” Heaven Leigh informed her.

“I see that. And what do you like to do?”

“A little of this, a little of that.” She shrugged noncommittally. “I’m new around here, and I’m just kinda trying to figure things out. I really like to bake and make yummy treats, though. It’s fun to make stuff that looks like something else.”

“Like your fake veggie tray?” Dolores winked.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. That is a tray of healthy snacks! Speaking of snacks, I should probably go

make sure the broccoli tastes as... umm... fresh as the carrots.”

Heaven Leigh retreated to the tray, and just when she was about to warn the girls that dinner was coming soon, Hayleigh and Sadie started to argue again.

That was it. Last straw. Dolores marched over to the two girls, who were currently kneeling on the floor yanking the box back and forth because they “couldn’t reach it” to put the spilled markers in. Every time one of them pulled the box away from the other, more markers spilled out the side. Bending down, Dolores took a firm hold of both of their ears and pulled them slowly to a standing position.

“I have had about enough. You two are being ridiculous. All of this fighting and bickering is unacceptable.”

“Ow ow ow!” the girls sang in chorus as they danced on their toes and grabbed at her wrists in order to reduce the pressure.

She marched them both over to a corner of the room when a stroke of brilliance hit her. The girls couldn’t stop fighting, so she would force them to learn to get along. It was a trick her parents had actually used with her brothers more than once.

Releasing their ears, she turned both girls toward the wall. “You two will stand here together holding hands. You will not move an inch or make a sound for five minutes.”

“I don’t wanna hold her hand.” Sadie pouted as she rubbed her ear.

“I don’t wanna even stand next to her.” Hayleigh scowled as her movements mimicked Sadie’s.

“I’m not interested in what either of you want. Bare your bottoms and then hold hands. Keep arguing or make me wait,

and I will continue to make this punishment worse.”

The girls exchanged looks like they were trying to decide if it was worth it or not to keep pushing. Dolores was so done with the fighting that she kind of hoped they would. Her palm itched to make contact with their bottoms, and her ears ached to hear the yelps of pain and promises of better behavior.

Turning on her heel, she stomped over to the armoire and flung it open. It seemed to have every implement under the sun, but when she spotted a sturdy wooden spoon, she knew that would be perfect for two naughty little brats in need of a serious attitude adjustment. If they were not in position by the time she got back to them, she was going to give them a little bit of special motivation.

Quinn, Everly, and Heaven Leigh gave a wide berth as they watched the situation unfold. Good. Let this be a lesson to all of them. Hayleigh and Sadie seemed frozen in place until they saw Dolores making her way back to them with the spoon.

“Okay, okay! We’ll behave!” Hayleigh put her hands up in surrender.

“Yeah! No more fighting. We’ll clean up and be best friends for the rest of our lives,” Sadie whined.

The only thing she noticed was that neither of them moved to obey her instructions.

“Face the wall,” Dolores commanded as she pointed at the wall with the spoon.

“But we’ll be good!” Sadie reiterated.

They were testing her, and she was about to show them she wasn’t leaving the room without a 4.0. “Oh, I know you will, because now I am going to blister both of your little bottoms

before you stand quietly in time out. Palms flat on the wall, *now*. Last chance before I start taking away fun activities and privileges.”

Apparently that threat was way worse than anything she had given and she filed that away for later use. Apparently quick corrections were much more preferred for a Little than prolonged ones. It made sense, really. She'd rather take a spanking herself than miss out on something fun. Both girls quickly turned around and put their hands on the wall in front of them. They were so close to one another that their arms were touching from the tips of their pinky fingers to their elbows. Now that they were about to be spanked, they were apparently the best of friends.

Dolores hooked her thumbs in the waistband of Hayleigh's leggings and yanked them down to her knees before doing the same to Sadie. She wanted this spanking to count, and the best way to make sure of that was to deliver it to a quivering, bare bottom. She wasted no time applying the bowl of the spoon to the middle of each of their butts, making sure to alternate between the two of them. The girls gave little yelps of pain and occasionally went up onto their toes in an attempt to avoid the next strike. Unfortunately for them, she never missed a beat.

After both of them were sporting a light pink glow, Dolores stopped playing nice. Positioning herself to Hayleigh's side, she rapid-fired six swats to the same spot on each cheek. Then she moved to Sadie. Back and forth she went, sometimes doing more, sometimes doing less. She didn't know either girl or their tolerance, but she imagined that living at a place like Rawhide Ranch meant both of them could likely take a whole lot. She listened to them yelp and make promises, and with each swat she actually felt her confidence grow. This

wasn't as hard or complicated as she had made it out to be in her head at all. Taking a naughty Little to task might be a tad different than the scenes she had done with submissives, but not by much.

When both bottoms in front of her were red and blotchy, and the owners of said bottoms had been reduced to tearful promises and sad little sniffles, she decided they'd had enough. Plus, her arms and shoulders were getting a tired.

She slid the spoon handle into her back pocket, then ran her hands over the warm skin she had just punished. "You took your spankings like good little girls," she praised. "Now that you know I mean business, I'm sure we won't have any more incidents, will we?"

"No, ma'am." They both sniffled.

"Good, now hold hands and stand quietly for five minutes. If I have to talk to either of you, you'll both get more swats and I'll start the time over."

"Can I have a hug?" Hayleigh mumbled sadly.

It pulled at her heart strings, but she had to follow through with what she'd threatened, or she wouldn't get any peace all night long from any of them. "I will give you all the hugs you need after your time out," she assured the sad girl. "Setting the timer now."

Leaving the two of them alone, Dolores went to the other girls, who had been watching the whole scene. She smiled at them. "Who wants to help me get the table ready for our dinner?"

They all jumped to action.

"Leave the markers where they are. Sadie and Hayleigh will clean those up in a little bit."

A knock on the door signaled their dinner was being delivered. Erika answered and invited the two kitchen employees in with their carts. Dolores had a pang of guilt in her stomach that Hayleigh and Sadie were still on display, but then she reminded herself this was likely a common occurrence at a place like Rawhide. She imagined that everyone who came to her house would also get used to such sights.

The timer went off as the food was being off-loaded onto the table. Grabbing two bottles of water, she left Erika and the three Littles to handle things while she went back to Sadie and Hayleigh.

She pulled their pants up one by one, doing a cursory check of each of their bottoms. “Okay, girls. Time is up. Are we ready to behave like the sweet Littles that I know you both are?”

“Yes, ma’am.” They both nodded. The tears and sniffles were gone and their voices were a lot less shaky.

“Good. Now, we have two choices, and I am okay with either one. We can snuggle on the couch for a few minutes and let everyone else start eating, or we can eat first and snuggle later. What will it be?”

The girls looked at each other, silently communicating before looking back at her and answering simultaneously. “Snuggles now.”

The three of them made their way over to the couch. Dolores sat in the middle and Sadie and Hayleigh snuggled into opposite sides.

“Drink some water, my sweethearts,” she encouraged them as she ran her fingers through their hair. They sat in silence,

listening to everyone else get their dinner started. Dolores closed her eyes and replayed the interactions in her head. She had gone into the evening hoping she didn't have to discipline anyone, but the longer she sat snuggled between the two girls, the happier she was that everything had gone down exactly as it had.

Chapter 8

Sitting on the couch with two naughty little girls pressed against her sides seeking her comfort after she had just punished them was an experience Dolores never wanted to forget. For the first time in her adult life, she felt like she was exactly where she wanted to be. Not that she didn't love her life; on the contrary, actually. Her life had been perfect and she was happy and content, but this... this was something else entirely. This was... right. Everything about it.

Sadie sighed. "Mrs. Dolores, I think I'm ready to have some dinner, if that's okay."

"Of course it is. Hayleigh?"

The other girl nodded.

She waited for the two of them to stand before grabbing each of their hands to get their attention. "No more fighting, right?"

"Right," they both agreed.

"Good, now let's go eat. Apparently taking naughty Little girls to task really helps build an appetite," she half-teased. She had eaten minimal amounts of food due to her worry about Vince. She just hadn't been hungry, but tonight she felt like she could eat an entire horse.

The three of them sat in the available empty seats and began dishing up their food.

“Why is everyone so quiet all of a sudden?” Dolores asked as she looked around the table. They hadn’t been loud earlier, but there had been conversation flowing. Were the other girls afraid of her now? Had she screwed everything up?

She looked around again and each of them was staring at their plates intently. “Did Heaven Leigh tell you all that she brought a very special veggie tray for dessert?” A few affirmative noises were uttered, but not much else.

Dolores sighed and sat back in her chair. She didn’t know if she needed to address something or just allow things to fall back into the comfortable place they were in before she had spanked Hayleigh and Sadie. But if she had done something wrong, she really needed to know. After a few minutes of nothing but the sound of cutlery against dishes, she’d had about enough. Not even Erika was making eye contact with her.

“Okay, girls. What’s going on?” Dolores asked. “Did I do something wrong?”

No one answered.

“Is this because Hayleigh and Sadie got spanked? Because if it is, I need to know.”

Quinn started to giggle and Everly elbowed her.

What the hell was going on?

“Is something funny?” Dolores asked her.

Quinn nodded, her giggles getting a little louder. Then, one by one, each of them started to giggle, until everyone was laughing hysterically. Everyone except Dolores.

She didn't want to get upset that they were enjoying themselves, but it was frustrating to be the only one in the room who hadn't been let in on the joke.

"Okay, okay, wait, stop." Sadie tried to calm herself down so she could talk. She was holding her stomach and tears were running down her cheeks.

Dolores crossed her arms over her chest and scowled at each of them in turn.

Hayleigh was the first to sober up, and she nibbled her lip. "I think maybe we owe you a teeny-tiny explanation." She held up her hand to show her thumb and forefinger in a pinched position.

"I would appreciate that, yes." Dolores nodded curtly.

"See, Sadie and me," she looked at the other girls, who were now staring side-eyed in her direction. "Sadie and I thought you wanted to have the full experience of topping Littles, so we kinda faked our fights so you could... ummm... do that." She forced a smile.

Dolores raised a brow in disbelief. "You set me up?"

"Well, when you say it like that it sounds so negative," Sadie grumbled. "We were helping!"

"Uh-huh, and I'm going to go ahead and assume you all knew about it?" The girls all nodded, including Erika. "You, too? I thought we were friends!" Dolores exclaimed.

Erika shrugged her shoulders almost all the way up to her ears. "I only just found out, and I have to say it is a little bit endearing. They literally sacrificed their butts for you." She laughed as she spoke.

Dolores shook her head. “I should spank you all for this stunt, you know that?”

The giggles stopped and all eyes were on her. Time for her to have her own fun. “Everyone up, palms flat on the table in front of you. You want to give me the full experience, it’s only fair that I reciprocate, right?” She smiled brightly as she stood and grabbed the wooden spoon from where she had left it earlier.

One by one the girls obeyed, until only Erika was left sitting. They made silent eye contact with each other until the corner of Erika’s mouth tipped up in a smile, almost daring Dolores to include her in this little group correction.

“Don’t threaten me with a good time,” Erika sassed.

Dolores laughed. “Well played. I suppose I owe you for all you’ve done for me, anyway. The rest of you, I want to see bare bottoms on display, let’s go. Chop chop.”

“I don’t want another spanking,” Hayleigh pouted.

“This is what we get for trying to help. How come no one is thankful when I try to help?” Sadie angrily pulled her pants and panties down and slammed her palms back on the table.

“Poor baby, you’re so misunderstood.” Dolores patted her bottom before starting in on her with the spoon. “Maybe you should stop trying to be helpful. It sounds like it never ends in your favor.”

“I’m gonna be the most unhelpfullest person on the planet for the rest of my life,” Sadie whined as she danced in time with the spoon smacking against her bare skin.

After a couple of dozen swats and an adequate amount of whining and pleading, Dolores moved to the next in line. She didn’t give Quinn, Everly, or Heaven Leigh half the amount or

severity that she gave Sadie. She couldn't really blame them for laughing at the hairbrained scheme.

Once she got to Hayleigh, she gave her the same as Sadie.

"Next time you decide to be naughty on purpose, let this be a reminder to think twice. Actions have consequences," Dolores lectured as she laid down smack after smack. Once she was satisfied she'd gotten her point across, she set the spoon back down.

"Okay, little ones. Pants up, and if you need a hug, I'm right here." She opened her arms, inviting the girls in and giving them each a squeeze.

"Are you mad?" Hayleigh sniffled as she righted her pants.

"Not even a little bit." Dolores winked.

Sadie scowled. "Then why did you spank us so hard?"

"What's the point of giving a spanking if you're not going to make it count?"

"You're too good at this." Sadie rolled her eyes and went in for her hug.

Dolores kissed her on the head. "Thank you, sweetheart."

She was thankful for more than just the grumbled compliment, and she hoped Sadie and Hayleigh understood that.

By the smile the two of them shared, they did.

The rest of the sleepover went off without a hitch and they spent a lot of time talking about Dolores' house, even coming up with a name. The Naughty House. They'd written it in huge rainbow letters across the plans. Dolores would keep that

colorful piece of art forever as a memory of her time at Rawhide Ranch.

As she was cleaning up and everyone was getting ready for bed, her phone rang. When she saw Vincent's photo smiling at her, she squealed in delight and relief.

“Hi!”

“Hi, baby. How are you? I'm sorry I haven't been able to call. It's been kind of hellish and I called the first second I had. I don't have long, but I needed to hear your voice.” Because of his high level of clearance, Vince wasn't usually allowed to share any details of what he was actually doing or where he was, but it didn't bother her much as long as she knew he was safe.

“Thank you, I needed to hear your voice, too. How are you?”

“I'm here and that's enough for me right now. How are you?”

She had so many things to tell him, but it all seemed trivial. She'd write him an email to tell all about her night and how much fun she was having. “I'm good. Really, really good.”

“I'm glad to hear it, baby. How long are you staying at the Ranch?”

“I don't know yet. Master Derek has said I can stay for as long as I need. I won't take advantage, but I'm not in a hurry to leave, either.”

“Good. Enjoy your stay. The house will be there for you when you're ready.”

“The girls have named our house The Naughty House.”

Vincent laughed. “The girls, huh? I feel like there is more of this story that I need to hear, but I think it’s perfect. Okay, baby I have to go. I love you, and I miss you more than words can say.”

“I love you and miss you too, Daddy. Be safe.”

“I’ll do my best. Talk soon.”

“Talk soon.”

The line went dead and Dolores smiled. It was the perfect end to the perfect night, and as she got cuddled into her spot between Hayleigh and Sadie and both girls scooted closer to her, effectively sandwiching her in, she knew that every choice she had made up to that point was the right one, and she was confident she was going to create the best house possible.

Epilogue

“Daddy, there’s a huge slide that goes from the top floor all the way back down here!” Hayleigh came running up to them squealing at the top of her lungs with Sadie and Charlotte hot on her heels.

“And it doesn’t make you feel like a sardine stuck in a tube.” Charlotte added.

“That sounds fun, jellybean.” Connor pulled her into a hug.

Sadie threw her arms around Dolores. “I’m so excited for you Miss Dolores! Charlotte just gave us the tour and this place is amazing! I can’t believe you took all our suggestions and made them real.”

Dolores was so full of warmth and pride that she could barely believe it. She gave the sweet brunette a tight squeeze. “I did my best, but I owe everything to everyone who helped. Without all of your ideas and all of my brothers’ skills, this would have been impossible.”

She looked over at the group of men in the corner. Her brothers, all thirteen of them. They had all made it a point to be there for her opening night. Hell, they had even dressed up. She’d been surprised that Ryker had made it all the way back

from his backpacking trip in time, but he'd promised her, and she should have believed him.

Like he could hear her thoughts, her youngest brother turned to her with a giant smile on his face. The man always looked like he was up to no good. Winking at her, he raised his glass in a silent toast to her. Kane, the next youngest, elbowed him to get his attention. For being one of the babies, he was definitely one of the more serious out of the bunch. Ryker rolled his eyes as he turned back around to listen to whatever Apollo was telling them.

Since he was the oldest and had been in the ageplay lifestyle longer than any of them, Apollo had been the one in charge of the invite list for the evening. He and Maverick, the next oldest and closest in age to Dolores, were running the show. Dolores let them take over when she decided she wanted to be able to focus on the guests instead of everything else. She was the one that would be the staple at The Naughty House, therefore she needed to be available for questions and all of that.

"These goat cheese tartlets are to die for." Connor pulled her attention back to them.

"Silas and his catering team made all the food for the night."

"We should have them out to the Ranch for an event and give Connor a break," Derek teased.

Dolores hadn't known them for very long, but she didn't think Connor would like letting someone else invade his kitchen.

"I'll ask for the recipe," Connor assured them all as he snagged another one off the tray.

“I’m so glad you were able to make the trip out.” Dolores had probably said it a hundred times, but she really was thankful. “I know it’s a lot to ask you both to leave the Ranch at the same time.”

“Erika and Jared can hold down the fort for a couple days, plus we assured the place would still be standing when we got back by bringing the two biggest troublemakers with us.” Derek eyed Sadie and Hayleigh, who were busy looking over the table of mini desserts.

Dolores laughed.

“It’s true, and if we don’t get them away from that table we’re going to have our hands more full than they already are.” Connor sighed heavily, but the way his eyes never left his Little girl told a completely different story.

Derek and Connor excused themselves, and she watched as they collected their charges and moved them away from the desserts. Silas’ team had really gone above and beyond, and Angel and Heaven Leigh had even sent their own batch of confections. It all looked amazing. She only wished Vince was there to see it all. He hadn’t been home in almost a year and she missed him so much it hurt.

“How you holding up, little sis?” Otto wrapped his arm around her and gave her a squeeze.

She rolled her eyes. “I’m older than you, baby brother.”

“You may be the oldest, but you’re also the shortest.” He kissed the top of her head. “And you’re avoiding my question. It’s your big night; you doing okay?”

“It’s a big night for all of us.” She smiled, still avoiding answering him. They had all worked so hard to make this

happen and she couldn't let her sadness overshadow any of it. "I'm glad everyone is here to celebrate."

"We wouldn't have missed it, and you know Vince is proud as hell and wishes he was here, too." Apollo joined them, holding a pouting Charlotte's hand.

She had confided in him a few times about how much she wished Vince was there, but when he brought it up when she was trying to avoid the feelings, it kind of made her want to slap him.

"What's wrong, little one?" Dolores asked Charlotte, changing her focus so she wouldn't fall apart. She'd save that for later when she was alone in her bed.

"She's mad because I told her she's not allowed to have any more sugar until she eats something healthy, so she stomped her foot at me," Apollo answered for her. "I'm thinking we need to find some privacy before everyone starts to show up so I can give her a little attitude adjustment."

"Mi casa es su casa, you know that." She swept her arm.

"Traitor," Charlotte muttered under her breath.

Dolores raised a brow and opened her mouth to respond when the door opened.

"What's a guy gotta do to get a welcome home beer?" Vince bellowed with a wide grin.

Everyone froze and Dolores had to blink a few times to make sure he wasn't a figment of her imagination. Hurrying over to him, she put her hands on both sides of his face.

"Please tell me I'm not dreaming," she whispered.

"You're not dreaming, baby. It's been a long fucking forty-eight hours of travel, but I'm home." He closed his eyes and

rested his forehead against hers.

Unable to stay strong any longer, she wrapped her arms around him and let the flood of tears go. Vince scooped her into his arms and she clung to him. She could hear people talking, but she didn't know what was going on. Not that it mattered. All that mattered was that her Daddy was home and she didn't have to be strong all the time anymore. She was so freaking tired of being strong.

Vince sat down and held her tight while she cried. His silent strength and strong arms soothed her, and when she finally calmed enough she lifted her head and found them in their bedroom.

“D-do you like it?” She couldn't think of anything else to say.

“I love it, baby. All of it. I'm so fucking proud of you.”

“You've been around soldiers too long. You gotta watch your mouth around the Littles.” She rested her head on his chest. He always cussed a lot when he came home, but it usually tapered quickly.

“If I don't, am I going to get in trouble, boss?” he teased.

“Maybe? I'm a big bad Mommy Domme now. I've spanked so many naughty bottoms.” After returning home from Rawhide, she'd been seeking out opportunities to spend time with Littles, and she'd met some amazing people who were so excited about The Naughty House. They were all going to be there in under an hour.

The thought had her practically launching herself off her husband's lap.

“You need to shower and get dressed, and I need to fix my make up. The guests—” She was cut off when Vince pulled

her back down and slammed his lips against hers, taking her mouth in a searing kiss. All thoughts and worries flew from her mind as she melted into him.

“We have plenty of time, and your brothers will take care of welcoming everyone. It’s been a long time since I’ve been able to enjoy your body, and I intend to give it some attention before I have to share you for the rest of the night. I was hoping to get here yesterday so we had more time alone, but we’ll make do by killing two birds with one stone. Where is the bathroom?”

The entire house had basically been gutted, so Vince really had no idea where anything was. She pointed to the door and he took her there.

When they finally made their appearance at the party she was one happy and content woman. She’d just built the business of her dreams, and The Naughty House had turned out better than she’d ever imagined. And in the process, she’d discovered so much about herself, thanks to her husband, who’d encouraged her every step of the way, and the wonderful new friends and her family who filled the house tonight.

And now the man she loved was back home with her. She grabbed Vince’s hand and beamed at him. Could her life be any more perfect?

The End

There's more!

Continue the story with Ryker,
coming May 3, 2024.
Preorder your copy now!

About Allie Belle

Tucked in the countryside with her family and numerous stuffies, Allie Belle writes the stories she has always wanted to read. She loves the idea of being a Little to a strong, stern Daddy and explores the dynamic in every way she can.

When not writing, you can find her snuggled under her princess blanket with her kindle or watching trashy reality TV.

You can also find Allie here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AuthorAllieBelle/>

Facebook Reader Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/allieaddysecret>

BookBub: <https://www.bookbub.com/profile/allie-belle>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/authoralliebelle>

E-mail: authoralliebelle@gmail.com

A Little's Monster by
Ellie Rose

A FF story by Ellie Rose

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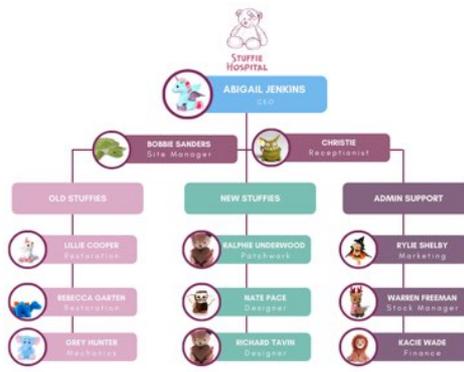
This book is a work of fiction. Names, places, locales, and events are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, and events are purely coincidental.

Author's note

Abi, thank you for loving me.

Please be aware that this story has on page panic attacks and autistic meltdowns. I hope I have treated Christie's experiences and emotions with the care that they and you deserve.

Character Map



Chapter 1

The door to Stuffie Hospital opened and Christie looked up eagerly. This was her favorite part of the day. At three pm, the postal worker walked through that door, and it was time to put her plan—well, Monster’s plan—into action.

She looked at where the tiny stuffie sat on her desk, with his oversized smile and daisy in one hand, and giggled.

Before Dana, the post collection had been a necessary evil. She’d spend half an hour in her back office, stood at the franking machine, and then hand off the letters and parcels to the postal worker who’d come to collect it.

He’d been quite grumpy. Scowly, even, and his lip had always curled whenever he walked into Stuffie Hospital.

Christie hadn’t liked his attitude. Yes, they repaired old bears—and sometimes designed new ones—but that didn’t mean that they were just frivolous. They did charity work, working with children’s hospitals and domestic violence shelters, and besides, what was wrong with bringing a little joy into the world?

But Dana, when she’d taken over the route a year ago, hadn’t been like that. She was always smiling and laughing,

and since the Monster pranks, she'd started leaving little surprises behind for Christie.

Christie grabbed the letters, stood up, and smiled innocently as she handed them to the postal worker.

Dana's hands were steady as she took them, and her brown eyes danced as Christie shuffled on the spot, anticipation building.

The first Monster prank had been an accident; she'd been waiting for Ralphie to come down to reception, and had planned out a confetti ambush to celebrate his engagement to Nate. And when a shadow had fallen over her desk, she'd jumped up and thrown a ton of confetti straight into Dana's very surprised face.

"It was Monster!" she'd said, panicking that she was about to get a dressing down, but Dana had just burst out laughing and turned to Monster and wagged her finger at him.

And since then, once a week, Christie did a Monster prank, and this week's prank was an absolute doozy.

Dana glanced up at her, before dropping her head down, the honeyed pink of her hair spilling over her shoulders as she went through the pile of letters.

"I don't suppose, Christie," she said, "that you left Monster alone with these letters at all?"

Christie swallowed a giggle, and said, "Well, I did have to leave to go to the bathroom..." She looked askance at Monster. "Monster, did you do something?"

Her stuffie looked back at her, all innocence, and she shrugged and smiled at Dana. "I mean, what could Monster have done?"

The other woman gave a snort of laughter, and leaned onto the desk. Christie tried very hard not to get distracted by her forearms. For some reason, Dana rolling up her shirt sleeves always made Christie's brain short-circuit. "I don't know Christie, what do *you* think Monster could have done?"

"I'm sure I don't know." She felt reenergized, like their dialogue was recharging her.

Finally, *finally*, Dana reached the envelope that Christie had spent her lunchtime decorating. Stickers, glitter glue, and Dana's name written across the front.

Those dark brown eyes sparkled at her. "There isn't any glitter in here, is there Monster?"

Christie reached out with her hand, and made Monster shake his head 'no'. As much as attacking Dana with glitter made her want to giggle uncontrollably, she didn't want to get the other woman in trouble on the rest of her route.

Dana put the rest of the letters down on the desk, and slowly opened the decorated envelope. She was doing it so slowly that there was no way she wasn't doing it on purpose. They both fed into this to and fro that neither of them really talked about, teasing each other and making each other laugh.

As Dana pulled out the drawing of an emoji with a sticking out tongue, she raised her eyebrows and looked straight at Christie. "Monster is getting pretty cheeky, isn't he?"

Christie gave a huge, exaggerated sigh. "My goodness, he is being naughty!" She shook her head disapprovingly at the stuffie, and then snuck a look up at Dana.

The bemusement on Dana's face made Christie feel funny inside. She felt like this sometimes, and she could never quite understand what it was that brought it on. She had it when

Dana laughed at Monster's antics, but she also got it when Dana didn't say anything at all. In fact, if she really thought about it properly, she had the funny feeling whenever Dana was anywhere near her.

Dana slipped the picture back into the envelope, and put it in her back pocket, before scooping up the other letters and putting them in her bag. "Little pickle."

That made Christie flush.

Then Dana leaned over, patted Monster on the head, smiled at Christie, and headed off. And it wasn't until Christie looked closely at Monster, that she noticed the daisy sticker atop his head.

Chapter 2

Rylie, Stuffie Hospital's marketing manager, was in reception the next day before postal time. She'd had a meeting with a local charity about doing a Christmas display, and took the opportunity to hang out with Christie afterwards.

"The problem with being in marketing," she said, "is that in the middle of the month, Kacie has to go into full finance mode for payroll, and she needs quiet in the office. And I don't like quiet all that much."

"Quiet is pretty boring," agreed Christie. "It's why I like the front desk. You get to see everyone come and go, chat to clients and the team, and interact with the world in general. *And* I get to say goodbye to each stuffie that's finding a new home."

It was one of the best parts of her job, getting to see people and children delighted with the bears and cuddly toys that they were rescuing, or taking home after a visit to the Restoration Lab.

Christie loved stuffies. She'd clung to them as a child, and even as an adult she had piles of them on her bed at home. They made her feel safe and loved. Different stuffies for

different emotions, and of course Monster, beside her every day at work.

She'd been expected to be perfect, growing up; get good grades and always know the answer to every question, and by the time she'd gotten to college, it had all felt a bit too much. She'd burnt out, dropped out, and found herself in desperate need of a job where people didn't care about how smart she was.

No one at Stuffie Hospital cared about how academic she was. They didn't expect her to be perfect. She answered the phones, booked appointments and was a smiling face for everyone who walked through that door. And she was fucking good at it. Even in this, she was efficient. But there was not pressure weighing her down, no judgement, and people liked her for more than just her brain. They liked her for her personality and her mischievousness, and for her kindness.

"You can always come and hang out here," she said, as she stood to finish off the franking of the post, sliding each letter through the machine so it was marked and ready for collection.

But when the door opened, it wasn't Dana who walked through it.

"Can I help you?" she asked in confusion. The woman in front of her was wearing the same postal uniform that Dana always wore, but that wasn't right. Monday to Friday, it was Dana who did their post.

"Here to collect the post," not-Dana said.

"But..." All of a sudden, Christie didn't feel very good at her job. She didn't feel like smiling. Where the fuck was Dana? Was she okay? "The other postal worker, Dana..."

“She’s been reassigned, got a new route. I’m Lauren, I’ll be collecting your post from now on.” Lauren stretched out her hand to shake Christie’s, but Christie just stared at it in confusion.

“Here’s the post,” interjected Rylie, handing the pile of letters over, and slipping into her professional mode. “Thanks so much, and it’s lovely to meet you. We’ll be sure to update our records so we know that you’re now our postal worker.”

Christie was barely aware of Lauren-not-Dana leaving reception, as Rylie took her by the hand and sat her down.

“Christie?”

“Yes?” The word was quiet and tremulous, and Christie realized that she might actually be about to cry.

“Do you want a hug?”

And then the tears came pouring out of her, as if someone had left a tap turned on by accident. “*She didn’t*”—gulp—“*even*”—gulp—“*say*”—gulp—“*goodbyyyyyyyyyyye*.” The last vowel became a wail and her whole body shook as Rylie pulled her close and held her as she sobbed.

Clutching at the other woman, her breath wheezed as she struggled to regain control.

Well, this was embarrassing. Beyond that. Humiliating even.

And that set her off again. How ridiculous was it that she was having this kind of response to Dana’s route changing, when the woman clearly hadn’t cared enough to let her know that she wouldn’t be collecting the post anymore.

But she’d left a *daisy sticker* the day before.

Her breathing didn't settle. Instead, Christie started hyperventilating to the point where she began hiccupping because she was taking in too much air at once.

“Christie. *Christie.*” Rylie pulled back and gave her shoulders a gentle shake. “You need to breathe.”

“I *caaaaaaaaaan't.*”

And as dramatic as she knew she was being, Christie also knew it was the truth. She couldn't breathe, not properly. It felt like every breath she took was a shallow gasp that barely filled the top half of her lungs.

The fact that she didn't like change wasn't a surprise, her autistic ass avoided it wherever possible, but the fact that something like this was resulting in the worst meltdown that she'd had in a long time was surprising.

That thought brought her up sharply. Meltdown. She knew what to do in meltdowns. Self-regulation and stimming.

She jumped up abruptly, and ran to the sink in the kitchenette corner of the back office, turning on the cold water. Placing her wrists beneath the stream, her breath started evening out and she found herself reciting times tables under her breath. It was a strange habit that she'd started whenever someone had gotten cross with her as a child, and the repetition of the numbers, and the familiarity of the patterns soothed her until she could take a deep breath, turn off the tap, wipe her eyes and turn back to face Rylie. And just like that, her mask was back in place.

Rylie's eyes had never been bigger. “Are you okay, Christie?”

Christie nodded. “I'm fine.”

Rylie looked doubtful. “That was a big response to—”

“I think I’m just tired,” said Christie, trying desperately to pretend that the previous few minutes hadn’t happened at all.

It didn’t matter that Dana had changed her route. These things happened all the time. It wasn’t as if they were friends or anything. They’d never swapped numbers, had never spoken outside the shelter of Stuffie Hospital’s reception, and yet...

She felt the pricking of tears behind her eyes and shut down that train of thought immediately. No. Nope. Not going there.

“I don’t care,” she said out loud, as much to convince herself as Rylie, “It’s fine.”

But she didn’t need to see Rylie’s skeptical face to know that she wasn’t convincing anyone.

Apparently, she’d been even less convincing than she’d realized, because not five minutes after Rylie had gone back up to her office, Ralphie and Kacie descended upon reception.

“Christie!” declared Ralphie, all false joviality, “What’s going on?”

“Stop it,” she said, folding her arms and staring them both down. “You don’t need to pretend that you don’t know what happened.”

“Good,” said Kacie, “because it’s payroll time and I can’t take a long break.” Ralphie glared at her, and the accountant shrugged apologetically. “Do you want to get paid this month?”

“Fine,” he sighed, and then threw himself dramatically onto the couch opposite Christie’s desk. “I’m devastated for you, Christie.”

She fought the urge to roll her eyes. Ralphie was incapable of doing anything without piling on the drama. “It’s a thing that happened. I’m over-tired, so I overreacted.” Maybe if she kept saying it, that would be the sole reason.

“So, it’s got nothing to do with the pining?”

“The pining? What pining?”

“You know, the gay pining the two of you have been doing for the last year.”

Christie blinked furiously. “I haven’t been—”

“Yes, you have,” said Kacie. “Even I could see the gay pining.”

Before she could protest, Ralphie cut in again. “You’ve been pranking her, Christie. Pranking her and teasing her and flirting with her. And from one brat to another...”

“I’m not a brat!” The audacity of such an accusation.

There was silence.

“Okay, so maybe sometimes I’m a teensy bit of a brat, but I didn’t think she minded.”

“I don’t think she did.”

“So then why did she leave without telling me?!”

There was a long pause and Kacie said, “Why don’t you ask her?”

Did they really think that she wouldn’t have tried that already? “I can’t, I don’t have her phone number.”

“Oh. *Oh.*” Ralphie sounded sad this time. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine.” Only it wasn’t. Nothing about this situation was fine. Christie had been so comfortable, so happy with their

daily interactions, that she hadn't needed anything else. Hadn't needed anything else until all of a sudden, those interactions had been ripped away.

She tasted salt on her lips and realized that tears were creeping down her face. No sobbing now, just silent sadness.

"Enough." She dashed the tears from her face. "Want a coffee?"

Taking the quietness as an affirmation, she walked and turned on the coffee machine. The familiar whir hid her juddery breaths as she breathed in slowly. Coffee would make things better.

The rest of the day was quiet. She booked in a few client meetings, and emailed people to let them know that their stuffies were ready to pick up. Members of the team popped by to see her, clearly alerted to the abundance of tears in her afternoon, and tried very subtly to check and see if she was okay. She smiled blankly and kept on.

As exhausting as masking had been throughout her life, it did have its advantages. Whereas in childhood she'd masked so people didn't realize how weird she was, how different she was, how not normal she was, now she used her mask to hide her emotions.

Christie had spent the last few years at Stuffie Hospital cautiously unmasking, allowing herself to react naturally and instinctively to situations. And that meant stimming, info dumping about her latest special interests, and generally not trying to hide who she really was. She did a happy dance when she was happy, and had earplugs in her bag for when she was overstimulated, and needed to block out everything other than the person she was talking to. You'd have thought that wouldn't work for a receptionist, but it did. She worked.

But for all that unmasking was wonderful, and helped her feel connected and authentic and happy, sometimes it was necessary. When she wasn't masked, everything in the world hit her that much harder: sounds, smells, even the feel of certain fabrics on her skin. And when she was tired or upset, it was that much worse. The day her grandfather had died, the humming of her computer had been so loud that she'd almost pitched across the room.

Today, wearing her mask meant that her emotions didn't overwhelm her to a point where she couldn't work.

And it worked. It worked really well, all the way up to the point when Dana walked through the front door at five pm.

Chapter 3

“Hey pickle.”

Dana’s soft voice cut through the quiet hum of electronics in the reception, and Christie had to look twice to make sure that she wasn’t seeing things.

“Pickle? *Pickle?!?*” Suddenly, she was furious, all the emotions that had besieged her that afternoon morphing into pure fury. “What the fuck, Dana?! You don’t even bother to tell me that your route has changed, and then you just waltz in here like it’s nothing and say ‘Hey pickle’?!?” Her voice sounded more strained than it usually did, and Dana looked so alarmed that Christie almost held herself back. But then she felt threatening prickling behind her eyes once more, and she found herself storming into the back office before she burst into tears and embarrassed herself thoroughly.

“Shit.” Dana ran round the desk, and then paused at the threshold to the back office. “Shit, Christie, I... I didn’t mean... Oh fuck, are you crying? Don’t cry!” And then she was striding towards Christie, and pulling her into her arms.

Everything slowed down then. Tears slowing until they almost stopped, and all Christie could concentrate on was the

thump-thump, thump-thump of the other woman's heartbeat, as she buried her face in Dana's neck.

Dana smelt like something spicy, an aftershave of some kind that Christie wanted to inhale as if it were oxygen, and she starved of air. Arms were tight about her, and at first she was stiff, afraid to move, but then, slowly, Christie's shoulders loosened and her back relaxed, and she melted into Dana's embrace.

"I'm so so sorry, darling. I didn't know. They switched around our routes this morning due a member of staff being fired, and I didn't know until I was on my new route."

"You could have called though; I answer Stuffie Hospital's switchboard." Christie sniffed.

"I should have; I was just thrown off by the new route, and I planned on coming by after work to explain everything."

Christie took a deep breath and disentangled herself. "And you did do that. Because you're here."

"Yes." Dana smiled at her, brown eyes anxiously searching Christie's face. "I'm here. Are you okay?"

Nodding, Christie smiled anxiously back. "You must think me a right one, making such a fuss over something so small."

"Not at all." Dana braced herself against the doorframe to the back office. "To be honest, I was kicking myself for having never asked for your number. Which is something I'd like to rectify immediately."

She looked at Christie expectantly, and Christie grinned impulsively. "Well go on then, rectify it."

There was a low chuckle. "You cheeky little... Christie, may I please have your number?"

Christie almost paused too long, before giggling shyly. “I suppose I can do that.”

Dana handed Christie her phone, and as she typed her number in, added, “Tomorrow’s Saturday.”

“Yes,” said Christie, before she could stop herself. “Saturday does follow Friday.”

She was shot a look that made her have that funny feeling again, and she wriggled on the spot. Being cheeky was fun.

“Well, I don’t know if you’ve already got plans for this Saturday, but if not, I’d like to take you out for the day.”

“Take me out? Like on a date?”

“Exactly like on a date. Would you be up for that?”

Christie almost burst with her longing to say yes, but she paused for a moment and considered it properly. She would *love* to do on a date with Dana, but...

“I’m a Little,” she blurted out. Fuck. She hadn’t meant to say it quite like that; however, she couldn’t date someone who wasn’t alright with her Little side. And she didn’t even know if Dana knew what a Little was; what if she’d fucked it all up, and—

“I kind of guessed,” said Dana, with a smile. “What with Monster’s pranks, and all. I like Littles, but I’m not a... I mean...” She paused and took a big breath. “I’m not a Mommy Domme, it just feels too weird to me.”

The words hit Christie like a punch and she wanted to curl up in the furthest corner of the back office and let the photocopier swallow her up.

“Hey.” Dana’s face was suddenly close to hers and she almost pulled away. “Let me finish what I’m saying, little

one.”

A very slow, nervous nod.

“I was saying that being a Mommy Domme doesn’t suit me; but I like being Daddy, looking after my good girl.”

“Oh, I see.” Christie thought about it for a moment. “I think I understand that.”

“Would that bother you, having a Daddy instead of a Mommy?”

She shook her head intently, and realized in that moment what Dana was saying. “Wait, do you mean that you’d like to be...”

“I’d like to try being your Daddy Domme, if that works for you, Christie?”

Impulsively, she threw herself into the other woman’s arms. “Oh, yes *please!*”

For a moment, the whole world stood still and shrunk down to the two of them. This time, in Dana’s arms, Christie wasn’t crying. This time she felt everything, from the soft brush of pink hair against her cheek, to the strong arms that held her in place. Eyes met eyes, and she gasped, a tiny in-breath that had Dana’s gaze flickering down to her lips.

“Da-Daddy...?”

“Yes, pickle?”

“Do I get kisses?”

Dana’s eyes darkened, pupils’ widening until they could take in every inch of Christie’s face. “Yes, pickle, you can have all the kisses you desire, when you’re not at work.”

She moved back with a huff. “Well, that’s not fair. I deserve at least *one* kiss, ‘cuz I’ve been so good and—”

Dana’s lips on her forehead stoppered her mouth. Oh, well that felt... That felt lovely.

She blinked furiously, looking away shyly before back up at Dana. “Tomorrow?”

Dana nodded. “Tomorrow. And I’ll text you with all the details tonight. Is that okay, pickle? I have to drive my van back to the depot.”

It was more than okay, it was wonderful.

Chapter 4

She hadn't known what to expect from the date. Dana's texts had been very clear about where she was going to pick her up from, and what kind of clothes to wear, but that didn't really give Christie any kind of clue about where they were going.

In the end, she'd opted for cute but practical; a pink pinafore over jeans, with comfy slip-on shoes that sparkled in the sunshine. Christie even did her hair in bunches, but the cute kind that sat low, that adults could get away with without any comments, and she twirled them round her fingers as she waited.

She was kind of proud of the way that she managed to slip her stims into her every day, in small actions that hid what they really were. Not that there was anything wrong stimming—of course there wasn't—but Christie had been told off for fidgeting far too many times for her to be entirely comfortable doing so in front of strangers.

The car that pulled up was completely different from what Christie had been expecting. She was so used to seeing Dana jumping down from the cab of her van, albeit through the reception windows, that the tiny Mini that pulled up confused her for a moment.

The window rolled down, and a smiling Dana looked through. “Come on then, pickle, in you get.”

She hurried over, getting in, though Dana leaned across her to plug in her seatbelt.

“How are you feeling today, pickle?”

“Really excited, Daddy! Where are we going?”

But Dana just laughed and raised her eyebrows. “You really think you’ll get the surprise out of me that easily?!”

Christie wasn’t sure whether she should huff in disappointment, or wriggle with excitement. Surprises were both wondrous and absolute torture. She did both, and then stopped trying to mask how happy she was feeling and let herself grin.

“That’s better,” said Dana. “I like it when you smile. You all good, pickle?”

“Yes, Daddy.” Christie paused. “Ummm...Daddy...”

“Yes, pickle?”

“You know that I’m autistic, right?”

Dana took one hand off the wheel to squeeze hers. “Yes, I know.”

“So, can I ask if the place we’re going to is super noisy?”

“No, it should be pretty quiet. I know you wear your earplugs sometimes, so I’d check with you first, before taking you to a super noisy place.”

Christie went very quiet, so quiet, that she realized that Dana was looking at her worriedly.

“Pickle?”

“Hmmm?”

“Did I do something wrong?”

Christie shook her head, and held up her finger. “I’m thinking.” She thought for quite a few moments; probably for more moments than was entirely necessary. Different people had different responses to her letting them know about her autism. Some people immediately started talking down to her; they were annoying, but even worse were the people who said that they didn’t think that she had autism. ‘Oh, you’re far too social to have autism’ or ‘oh, but you dropped out of college.’ Because the model of autism that most people saw, was the one presented by the media, and usually that meant an awkward teenage boy with genius levels of mathematical understanding. Christie didn’t think she’d met a single teenage boy who hadn’t been awkward, and found that a very confusing barometer for autism.

She’d gotten used to just saying she was tired when she was going through sensory overwhelm, and hiding her stims in everyday patterns that wouldn’t stand out.

But here was Dana who’d taken this fact, and considered it.

Dana had considered *her*.

That wasn’t something that Christie was very used to, being considered. She was far too used to being the person that people had to make allowances for, and yet, without even having to ask, Dana had picked somewhere quiet for their date, so that Christie wouldn’t get overwhelmed.

“That was nice of you,” she finally said. “Thinking about that aspect of it.”

Dana shrugged. “Seems like I’d be a fairly shitty Daddy if I didn’t think about my pickle’s needs,” she said. “I want you to enjoy the date; not find it stressful.”

As they were talking, Dana pulled up and parked outside a small craft shop. “We’re here.”

The shop window had “Book an Art Experience” emblazoned across it, and Christie looked at Dana.

“Considering how much *Monster*,” Dana emphasized the stuffie’s name, “enjoys coming up with artsy ways to prank me, I thought he might like some new ideas.”

“But Monster isn’t here,” said Christie.

“Well, I suppose you’ll have to tell him all about it then.”

Inside, there were tables dotted around the center of the room, with washable table covers atop, and there was a veritable smorgasbord of art supplies all around the outside. Christie didn’t know where to look first, she wanted to run back and forth and look at everything all at once, so much so that she almost vibrated with excitement.

Dana gently nudged her forward with her shoulder. “Go have a look, pickle.”

And so she did. She must have spent nearly twenty minutes going along each shelf, looking at all the different pens and paints and paper they had. Eventually, she collapsed in the chair next to Dana and gave a big sigh. “This is ’mazin’!” she breathed out. “Totally ’mazin’.”

Christie was one hundred percent an arts-and-crafts Little. That wasn’t to say that she was any good at arts and crafts; just that, give her something to draw or glitter with, and a mountain of card, and she’d slip happily into her Little space and craft away.

She wriggled so that her chair kissed Dana's. "What d'you wanna do, Daddy?" she said in a singsong voice, and then paused and looked cautiously around the shop.

Dana laughed. "It's okay pickle; the owner is a Little herself, and so she has specific Little-time hours available. You don't have to worry; you can call me Daddy."

That was a relief; Christie was perfectly happy being herself, and bounding along, but she didn't want any parents with young children to have answer awkward questions. And besides, she didn't like how some people looked when they heard she was a Little.

Dana must have noticed her going a bit quiet, because she placed a piece of pale cream card in front of Christie, and a huge palette of watercolors. "Why don't you paint about it?"

Dipping her paintbrush into the water, and then selecting a dark indigo, Christie made a long, slow brushstroke across the paper. The depth of the color reverberated within her, and soon she was blending different colors together to make the perfect night sky. She even left tiny gaps, so she could fill in stars with a metallic silver that she found, and soon she'd lost herself in the calm of the art.

Every now and again, Dana leaned over to look at her art and praised this star or that bit of sky, and each time she did, Christie felt like she was glowing. She wouldn't have been surprised if she was letting off a sparkle as shiny as the stars on her page.

"You're doing an excellent job, pickle," said Dana, and this time, her lips didn't stop on Christie's cheek. The other woman nuzzled with her nose, and when Christie turned her head ever so slightly, there was a pause before Dana gently

brushed her lips to Christie's. It was so soft, the touch could have been a whisper.

"You kissed me," breathed out Christie.

"I did. Was that okay, pickle?"

"Yes, oh yes, Daddy." And Christie carefully put her brush down, so as not to disturb her painting, before leaning over to kiss her Daddy back.

Dana's lips were soft and pliable, and there was something just so very *certain* about the way she kissed. She kissed with intention, with affection, and Christie just *knew* that being held and kissed in Dana's arms was everything she could ever have wanted.

When they finally broke apart, Christie was pleased to note that Dana was breathing as heavily as she was. "You're a good kisser, Daddy. You may kiss me again. I'll allow it."

That made Dana laugh, and this time when she went in for a kiss, she slid her hand up and entangled her fingers in Christie's hair, tugging until Christie's head fell back and she gasped.

"Well, little pickle, if you're a *very* good girl indeed," Dana punctuated that with a sharp nip against Christie's neck, "I might show you all of the other things that I'm good at."

Eyes widening, Christie dropped her forehead so it rested against Dana's shoulder and sighed. "Daddy, I...I..."

"Yes, babygirl?"

"Well I'd best be the judge of what you're good at."

And Dana laughed.

Chapter 5

Once their paintings dried, Christie decided that she wanted to take Dana home.

Well, she'd actually decided that the day before, and definitely decided when they'd kissed and *absolutely* decided after Dana cooed over her painting as if it were a Rembrandt.

"Would you like to come and have dinner at mine?" she asked.

"That would be lovely, pickle," said Dana. "Thank you for asking me." They held hands as they crossed the road from the shop to the car, and Christie swung their hands a little.

"You're very welcome. We can have dinner and watch some tv, and then you can have me for dessert!"

Dana stopped, stock still, and stared at her. "I—damnit, pickle, you're going to be the death of me."

"Hopefully not before I get you home," answered Christie cheekily. The she paused and said in a more serious tone of voice, "I mean, of course we can take it at whatever pace you want. I don't want to assume that—"

"I would *love* to have you for dessert," said Dana. She lowered her voice and stepped towards Christie until Christie's

back was against the door of the car. “I’m going to eat you all up, pickle.” And then, the Daddy Domme kissed Christie quickly on the cheek, and opened the door as if she’d said nothing at all!

Christie wasn’t sure whether to squeal with delight or faint.

But either way, she couldn’t wait to get home.

Her apartment was pretty small, but it was very cozy, and the walls were covered with art. Stickers, pictures, and even paintings she’d picked up on the cheap from thrift stores. She might not be great at doing the art herself, but she had appreciation for good art, and liked to surround herself with it.

Dana took some of the magnets she had on her fridge, and put their two paintings on there, side by side.

The other woman had decided to paint flowers, and had filled the entire page with daisies. Daisies were Christie’s favorites, and she thought Dana might have painted them because of that. “Petals for my petal,” Dana said, as she stepped back to admire them both, and Christie beamed. She was okay being a petal.

She was more than okay with being a petal.

“Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,” she said, bouncing from foot to foot. “Do you want to see everything?”

“Of course, I do,” said Dana, and she followed Christie round the flat, cooing over all the art, and admiring the small bookcase that was filled with children’s books. “You’ve got lots of picture books, little one,” she said. “Do you like stories?”

“I *love* stories,” said Christie. “And I’m really lucky that I can read picture books without getting all Big, because they’re

so cute and the stories are so lovely and and and—” she ran out of breath and took a huge gulp of air. “—and I has books with the prettiest pictures as well.”

Dana reached over to ruffle her hair, and Christie stuck her tongue out at her Daddy.

“Little miss!” said Dana, her tone mock-serious. “Did you just stick your tongue out at me?”

“Ummmm...” Christie thought it over. “Nope. Must have been your ’magination, Daddy.”

“Little miss, are you telling the truth?”

Christie dropped her head and shook it slowly. “Maybe not.”

“Well now, we can’t be having that. How about we sit down and have a chat about what is and isn’t okay.”

Shuffling over to the couch, Christie felt more than a little sheepish, and a bit sorry for herself as well. She’d only been teasing and—

Dana’s hand slipped into hers. “I’m not cross cross, little one. We just need to establish some rules and boundaries, I think. Because you’re a Little, but you’re also a brat, and brats need to be kept in line.” Her eyes twinkled as she spoke, and Christie felt the slight sense of panic subside.

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Okay, how about we start with you? Anything you do want and don’t want?”

Christie had daydreamed about having a Daddy for years; she’d seen other Littles at Stuffie Hospital find their people, and she’d been left, always wondering. “I’ve never had a

Daddy before,” she said shyly. “I mean, I’ve always been a Little, but I’ve never had a Daddy.”

“How about a Mommy?”

She shook her head, “Nope, no Caretakers for Christie!” She tried to make her voice sound light and airy, but she couldn’t quite pull it off. “I think I might be a little too bratty.”

Dana laughed, and turned it into a cough. “I mean, you’re certainly bratty, but,” she added, leaning forward until her lips almost touched Christie’s, “I happen to be a big fan of brats.” And she stole a kiss along with Christie’s breath, before sitting back up and carrying on.

“So what would you like from your Daddy Domme?”

“Stories! An’ colourin’ in! An’ cuddles an’ kisses an’—” here Christie blushed, “—an’ Big time too.”

Dana nodded, “I definitely want Big time with you as well; I want to know Big Christie as well as my perfect pickly petal.”

She giggled and nodded. “And when I’m Big I like lots of things, but ’specially spanks and floggers and impact play. Is that something you like?”

“Oh, I can’t wait to redden your arse, petal.” The Domme’s look was wicked. “Make you cry out and then...” she blushed herself, and Christie realized how much she liked the fact that Dana was clearly as into her, as she was into Dana. It didn’t feel unbalanced, or the power dynamics skewed. It felt right.

“Yes please, Daddy.”

“And we need safewords, for both of us.”

Christie agreed. “I have used traffic lights in the past: red for stop; yellow for pause and check in; and green for go go

go. Would that work for you?”

“That’s perfect; trying to remember new ones can be difficult when you’re in the middle of a scene, so tried and true works for me.” There was a pause. “Now, about the things that you don’t like...”

“Humiliation.” Christie’s voice was no longer playful. This was important, so important to her. She’d been so hurt, so irrevocably harmed in the past, that this was non-negotiable. “I don’t want to be insulted.”

Dana took her face in her hands, and looked into Christie’s eyes as if she were searching for something. Whatever she saw there made her swear, and then she sat up straight. “I will not insult you and I will not humiliate you, baby girl. That’s not the kind of Domme I am.”

“Thank you.” Christie’s answer was whispered. “I really appreciate that. Is there anything that you don’t like?”

“I think,” said Dana, “that I’d be up for trying most things, within reason. But,” she added, “I think we’ve somehow managed to get away from the fact that you stuck your tongue out at me, and then lied about it, little miss.”

Christie flushed again. That voice that Dana used, the one where she sounded slightly strict and ever so in charge? That voice apparently got Christie wet.

“And what’re you going to do about it?” Her bratty answer was met with a very satisfied look, and one that most definitely spelt trouble for her and her ass.

“Well done, little one,” said Dana, “for bringing us so beautifully on to punishments.”

Chapter 6

Punishments? Christie immediately regretted her words, but even as she did, there was a frisson of excitement in her stomach.

There was something about the fact that someone cared enough about your actions to punish you when you didn't deliver on a previous promise, that made her melty. It had been so long since she'd had anyone actually punish her, even in a funishment kind of way.

“So I usually have three kinds of punishments,” continued Dana. “One, the standard, spank-your-ass kind.”

That made Christie grin.

Her grin did not go unnoticed. “Exactly. I usually save punishment spanks for the lighter, mischievous kind of behavior. Next up are lines.”

Christie's eyes widened. Lines were not her favorite.

“I think that lines usually set the tone pretty well. For example, ‘I do not stick my tongue out at Daddy, and then lie about it.’ That would be a pretty appropriate punishment for what just happened. And—” There was more? “If there's repeated infractions, then getting you to change the color of the pen for different words usually sorts that.”

She'd never heard of that before, and realized exactly how frustrating that would be. There was no way you could get in the flow of writing, if you had to keep stopping to swap out pens.

“And finally,” said Dana, her voice tinged with amusement, “there’s the mystery punishment.”

“Mystery punishment?!”

“Yeah, it’s always what you’re least expecting. It can be fun, or cruel, but always fits the crime.”

Christie screwed up her face. “You’re mean, Daddy!”

“Not at all, pickle, I’m very fair indeed. What do you think?”

Christie pondered the prospective punishments for a moment. The first two seemed pretty standard, but the third... “What if it’s something that I really hate, like, safe out hate?”

“Then you safe out and we stop and talk about it. There are perfectly good reasons for not doing some punishments: being triggered; your own physical limitations; feeling ill or unwell. In those cases we either put a pause and do it another time whilst I look after you, or adjust the punishment accordingly. The aim is to help you self-regulate.” She ran a hand through her hair, and leaned back. “Most brats I know, only act up with someone they feel safe with.”

That was very true. “I don’t usually brat people,” admitted Christie. “I don’t like getting told off, and it’s too scary. But there are some people who I know won’t ever let me push them away, and they’re the ones I feel comfortable bratting.”

Dana looked touched. “I’m glad you feel safe with me,” she said. “Who else do you brat?”

Christie mumbled something under her breath.

“Pardon?”

“My therapist!” she blurted out. “I didn’t even realize I was doing it for about six months.”

Dana burst out laughing, and Christie grumped a little, but only in a jokey way. This felt fine. Better than fine.

“The thing is,” she said, “I’m usually pretty good at self-regulation. I run my wrists under cold water, I do square breathing, I have my ear plugs... But I’m still always in my head.” It was exhausting, never being able to switch off, to relax; always having her brain on on on. “There are a few things that help break me out of that, that allow me to be in the present. One of them is being Little, because when you’re Little, nothing else matters. There are no bills to pay, no world that doesn’t understand you, and no parents who expect you to be just so; there’s just joy in all of the small things.”

“I can see how that would work; being able to switch off and play seems to me like it would be one of the best things about being a Little,” said Dana.

“And the other thing that helps me be present...” said Christie, trying to summon up every bit of courage she had, “is kinky play.”

Dana didn’t say anything, but instead nodded encouragingly, waiting for Christie to continue.

“I’m not very good at being present, but impact play in particular, anchors me in my body and allows me to go all floaty and just be.” She took a breath because her voice was shaking a little bit; she hadn’t realized quite how important it was to her. “I haven’t had anyone to do that with me for quite a while, and it’s really important because without it, my brain

doesn't ever really quiet. And it gets very noisy inside my head, and that's difficult when I struggle to cope with noise as it is." She gave a short self-deprecating laugh, and Dana pulled her close and put her arms around her until all Christie could hear was the beat of Dana's heart, loud against where her ear was pressed.

She closed her eyes and listened.

She'd heard that the quickest way to get a baby to fall asleep, was to press them up against a heartbeat; it apparently tapped into their psyche from when they were in the womb and sent them drifting off. She didn't know if it had anything to do with that, but she found it incredibly calming, listening to Dana's heartbeat.

"You are such a good girl," said Dana. "Even when you're being a mouthy brat."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, and you deserve to have all the 'just be'-ing time that you need. Would you like a spanking now?"

Christie sat up in surprise and looked at her Daddy. "I'm allowed to have one?"

Dana laughed, "I mean, usually, that amount of cheek would pretty much have guaranteed you one, but I think for this first time, I don't want it to be about punishments. I just want to be able to hold you, and make you go all floaty, and give you what you need. How would you feel about that?"

"Yes, I'd like that." Christie had gone all shy again, and Dana chucked her under the chin, and leaned forward to kiss her.

"A few last things to check though, petal."

“Okay, Daddy.”

“What aftercare do you need?”

“Cuddles and holding and water, usually. Oh, and I might cry!”

Dana’s palm was warm against her cheek, and soft brown eyes smiled at her. “That’s totally okay, you can cry if you need to.”

“And I might get turned on, maybe a little bit?”

The answering throaty chuckle made her pussy clench. “I think I might get turned on a little bit too. If you want to act on that, you let me know, okay, petal?”

“Yes, Daddy.” Christie’s heart thumped so loudly she could have sworn that it could be heard in the next room over. And she leaned forward and kissed Dana eagerly. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Chapter 7

There was some slight awkwardness at first, but after Christie had attempted to wriggle out of her jeans and had almost fallen flat on her face, only to be caught in Dana's arms—swoon!—they'd both laughed and that broke the ice.

Still, the way that Dana looked at her as she stood there in her pink pinafore, the dress skirting the tops of her thighs, made Christie tremble with excitement.

Dana climbed up and sat on Christie's bed, back against the headboard, and patted her lap. "Come on petal; floaty time."

Crawling never felt entirely dignified, but even less so when she chose to bound over excitedly. Sitting back on her heels, she looked nervously at Dana. "There's quite a bit of me," Christie said.

"I know," said Dana, with a look of appreciation that made tremors run through her. "And I can't wait to get my hands on every inch of you. So why don't you get on your hands and knees for me?"

As she crawled into place, that quiet space that she only experienced if she was very lucky, or the Domme very good, descended and Christie could feel her entire body settle into

itself. A deep breath, and then a gasp as fingers traced her skin between the straps of the pinafore.

“So tell me, pretty petal, how would you like your spanks? Teasing you through fabric—” and here the fingers ran over the material across her back, and made her squirm “—or against your skin?” And now there were tiny fluttery fingertips at the nape of her neck.

Christie was struggling to concentrate, to think for herself when Dana touched her like that. “I...I...” She didn’t want to think, didn’t want to have to decide anything for herself. She just wanted to give herself up and over to the sensations that were flooding her body. “I like both, you decide, Daddy?”

She could almost hear the smile in Dana’s voice. “That’s okay, petal. Daddy can decide for you. I think I’m going to spank you on top of those lacy panties you keep teasing me with, until you beg me to touch your skin.”

There was a cool rush of air as the skirt of her pinafore was flipped up over her ass, and then some prolonged swearing.

Christie turned her head in consternation, only to see Dana looking at her with such desire, that she immediately dropped back down, letting go until her body weighted against Dana’s.

“How are you so damn beautiful?” asked Dana, leaning forward to pepper her skin with kisses. “You are so delicious, so delectable, and I get you all to myself.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

A single finger ran across the waistband of her underwear, and Christie was suddenly aware of how very damp the lace gusset was.

“So wet for me,” whispered Dana. “Are you ready, petal?”

She nodded.

“I can’t hear you, babygirl. You gotta talk to me.”

“Yes, Daddy, I’m ready.”

The spank that followed made Christie gasp out loud. The shock of the touch, after so long without, made her moan. She cut off, embarrassed, but Dana struck her ass again.

“Don’t be silent; I want to hear you, petal. I want to know what I’m doing to you.”

The next spank was met with a long moan and Christie almost lost it when they began in earnest, the sharp stings fading, only to be replaced with new ones, over and over.

Dana checked in once or twice, making sure it wasn’t too much until Christie laughed and swore at her. “Is that all you’ve got, Daddy?”

That got a response indeed, and Christie was half panting, half keening in desperation at the volley that followed.

It was everything, and yet not enough at all. She needed more, she needed... “Please, Daddy.”

“Please what, baby girl?”

“*Please.*”

Dana huffed out her laughter. “Come on petal, you can use your words. Tell me what you want.”

“Please, Daddy, please. I want to feel you against my skin.”

“Oh yes?” The other woman leant forward until a curtain of pink hair fanned across Christie’s back and made her shudder. “Here?” And she bit down on Christie’s shoulder, just a little, and Christie moaned.

“No, Daddy, I mean yes, Daddy, but I mean...?”

“Oh, babygirl, are you all confused?”

She turned and stuck her tongue out then, and the resulting spanks had her almost crying, almost laughing. The exhilaration was like nothing she'd ever experienced before.

“Tell me.”

She whispered the words, feeling shy and empowered all at once. “Please take my panties down Daddy, I want to feel your hand against my ass.”

“Good girl.” The kiss that followed was brief but strong, and even after Dana's lips had moved away, Christie could still feel them on hers.

Dana didn't move quickly though. Each movement was slow and deliberate until the lace that had cupped Christie's cunt was around her knees, and she realized that even this could be a way to keep her in place.

This time though, Dana's hand didn't come down when Christie expected it. Instead, there was a rush of movement, the air driven towards her ass as if a spank were about to happen and then... nothing.

The laughter that she expelled was both delighted and frustrated. Making her wait, making her beg, making her need the touch of Dana's hand with every fiber of her being—that was the work of someone who truly knew what they were doing.

Knew what she needed.

Because Christie, who spent her life planning out every moment so she didn't meltdown or get overwhelmed, needed someone to take all of the decisions away from her. Needed

someone to decide when she got spanked and how she got spanked, and to just look after her.

And when finally, *finally*, Dana's hand landed on her ass, Christie both laughed and cried.

Chapter 8

At some point in between spans, Christie's brain whited out and she went almost completely limp. Dana leaned over to nip her shoulder and check that she was okay.

"Green please, Daddy," she said dreamily. Why had the spans stopped? She was totally okay.

There was a chuckle somewhere far above her and then the spans continued.

Subspace was the best kind of space. At this point, she knew that she was being spanked, and probably pretty hard, from the sounds that her ass was making, but she was floating way above it, all spaced out.

Her tears must have dried up, because all of a sudden she was laughing in pure delight, letting her body and her mouth respond in whatever way it wanted. This was perfect. Her body, flooded with sensations and her Daddy looking after her so fucking well.

Daddy.

She needed... she needed her Daddy.

"Daddy," she said, no longer shy. "I need you, please, please fill me up Daddy."

Dana paused her spanking and moved until she could look into Christie's eyes. Christie felt her head nod and smiled happily.

"Please fuck me, Daddy."

Dana kissed her then, the spacy fog clearing for a moment. "Are you sure, babygirl?"

"Yes, Daddy. I need you inside me."

Her Daddy never moved from where she met Christie's eyes, as her fingers danced down to Christie's clit, teasing, rubbing little circles until she got the noises she wanted out of Christie.

"You want my fingers, baby girl?"

"Yes, Daddy. *Please*. Stop teasing, it isn't nice!"

That made Dana laugh and then she was sliding inside Christie, thumb gently resting atop her clit, rubbing in slow circles.

It was so much, but not enough. Not nearly enough, and Christie started moving backwards, slowly fucking herself on Dana's fingers until Dana swore and kissed her again.

"So perfect for me. My perfect petal."

"I'm..." she gasped as Dana hit her g-spot, "...your perfect petal, Daddy."

"Yes you are. You're so good for me, all wet and desperate and needy for Daddy."

The noise she made then didn't sound human, and it felt as if it were wrenched from her soul. "Fuck, oh God, please Daddy, please, I need more."

She leaned forward, grabbing a bottle of lube off her bedside table, and almost flung it at the Domme who laughed.

“You want more? Well how about I see how much you can take?”

Christie almost cried when Dana slid her fingers out, the loss being so very overwhelming, but when everything was a lubed up, Dana returned those two fingers, adding another, and another, and then her thumb until Christie could barely see, she was so full.

She hadn't taken Dana's whole fist, she could tell that, but she could feel where the knuckles notched against her entrance and she was screaming and moaning and almost crying with pleasure when Dana whispered, “my perfect petal” in her ear and then she was coming over and over and over until her voice was so hoarse from screaming that eventually it was just one long silent scream, back bowed, eyes closed.

Collapsing back against the bed, Christie gulped in air. Dana rolled her onto her side, and then came to lie next to her and she found herself clinging on like a koala bear, arms and legs hooked round her Daddy, face buried in her shoulder.

“I've got you, babygirl,” said Dana quietly, stroking her hair, and Christie said nothing, nothing at all, but just clung on until she fell asleep.

Waking up next to Dana was the best feeling in the world. They were completely zonked out, and snoring away, which made Christie giggle a little bit. But it also made her feel safe and loved, seeing how the other woman's arm was wrapped around her, pulling her close.

She wriggled down until she was between Dana's thighs and tickled Dana's sides until the other woman squawked

sleepily, and looked down at her blearily. “What the—?”

“Can I eat you out please, Daddy?” she asked.

The huff of laughter that Dana gave sounded like permission, but Christie waited until she’d been given the official go ahead.

“Yes darling, you may eat me out.”

“Fantastic!” she said, and moved forward until her nose almost rested on Dana’s clit. She nudged it and giggled at the moan that came from above her. Running one finger through Dana’s folds, she was delighted to see how wet the other woman was. Wet and delicious, she bet, and so she leaned forward to taste.

Dana made the most delicious noises when she was eaten out, and ground her cunt against Christie’s tongue, showing her how to please her best. Small, deft flicks against her clit and long languid licks against her entrance, and between her labia.

Christie could have stayed there for hours, relishing the taste of her Daddy, but she wanted to make her come. She *needed* to make her Daddy.

Raising her head for a moment, using her fingers against Dana’s clit to keep her stimulated, she saw the other woman looking down at her with wonder in her eyes. “Please, Daddy,” she said, “please can you come for your petal?”

“Oh darling, yes, Daddy will come for you.”

And then she went back to licking until she felt Dana’s thighs begin to tremble about her ears. That made her redouble her efforts, licking and teasing, desperate to feel Dana come for her.

Then, with a cry, Dana's taste flooded Christie's senses until all she could taste, all she could feel, all she could smell, was her Daddy, and Christie could have died happy.

They spent all weekend like that, oscillating between making each other come apart, over and over, and flitting around the apartment, eating breakfast and watching silly sitcoms that made them both laugh until they couldn't help but kiss again.

Dana insisted on doing all of Christie's washing up after lunch, and there'd been a good few days' worth there. But she'd kissed Christie so sweetly and told her that it didn't matter, that she didn't care and that she liked helping out. And so they stood there, Dana in her underwear doing the washing up, and Christie a naked thing, drying up and putting things where they needed to go.

She even read Christie a picture book before bedtime, and Christie had been curled up in her arms, sucking her thumb and lulled into sleep by Dana's voice.

It was everything that Christie had never known that she wanted. And as much as it felt right, there was an ache that she couldn't quite shift.

Chapter 9

On Monday morning, Dana insisted on dropping her at Stuffie Hospital before heading to work. Christie was usually one of the first people in anyway, but everything felt particularly quiet that morning. She felt the loss of Dana acutely, as the other woman kissed her goodbye, as if something precious was suddenly out of reach. A foolish feeling, she knew. She'd see her after work, just like they'd planned. But unlocking the doors and walking in alone felt very strange.

Not even Bobbie was in yet, and Christie found herself wandering into the Restoration Hub and sitting at the bottom of the Great Wall of Stuffies. The mountain of stuffies behind her made her take pause for a moment.

She was used to having wobbly moments—they were just a part of her daily existence—but this wobble felt bigger. A lot bigger.

She had a Daddy.

It was wonderful; truly wonderful. The truth of it made her feel safe and loved and adored and cherished, but it also scared her too. Now she knew the wondrousness of it all, how could she cope without it? How could she cope without that hand

holding hers, those arms surrounding her, grounding her in the here and now.

Taking a shuddery inbreath, she tried to re-center her emotions, but it felt like it was too late, like she was being picked up by a tornado and carried off, her stability discarded in its wake. And then, to her absolute horror, she started hyperventilating.

Technically, Christie knew what to do during a panic attack. Regulate her breathing. Run her hands under cold water. Focus on the other sensations surrounding her.

But she couldn't.

All she could do was sit on the floor, arms clasped onto her knees, and rock back and forth, making a keening noise.

She had to get it together, had to pull herself together before someone saw her. Nothing bad had even happened, it was just her fucking brain getting in the way of her happiness again.

She started gulping then, trying desperately to take in air.

This wasn't meant for her. It wasn't good for her. She'd find something good, something she loved, and then she'd lose it again, just as she had when she was at college.

Christie had tried many a time to recall those two months after she'd dropped out, but she couldn't. Even in therapy, she couldn't remember them, couldn't recall them. It was as if she'd lost two whole months of her life. No memories, no recollection, and her brain literally shutting down whenever she tried to talk about it.

She couldn't do that again.

It would break her.

“Christie?”

Not even her boss’s voice could pull Christie out of the panic attack. She was vaguely aware of Abigail kneeling down next to her, putting a blanket round her shoulders, and placing a glass of water on the floor next to her, but she still couldn’t break the cycle.

Fucking stuck.

Abigail took her wrist and slipped a hair tie over it.

The sensation of being touched almost made Christie recoil, but it was the hair tie that drew her attention. She knew what to do with those. She grabbed the band, pulled it back, and released it with a sharp sting against her skin.

It gave her a relief for a flicker of a moment.

She did it again. And then again.

By the fourth time, her breathing was slowing, and she was able to look at Abigail through her tears.

“Sorry—”

“No sorries,” said Abigail. “People will be arriving soon; why don’t you come up to my office for a little bit?”

“But reception,” Christie managed to gasp out.

“We’ll pop Ralphie on it. He hasn’t got any client meetings this morning, and he’ll adore the opportunity to cause chaos.”

What sounded like a strangled laugh emanated from Christie’s throat. Ralphie on reception would be chaos indeed. “Maybe if we get Nate to keep an eye on him?”

“Good idea.” The older woman stood up and offered her a hand. “Come on. You can curl up on a beanbag or something. Recalibrate.”

She took Abigail's hand. "Thanks."

Abigail Jenkins' office was not exactly what you'd expect from the owner of a successful business, but it was one of the things that Christie had most liked when she'd come for her interview. It was cozy and welcoming, and there were beanbags everywhere.

Her boss didn't make her explain, or ask a ton of questions, she just let Christie pick a beanbag—one of the huge ones that you could lie down on—and curl up on it.

"Where's Monster?" she asked, and then went down to reception herself to grab him.

Monster was definitely comforting. He was too small to cuddle properly, but when Abigail noticed Christie staring at an old red panda stuffie on her shelf, she placed it in her arms.

"Thank you," whispered Christie. "I'm really sorry."

"It's fine," said Abigail. "If you would like to talk about it later, that's totally okay, but right now I think you just need to recover. So, sleep. I'm on emails and business plans this morning, so shouldn't have to make any calls to disturb you."

"I can't do that!" objected Christie. "You're paying me to ___"

"I know what I'm paying you for. But you just had a panic attack, and you're clearly overwrought, so rest and recover. Running reception is not something you need to sacrifice your mental health for. I'd send you home if I weren't so worried about you."

"I..."

"You matter, Christie. You are an important part of our team, and I value your contributions. I don't know what's

going on, but I do think you should rest.”

Christie didn't quite know what to say to that, so she hugged Red Panda and Monster to her, and tried very hard not to think at all, until slowly the tip-tapping of Abigail's keyboard lulled her to sleep.

Chapter 10

When she awoke, disoriented, from her nap, it was clearly after midday. Abigail had apparently fetched her lunchbox, because her sandwiches and fruit slices had been placed on a plate, her juice box beside it.

“Hey there,” said Abigail’s voice softly.

She blinked and sat up hurriedly.

“Have your lunch, okay, Christie?”

She nodded, and took a big bite of her sandwich. The crisp freshness of the cucumber and iceberg lettuce felt satisfying in her mouth, and she gulped down the orange juice so quickly she started coughing.

“I should get up,” she mumbled round a second mouthful of sandwich. “Sorry for hijacking your office.”

“Christie,” said Abigail. “You don’t have to tell me, but if you can, I would like to know what prompted the panic attack, in case there’s something we can do at work to help your experience here.”

“It wasn’t a work thing,” said Christie. “It was a... personal thing.”

“Well, I’m glad that it wasn’t a work thing,” said Abigail. “But we can talk about personal things too, if you’d like.”

Christie eyed her, unsure. “It’s a bit... I mean... It probably wouldn’t be professional to discuss.”

Abigail just smiled serenely.

“I mean, I can be a little childish at times...”

Abigail laughed. “If you’re trying to say that you’re a Little, Christie, I run a hospital for stuffed toys. I’m more than familiar with the concept. You can talk about it openly with me.”

Furrowing her brow, Christie examined Abigail’s face for any telltale signs of deception. None that she could see. “So I’m a Little. And I’ve always been a solo Little. Done it on my own. Been on my own. Never had anyone to share it with really, or talk about it with. Or look after me.”

“Ah,” said Abigail. “That sounds pretty lonely.”

Christie shrugged. “It’s okay; I’m used to it. But that’s the thing, I’m so used to being on my own, that having a Caregiver could threaten that.”

“Threaten the being alone?”

“No, threaten my comfort with being a solo Little. It’s fine because it’s all I’ve ever known, but if I have a Caregiver and then they leave me... If I have to go back to doing this one all on my own again, I think it might break me.”

Abigail looked thoughtful. “Is a Caregiver in the cards then?”

She nodded shyly.

“And do you like spending time with them?”

“Oh gosh yes,” said Christie. “It’s the best thing ever. They’re so kind and caring, and look after me so well. It almost seems like they want to always look after me, but what if they do that, and then they change their mind? If they suddenly decide that they don’t want me or that I’m too much work, and then they leave? I can cope with being on my own; I can’t cope with learning not to be alone, and then having to go back to it.”

Abigail’s smile was gentle. “But would you really be alone? Think of the friends you’ve made here, who all care for you so very much. I don’t think that you would be truly alone, though I do understand what you mean.” She sighed. “I have had and lost a Little, myself. But I don’t regret that relationship, no matter how much pain its ending brought me. I think that love is almost always worth the risk, as long as you do not have to lose yourself in order to have it. Are you in danger of losing yourself?”

Christie shook her head.

“Well that is good, at least. I think perhaps you should speak to this prospective Caregiver—out of Little space—and share your fears with them. If they’re worth even a fraction of your time, they will listen and consider it seriously.”

That certainly gave Christie something to consider. “Thank you,” she said again. “But can I please go back to work? I won’t be able to talk to them until the end of the day, and I think I need to be busy until then, or my brain will run wild.”

Her boss nodded. “Of course. And remember, if you ever need a quiet space, you can always come in here.”

Christie shot her a look.

“Okay, maybe that’s not always realistic. Perhaps we should consider having a quiet space somewhere onsite for people to use.”

“Now that,” said Christie, her tone reverting back to its normal timbre, “would be an excellent idea.”

Down on reception, Raphie was half disappointed at having to give up what he called “*All of the power!*”, but he also took a moment to stop and check on her. “Do you want a hug?”

She shook her head, but said “Thank you” in a voice that was so choked that it couldn’t be mistaken for anything but wobbliness.

Nate, who’d apparently been working on his laptop on the couch all day, to keep an eye on Ralphie just as she’d suggested, lifted his head and just nodded at her when she looked his way, and then said “Come on Ralphie, back up to our office.”

“*My office,*” teased the shorter man, but he did as he was told, squeezing Christie’s hand as he passed her.

When she went to check her phone, she saw a couple of messages from Dana, each increasing in intensity as time had passed. The final one simply said *Please let me know if you’re okay.*

Telling her Daddy how she was feeling seemed like the right thing to do, but it still felt scary. Christie didn’t want Dana to feel bad, or worried; she hadn’t done anything wrong. It wasn’t her fault that Christie was a mess.

Bit of a wobbly morning. My boss told me to take a nap to help self-regulate and I didn’t have my phone on me. Sorry for worrying you!

There. That was honest but still sounded vaguely informal, like it was no big deal.

But it was a big deal.

The biggest of deals, really.

And Christie didn't know how to say that without sounding like she was too imbalanced for a relationship.

Dana's answer came back quickly.

I'm so sorry pickle, that sounds really rough. Would you like to talk about it this evening?

No. She really wouldn't, but she knew she should.

Yes please.

Chapter 11

Christie spent the half hour between getting home and waiting for Dana to arrive tidying up.

Dana helping her with her washing up the previous day had thrown her off, made her feel slightly ashamed of the fact that she struggled to do this most basic of chores for herself sometimes. Though Dana hadn't seemed to mind at all; it had seemed like she'd actually enjoyed looking after Christie.

But in this moment, waiting to have the most awkward of conversations, Christie forgot all of that and just flitted from room to room, tidying away fallen leaves around the plants on her windowsill, putting away laundry, and even putting a load in the machine, so that if things went horribly wrong, at least she'd have laundry to put away afterwards.

The knock at her front door made her jump, and when she opened it she immediately went into busy mode, ushering Dana in and taking her jacket and trying to sort out everything and nothing all at once.

Her Daddy reached out, and caught her shoulder. "Hey, pickle; breathe."

She took a deep breath, and then turned until she could bury her face in her Daddy's shoulder and sob.

This was becoming quite the reoccurrence.

“Oh petal,” whispered Dana, brushing hair from Christie’s face, and moving her hand to cradle the back of her head.

That made her cry even harder, and Dana moved them both, until they were in the living room and could sit on the couch.

She took a deep breath and got her crying under control. “I’m so sorry,” Christie said. “This is so embarrassing.”

“Not at all, petal,” said Dana. “What’s going on?”

“I like this. I like who you are, how we are. But it’s so so scary. What if you realize that I’m a lot of work, or that you don’t want me after all? I’ll have to go back to being alone, and being alone was okay before, but now? Now I *know*.”

Tears started to fall silently as she spoke. “Now I know what it’s like to wake up in your arms, and I know what it’s like to be held by you and be kissed by you. To share my vulnerabilities with you, and to have you accept them and me altogether. And losing that would break me, I think.”

Dana leaned forward and wiped the tears from her cheeks. “Losing you would break me too,” she said. “The friendship we’ve developed over the last year, and the revelation of us together, all of it is too precious for me to want to lose. So I understand how scary that must seem, I really do. But I’m not going anywhere. You have me, petal. I’m yours.”

When they kissed this time, it was a mess of damp cheeks and tears that still spilt, even as their lips met. Dana’s hands were in Christie’s hair, on her skin, and everywhere all at once.

Clothes were discarded as their need grew, and when Dana bit Christie’s neck, she cried out, “*Daddy!*”

“I’ve got you babygirl,” the other woman whispered. “I’ve got you and I’ll never let you go.”

Neither of them attempted to leave the couch. It seemed right, that they’d fuck there where moments ago they’d shared their fears with each other. As Christie struggled out of her top and her bra, Dana slipped one finger beneath the gusset of her panties and tugged.

“Can I...?”

“Yes,” said Christie, and then gasped as Dana tugged again and ripped them apart. Then her fingers were nudging at Christie’s entrance, already slick with her desire, before sliding inside.

“Mine,” she said, almost growling the word, and Christie felt her pussy clench and gasped. Dana’s pussy was grinding against her thigh, even as Dana finger-fucked her, and it only made her more desperate, clinging on as wave after wave of sensation crashed over her.

And as each wave drew back, she felt smaller waves, waves of emotions cresting.

“Oh,” she breathed out as the fingers inside her curled, stroking against her g-spot. “I think I’m going to...”

Dana grinned and kissed her, a burning kiss that brought tears to Christie’s eyes. “You okay there, petal?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said. Daddy, her Daddy. Her Daddy to care for her and look after her and cherish her.

“I got you,” said Dana again and then, so determinedly, as if she were trying to paint the words on Christie’s skin. “I love you, my darling, my babygirl, my petal. I love you and I will look after you and I’ve always, *always* got you.”

And Christie came.

Epilogue

Christie loved nothing better than coming home to her Daddy at the end of a long day. There was space enough for both of them in her flat, and so Dana had moved in (bringing with her a startling amount of furniture that somehow managed to fit in each nook and cranny of the apartment without ever making it feel crowded).

Making a home together had felt strange at first, neither of them entirely certain what they were doing, but they'd muddled through and found their way. And Christie did more washing up now than she'd ever done before, because she didn't want Dana to feel like she did it all.

They were planning on getting a dishwasher, because—as Dana said—that would put paid to any kind of housework guilt nonsense.

“Where are you, Daddy?” she called, as she dropped her bag by the door and slipped her shoes off.

“In the living room,” came the answer, and when she walked in, a sunbeam was highlighting Dana's honey pink hair and the sight took Christie's breath away.

She might never have known that this was what she needed, but this happy ending had somehow found its way to

her anyway.

Throwing herself onto the couch next to Dana, she shuffled until her head lay in her Daddy's lap, and she could beam up at her.

“Hey Daddy.”

“Hey petal.”

And then Monster fell off the back of the couch onto her, and she realized that he still had a daisy sticker on his head, from way back when. She stroked it, and looked up at her Daddy.

“Kiss me?”

“Always.” And Dana did.

The End

About Ellie Rose

Ellie Rose is a queer author who writes fluffy and steamy Little romances. Her books are kinky, queer and neurodiverse, and always have a Happy Ever After!

When she's not writing, she can invariably be found reading in her princess tent, surrounded by a mountain of stuffies, or dancing in a silent disco for one in her living room.

Follow Ellie on [Facebook](#), join her Facebook group [The Shenanigans Squad](#), and sign up to her [Newsletter](#) to keep up to date with everything Stuffie Hospital.

Destined Daddy by
Rogue London

A MF story by Rogue London

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, places, locales, and events are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, and events are purely coincidental.

Chapter 1

Kelsey-Ann

As the cab pulled up to the airport, all I could think about was the trip to come: a weeklong vacation for two at a five-star resort in Barbados... and I was going alone. I'd been looking forward to this for months, busting my ass at the bar and saving all my tips to purchase the tickets, and now I didn't even want to go. If it had been anyone but Marilee, my bestie from childhood, I'd have canceled the trip and eaten the cost.

Exhaustion from a late shift and too little sleep pulled at me as I paid the driver, exited the cab, and entered the airport. Tugging my suitcase up to the counter, I handed it over and received my boarding pass. The gate was at the opposite end of the airport, she'd said with a cheery smile that made me want to give her the middle finger.

"Good thing I arrived two hours early for my flight," I grumbled under my breath.

"What was that, dear?"

Dear? She was my age, for crying out loud. "Oh, nothing. You have a great day," I said, trying to be polite and failing miserably, judging by the frown on her face. I really wanted to

rant, but even in my miserable state, I realized that my feelings were based solely on my choices, and no one was to blame but me.

I took my time perusing store fronts, but couldn't help comparing my reflection with the well-dressed mannequins of each display I passed. The gloomy feelings heightened when I noticed how cheap I looked in comparison in my worn sundress, too-high wedge heels, and a torn jean jacket.

I'd bought the jacket during my senior year of high school and thought I was so cool with the ready-made rips. It was the last time I'd splurged on myself, and that was two years ago. I fingered my last fifty-dollar bill in the pocket of my sundress and kept on walking.

The bombardment of internal negativity continued to assault me, and I hated it, especially now, when I was traveling for such an auspicious occasion. Marilee was getting married to the man of her dreams. Some women had all the luck. When she'd announced the news, I'd been happy for her and readily accepted the role of maid of honor, but at that time, I thought I'd be traveling with my boyfriend, Ryan, and the two of us would enjoy a romantic getaway, at a wedding venue, no less.

The wound he left behind wasn't as fresh as it had been, but it still stung. He said he was my Daddy, that I was his only Little girl... right up until he left me for some visual arts major whose portfolio mostly consisted of her own nudes on Ryan's phone. Even worse than being dumped, without him, I couldn't afford the rent in student housing. And worst of all, he never offered to reimburse me for his half of the money I'd already spent on this vacation. I wish I was the kind of person who could joke about the trash taking itself out, but the reality

was overwhelming; I was beyond broke, homeless, and had no idea how to get my life back.

I wanted to blame Marilee for me being where I was at, as if she forced me to take a flight I couldn't afford, but the truth was, I was just feeling sorry for myself. I hadn't even told anyone from back home what was going on with me. No one would have guessed how depressed I was after Ryan left. I stopped caring about myself, about anything really. My grades plummeted, I lost my scholarship, and without the funding, I could no longer afford to pay for my course load.

Only a few campus friends knew about my situation and luckily allowed me to rotate between sorority houses, sleeping on couches and living out of my suitcase. I was a joke, but not the funny ha-ha kind of joke, more of a 'don't let this happen to you,' kind of joke. Mostly, I judged myself for being so stupid. I'd been valedictorian of my high school graduating class, for crying out loud. If they could see the complete flop I'd become, let's just say that more than a few so-called friends from school would be happy to see me knocked off my pedestal.

"Look on the bright side, Kelsey. You'll have an actual bed to yourself for an entire week," I grumbled as I took a stool at a coffee bar and ordered a caramel macchiato. Well, it was too late to go back now, everything was paid for, no refunds. And maybe this was what I needed. I'd been stagnant lately, so fearful of making more bad choices that I wasn't making any at all. I truly hoped this trip would provide me with a change of scenery to help me uncloud my head, and my heart.

"May I join you?" a man's deep sexy voice interjected, with a broad Scottish brogue that sounded more like 'Mee I

joinyee?’ It was so unexpected and so close to my ear that I jumped and nearly fell off my stool.

Catching myself, I swiveled on my seat, but my indignation melted as I took in the stranger beside me. The guy was drop-dead gorgeous! I couldn’t help the heat that flushed my face (not to mention my panties) as I stammered, “Uh, sure.”

His muscular thigh brushed against me as he took his seat. “Declan,” he said and held out his hand.

I took it and felt my hand gently engulfed by his. His touch was warm and strong, but not crushing, and his skin, while not smooth, wasn’t rough, either. His muscular frame, neither emphasized nor disguised by his well-tailored clothes, emanated power and authority. Who was this man? My imagination ran wild with possibilities. I could see him as a commander in the Navy with his dark stormy looks, or maybe he captained a different sort of empire, banking or business. Or law? He’d look good hammering a gavel or pacing in front of a jury, defending the innocent or prosecuting the guilty.

“And you are?”

Oops. Here I was dreaming about the guy, with my hand still grasped in his, and it didn’t look like he was letting go anytime soon. I took a deep breath and relaxed my shoulders.

“Kelsey,” I husked, quickly swallowing to dislodge the sudden lump blocking my airways. “Sorry. Uh, Kelsey–Ann Monahan, but my friends call me Kels or, uh, Kelsey.” The heat in my cheeks turned up a few notches. I mean, honestly, how much more awkward could I be? His presence definitely had an unsettling effect, but not in a negative way, happily, the opposite. His unexpected company and intense charm were a very welcome distraction from my pity-party.

My drink came, giving me the opportunity to covertly look him over as I sipped, and I sure liked what I saw. He was well-built and well-dressed. Unbuttoned tailored jacket and open-collar shirt giving me a peek at his broad chest, glint of gold on his wrist (but no wedding ring), muscular thighs encased in expensive slacks... That was too bad, as I'd rather see him in a kilt and catch a glimpse of what I hoped would be an equally proportionate treasure underneath.

"It is nice to meet you, Kelseean," he said in his rumbling accent.

"You as well, Sir."

Crap! Why did I say that? My cheeks literally burned with shame. But his eyes told another story entirely. His irises deepened from a soft earthy brown to an unfathomable darkness as the bottom of the loch I imagined he sprung from.

His hand squeezed mine before he placed it on my lap.

"Why are you flying alone, Kelseean?"

Why did he keep calling me by both names after I'd already told him I preferred Kels or Kelsey? And why didn't I mind? "I'm single, and my best friend is getting married. She begged me to be there and be her maid of honor, so here I am." My attempt at excitement failed miserably, and I dropped my gaze to my lap. My hands fidgeted with the hem of my sundress.

Maybe telling a stranger I was traveling alone was a bad thing. People went missing all the time while on holiday. But I couldn't help responding to the gentle demand in his question.

"Oh? You wouldn't happen to be staying at Sandals in the St. Lawrence Gap, would you?"

I nodded my head. “Yes. That is exactly where I am staying.”

He smiled, nodding. “It’s a lovely resort, lass, and I’m sure you’ll have a fine time.”

I wanted to ask where he was staying, but I couldn’t get up enough courage to ask. What if he took my interest as being too forward? Instead, I asked what he was doing in Texas.

“I was here for a conference, and now I have a project that needs tending in Barbados.”

So, he wasn’t traveling to the same wedding. Disappointment filled my chest.

“I see.” My petulant reply came with a slight pout of my lips. Quickly I schooled my features. What the hell was wrong with me? A handsome man with an accent talks to me and I fall apart... pathetic.

“Tell me, Kelseean, what line of work are you in?”

Line of work? Was he for real? What should I say? I was a college dropout, couch surfing while working at a bar on campus.

“I sell perfume,” I replied sarcastically.

The disappointment was evident in his eyes. I thought I was being charmingly flippant, but he clearly didn’t see it that way. Why did I lie?

“You’re a lucky lass,” he said, his accent thickening. “If you were mine, I’d be matching your backside to the healthy pink glow of your cheeks for that lie.”

I stared up at the giant of a man from underneath the protection of my bangs.

“That wasn’t a lie, more like an embellishment.” Another lie! Damn, was I trying to dance with the devil on purpose?

His attention was on his phone. He punched in something and then stood, glancing at the clock on the wall.

I’d fucked up and now was being cast aside, but who could blame him? I’d lied twice, and he knew it. Clearly, that didn’t sit well with him, or me, because tears threatened to fall.

“Come with me, Kelseean.”

I followed obediently, wondering what the man would do with me. He led me out of the coffee bar and down a narrow hallway to a door that required keypad entry. Now I was very confused and wondering if following him blindly had been such a good idea.

“Stay,” he demanded. “I’m not going to harm ye, lass, but I am going ta skelp yer wee behind.”

His gruff, no-nonsense tone sent an electric zing down my spine and straight to my clit. A spanking, even a punishment, sounded wonderful. How long had it been since I’d been over a man’s lap? Try never, at least not in the way I desired. A few love taps from Ryan while screwing wasn’t my idea of a spanking. He’d never followed through on anything, but whenever I complained, it was always my fault for misunderstanding. This guy was the opposite, with his straightforward manner and speech.

Mortification set in as I realized I was being led away from the safety of a public space to get a spanking from a stranger. The enormity of what I was allowing to happen penetrated my lust-filled brain, smashing those pink endorphins to smithereens, but I kept walking. The door swung silently

inward, showing a private lounge with comfortable leather seating.

“Are we allowed to be here? What if someone comes in?” I asked, suddenly unsure. I retreated toward the door, ready to run back to the safety of the coffee bar.

His hand shot out, and while his grip wasn't tight, it held me in place. “Yes, we are allowed to be here.” Before I could utter another word, he tugged me to his chest and gripped my long ponytail. “You've been a naughty little girl, haven't you, Kelseean?”

I couldn't stop the moan that escaped my lips, even if I wanted to. This was my horniest fantasy come to life, and even though it went against all reason, a voice inside told me that he was someone I could trust.

He held me firmly yet gently in place, but instead of fear, I found myself excited, and my soaked panties were proof that I was into whatever he was about to serve up.

“I see a little girl in desperate need of a correction. Do you agree?”

My pulse hammered at his words. I felt like a little girl, wanting to run or to hide just so he would chase me, catch me, sear me with his brand of discipline. The mixed emotions played havoc inside of me.

“Yes, Sir, I do.”

“And do I have permission to punish you, Kelseean?” His brogue had thickened, like his cock, which was pressing against my belly. Evidently, he was as turned on as me, and his need was as great as my own.

How could I say no when every cell in my body strained to have his hands on me? “Yes, Sir.”

“Come. I want you over my knee.”

He took my hand and led me to one of the couches. Taking a seat, he tugged me easily over his lap. The breath I'd been holding left me in a rush when I landed over his muscular thighs. The short, flowy skirt of my sundress rode up to my hips, exposing my panty-clad ass to him. Humiliation filled me when he parted my legs and tugged my panties down my thighs to pool around my ankles.

The feel of his expensive pants against my skin and the sensation of my panties keeping my ankles bound was so erotic that another moan left me. He was a big man, and when he positioned me with my ass high, my feet and hands had no purchase. I was literally being hung out to dry.

“Receiving a spanking excites you, doesn't it, little one?”

“Yes, Sir,” I cooed.

His hand came down, covering my backside. It hurt, but the throb immediately turned into heat that thrummed right to my core.

“Oh! Yes!” I crowed, happy to be the recipient of the sensations I'd dreamed of getting.

His hand came down again, a little harder this time, and the heat built upon the last one. I tried rubbing against his leg, but he was having none of my attempts to top. “Uh-uh. You will receive pleasure when I say, not when you say.”

His hand landed on my ass with swift stinging swats. What had started as a slow heat quickly morphed into an inferno. Being good was the last thing on my mind as I struggled to twist away from the sting he delivered with each stroke of his paddle-sized hand. My legs kicked up, and I felt my shoes fall,

first one and then the other in quick succession, with my panties following.

“What a lovely pussy. If you’re good, I’ll make it purr.”

His dirty words shocked me to the core. I didn’t want him to witness my glistening folds, and I immediately stopped bucking and kicking, attempting and failing to close my legs.

He placed one of his meaty thighs over one of mine, scissoring my legs and landing a light smack on my sensitive, swollen lips.

“Ow!”

He smacked my sensitive nub and swollen lips a few more times. The heat morphed again, right into my clit. The scorching throb in all the right places was pushing me to an edge I couldn’t stop.

“I can’t hold back,” I panted, “I’m going to come!”

He closed my legs at once, tucking both under one of his. “Not until I say,” he admonished.

Unable to move at all, I was completely at his mercy, riding the edge of orgasm.

“Here comes the last ten strokes on your naughty bottom, Kelseean.” His hand came down harder than before, and I cried out, the tears finally releasing and tracking down my cheeks to land on the area rug below me.

When he was done, he sat me up and cuddled me to his chest, holding my backside in his ample hands.

“That’s it,” he murmured, “Let it all go.”

And I did, crying like a baby until the river of tears finally slowed down and reduced to a few hiccupping breaths. A sexy

stranger took my spanking virginity at an airport, and I would never be the same. I'd been carrying so much worry for so long that I'd forgotten how heavy it was, and now, for the first time in what seemed like forever I was completely at peace.

Now, if time would freeze us forever, I would be the happiest woman in the world. The spanking had been such a cathartic experience, I wasn't ready to let go of it yet.

"I'm sorry I lied." My voice sounded different, less demanding, and strained. Was the change obvious to him to?

"I know you are, lass. We will talk on the plane, but we need to freshen you up and board right now, or we'll miss our flight."

The plane! How had I forgotten? I moved to stand on my feet, only to topple back down. "I feel woozy."

"You are in subspace, lass, and it is very important you do as I say." He slid me to the couch and returned with a bottle of water; breaking the seal on the cap, he held it to my mouth.

"Drink," he ordered and gave me a dark look when I tried getting away with only a few sips.

I quickly drank down half the bottle and felt immensely better.

"I will get you chocolate once we're aboard. I'm usually better prepared, but this was very unexpected." He slid my panties up my legs and had me lift my bottom to pull them over my hips. Holding me steady, he slid my chunky heels on my feet. "Ready?"

"Yes, Sir," I said halfheartedly as I stumbled to remain steady. Usually? What did that mean exactly? Would I find myself in the bathroom with his giant cock in my wet little pussy? Was that his usual? Some part of me hoped so, while

the other was annoyed at being the latest hole on his mile-high club card.

Declan smiled and scooped me up into his arms. “I think this is safer, lass.”

Chapter 2

Declan

My meetings for Scottish Air went well. Our launch had been successful, and with a year of promo, press, and rubbing shoulders with the biggies, I was ready for a bit of R&R. Barbados had been a last-minute decision that I was still questioning myself. Why Barbados? Why not? Some sun and maybe a little fun before heading back to Scotland was just what I needed.

My airline had been added to the list several months earlier, and I was looking forward to flying my airline to a new destination. Not new to me, but a new flight pattern for SA.

Entering Gate 41D, I immediately noticed that there weren't many people in the preflight holding area. My eyes roamed, taking in the demographics of the travelers. Not to say I didn't trust data, but real-time could offer insight that a computer just couldn't. At the coffee bar, I looked down at the line of drinkers, landing on a pert backside in a summer frock.

“Bloody hell,” I swore under my breath. No one had the right to have such a perfect arse. I was admittedly envious of

the stool holding those globes and wished it were my hands cupping her perfect bottom.

A ripped jean jacket encased her hunched shoulders. Her posture spoke of defeat or distress. Why would a young woman flying to a beautiful destination look so defeated? Unable to help myself, I walked up to the last empty stool in the row beside her.

“May I join you?”

She must have been deep in thought because my voice startled her. She turned, lacing me with dark blue stormy eyes, the color reminding me of the coastline of the Inner Hebrides, specifically Isle of Lewis, where the water was almost as blue as Barbados, but had a dark undercurrent, inspiring legends of sea monsters lurking in the depths. She was certainly no monster... a siren, perhaps. Her eyes surely held me as captive as a siren’s song did a passing sailor.

“Declan.” I held out my hand to shake hers.

I was a large man, standing almost six-foot-four, and my extremities matched. When she put her small hand in mine, I felt a zap of energy pass between our palms. From her reaction, she did as well. Her touch was cool, but quickly warmed up in mine. She was tiny, maybe five feet, with a halo of hair gathered into a pony tail that hung just below her shoulders. She had long bangs that overhung her brows, shadowing her eyes like a curtain. With a tilt of her head, she could escape inside her hair, but why hide when you were so beautiful?

Her breasts weren’t large, but were beautifully shaped. Add to that a tiny waist and wide flaring hips. My cock stiffened in my pants as I imagined gripping those hips as I took her from behind. “And you are?”

“Kelsey,” she sputtered and then gulped and added that her friends called Kels or Kelsey, but from the way she spoke, I didn’t think she preferred those nicknames. Kelsey-Ann Monahan was her full name, she said and then dropped her eyes. Even as she hid behind her bangs, I didn’t miss the way she pursued my physique.

“It is nice to meet you, Kelseean,” I responded.

“You as well, Sir.”

Sir? Not just sir, but Sir; I could hear the capital S. Was she trying to seduce me? My cock stiffened and pressed painfully against the restraints of my pants. I squeezed her hand before replacing it on her lap. This woman was temptingly dangerous. It had been a very long time since I’d had a woman in my life, even longer since I had a Little of my own.

When I inquired about her line of work, she fidgeted in her stool, grasping her hands.

“I sell perfume,” she said, with such deliberate acid, I knew it wasn’t true.

“You’re a lucky lass,” I deepened my tone. “If you were mine, I’d be matching your backside to the healthy pink glow of your cheeks for that lie.”

Her eyes flew to mine from under her veil of hair. Her pupils dilated, and the pulse at her neck was so quick, you’d have thought the wee lass was running a marathon. Bingo, she was a submissive, but was she a Little?

“That wasn’t a lie, more like an embellishment.”

It was hard not to smirk at her second lie. Either she was baiting me or, beneath her exterior, lived a Little, desiring to be taken in hand.

I punched in a reservation code for my new Scottish Air lounge and grabbed her hand.

“Come with me, Kelseean”

Walking down a connecting set of hallways, I thought about home. Not the tiny cottage I’d been born in, mind. I owned a small castle that had taken me almost a decade to restore to its original glory while meeting building codes, not to mention adding all the modern conveniences.

I employed an estate manager, a gardener, and a housekeeper full-time to keep the place running while I was away. After this quick R&R to Barbados, I was headed home to nestle in my coastal castle.

In the narrow hallway, the sounds of a busy airport faded until I could only hear our footsteps. When I paused to enter the door code, I heard Kelseean’s breath quicken. Was she afraid? She should be, of course, following a strange man into an isolated area. While I was flattered at her trust, her lack of safety was appalling. I was angry, yes, but also excited and turned on. Tugging her over my lap for a well-deserved spanking heightened my awareness. Every detail leapt to my eye, how she tipped so readily over my thighs and how her legs and arms dangled off the floor. The hem of her dress slid up enough for me to see the gusset of her panties was soaked. The little brat wanted to be here, and her need outweighed personal safety. I’d make sure her ass throbbed all the way to Barbados.

I tugged her panties down and gave them a twist, binding her ankles and enjoying the sight of her peach-shaped ass wiggling as she realized she was trapped. Swinging my hand like a paddle, I brought it down with a resounding crack on her backside, loud as a cannon in the peaceful lounge. After a few

spunks, she began to struggle, her too-high shoes falling off. Her kicking loosened her panties and they went flying, too, which was a pity, but now I could see her puffy slick lips, which more than made up for it. Her bottom jumped and bounced under my hand, cute mewls and cries spilling from her beautiful throat.

Bloody hell, but she was sheer perfection!

It ended all too quickly, and I found myself helping her to drink water and promising chocolate once we were aboard. Righting her clothing, I picked her up running with her in my arms back up the narrow hall and placing her on her feet when we re-entered the terminal. I held her hand as we rushed to the gate, telling her it was to keep her steady, but also, holding her small hand in mine just felt right. Like two circles crossing and becoming one. A wave of protectiveness spiked through me. And I knew that by the end of this trip, Kelseean would be *mine!*

“Uh, Declan. How will you feed me chocolate if I’m at the other end of the plane?” She waved her boarding pass in the air to get her point across.

The flight attendant smiled. “You’ve been given an upgrade to first class. Enjoy your flight.”

Keeping a firm hand around Kelseean, I sat her in the curtained-off first-class section, placing her purse in the ample storage and doing up her seat belt.

“Mr. Campbell, it is nice to see you, sir.”

Donna had been a staff member with the airline for over twenty years, and we often landed on the same international flights. “You as well, lass. Donna, this is Kelsey-Ann

Monahan, my traveling companion. She needs water and chocolate right away, please.”

“Of course, sir,” she smiled. “Nice to meet you, Kelsey-Ann.”

“Please. Just Kelsey. And nice to meet you as well.”

Donna hurried away, and Kelseean eyed me speculatively. “What did you say you did for a living, Declan?”

My name uttered by her soft voice was pure eroticism. I imagined her on her knees, begging to suck my cock between those soft full lips and taking me down her throat... I adjusted my position, alleviating the pressure of my throbbing cock.

“I didn’t, lass.”

Before she could question me, Donna arrived with my requested items. I broke the seal on the cap and held the bottle to Kelseean’s lips. She blushed prettily and licked her lips before parting them.

Bloody hell, her sexuality was natural and seemed to come as easy as breathing. She wasn’t an actress, far from it. No, what she had, you couldn’t bottle, sell or teach; you either had it or you didn’t.

After a long drink, she signaled she’d had enough.

“Now for the sweet stuff.”

I placed a square of chocolate on her tongue.

“Good girl,” I crooned.

More pink tinged the soft skin of her cheeks before she dropped her gaze to her lap, once again fidgeting with her fingers. But not like at the coffee bar, where she’d clearly been nervous. This seemed habitual, and I wondered if she used

therapy putty or something like it, or if she hadn't noticed that she had this habit yet.

Leaning close, I murmured, "If you need a toy to play with, we can go to the bathroom, and you can pull out my cock."

I'd been teasing—mostly—intending to distract her from her anxiety, but I'd clearly missed my mark.

Her eyes rounded, then quickly altered to a squint with a wrinkle between her brows before she hid away in her hair. She hadn't liked my little joke, which in itself was fair, but she wasn't complaining, and that demanded an immediate discussion.

The seatbelt sign went off, and I gazed around the semi-private cabin. It wasn't a full flight, as most people didn't travel to hot countries during a heat wave unless they had a purpose beyond vacationing. As such, the cabin only hosted six others, and we were well spread apart.

I whipped the curtain closed between us and prying eyes. As she began sputtering, I unbuckled her seat belt and lifted her onto my lap. "Unless you want a spanking that everyone will hear, I suggest you tell me your issue."

Turning her sideways, I placed her wedged-heeled feet on the seat she'd just vacated and parted her thighs. Her body stiffened in my arms, an audible gasp escaping her. "You wouldn't!"

"Wouldn't I?" I countered.

I hiked up the hem of her dress and slid my finger under the damp gusset of her panties. Kelseean released another sharp inhale as I lightly slid between her wet, swollen folds. Despite her shock at my forwardness, her body relaxed,

pressing her hips to meet my finger. But no matter how hard she tried, the pressure never increased.

“Hmph!” She crossed her arms petulantly and whispered, “I need to come!”

She wasn’t the only one. “Naughty girls don’t get to come. Only good, honest girls get rewarded.”

Kelseean released a breathy moan and relented. “I didn’t want to be part of your mile-high club.”

Now I was intrigued. “Explain.”

“You said it yourself, that you’re normally better prepared, so this isn’t your first time picking up women at the airport and...” She blushed. “...doing things with them.”

She abruptly closed her thighs. Lifting her chin, she challenged me to deny her words.

I was impressed that she’d picked up on what I considered a very innocuous statement, while also wanting to laugh that she had built a whole lascivious series of airport adventures around it when really, she was the first.

There were so many things I wanted to do at that moment, but how I handled this situation was pivotal to how things would play out moving forward, and understanding what made her tick won out. After all, we weren’t in training mode, and at this point, I wasn’t even sure that was a possibility. Time would tell. For now, we were still getting to know each other.

“I see,” I said gravely. “Now tell me why that was so hard to share.”

Her skin warmed, but she didn’t back down from my question. “If you knew I thought that, and weren’t such a good

guy, you could have used it to gaslight me. It's happened before. Are you angry?"

She was adorable.

"How could I possibly be angry with honesty? I understand why you would feel that way. The world can be a hard place for Littles."

I let the word hang between us like forbidden fruit. She hesitated, her eyes flickering with secret thoughts, before venturing, "Now that you know, does it make you like me any less?"

Christ, if only she knew.

"Not at all, Kelseean."

Her expression relaxed.

"You deserve an explanation and an apology," I told her, smoothing back her bangs to better see her beautiful eyes. "When I said I was usually prepared, I didn't mean I habitually pick up women on a layover, only that if I'm going to play with a woman with the intention of taking her to subspace, I want to be prepared for aftercare."

Her blush deepened. "Oh. I took that so literally. Now I feel stupid."

"Not at all. As for my other flippant comment about taking you to the bathroom... well, that was crass. You looked nervous, and I was attempting to distract you with my rapier-like wit. Unfortunately, Scots don't fight with rapiers. We throw boulders. I apologize."

"Oh, I don't mind the direct approach. But I do take everything at face value, and it's often been a challenge for me." She snuggled into my chest, comfort seemingly

outweighing the orgasm she needed so desperately only moments ago.

“Knock, knock,” came a voice from the other side. “We will be delivering lunch shortly, Mr. Campbell. Would you like to make your selection?”

Kelseean tried to scramble off my lap, but I held her in place.

“Yes, two of the usual, Donna.”

“Thank you, sir,” came her reply.

“Now, where were we?”

Kelseean blushed. “Uh, your hand was in my panties.”

It still was, but with her legs clamped shut, my hand was resting on her mound instead of inside those slick lips.

“*Fosgailte!*” I demanded.

She broke out into peals of laughter. “I’m sorry, what is *fos ga ti?*”

It was my turn to chuckle. “It means ‘open’ in Scotts Gael.” I pinched her mound and her thighs opened right away. I slid my finger inside her warmth, this time parting her swollen lips. Curling my finger, I went right for her hardened nub.

Kelseean slapped her hand over her mouth, bucking her hips momentarily before gushing over my hand. She started to stammer out an apology, but her mouth dropped open when I licked my fingers clean.

“You’re divine, little one,” I growled in a Scottish burr.

The color on her face deepened, but her eyes sparkled with the compliment.

I stood, placing her on her feet so I could growl, “I need to feel you with more than my fingers,” right against her ear.

With two bathrooms in this wing and only a handful of others to share it with, I felt fairly confident we could steal a few private moments together.

The other first-class passengers had closed their curtains as well. No one saw the two of us enter the bathroom, unless perhaps an attendant caught a glimpse from the galley. Locking the door, I leaned back, crossing my arms. “Elbows on the sink, ass out, eyes in the mirror.”

Kelseean scrambled to do my bidding. Her reflection showed how turned on she was as I moved behind her, lifting the hem of her dress and seizing her panties.

“Eyes on you at all times,” I ordered. “If you do not follow instructions, this will stop immediately. Only good girls get Daddy’s cock.”

“Yes, Sir.”

I ripped her panties in two and placed both pieces in the pocket of my suit jacket. Unzipping my pants, I gripped her hips like I’d imagined doing earlier and lined up my cock with her slick entrance. “Remember, eyes on you.” With a mighty thrust of my hips, I buried myself inside her tight sheath.

Kelseean’s eyes widened with shock, then shuttered with desire. Her lust was written in every expression she made. My image and hers merged blurred into one reflection: against dark Scots behind a pale fairy princess with her golden hair floating around her head like a wee halo, the storm in her eyes reflecting my own.

Her gorgeous tits bounced with each thrust. She was cresting, her walls beginning to spasm when there was a knock

on the door, and Kelseean froze.

“Fuck off!” I yelled at whoever was on the other side. “Look at me, babygirl.” Her eyes darted to mine. “There is only you and me. Stay present.” I pulled out, smacked her ass, and shoved my hard length back in, riding her hard and fast.

“May I come?” she panted.

I pulled out and smacked her ass hard and shoved back in. “Now!”

Kesleean shuddered, her pussy spasming around my cock and milking it hard with her strong muscles. “Oh, my goodness,” she stuttered, “I’m going to cum again!”

I pulled out and slapped her bouncing bottom and shoved back into her pussy.

“Declan!” she keened, falling apart, her spasms so powerful, I felt heat zip down my spine. My balls tightened as I pumped my seed, filling her up with ribbons of cum.

Riding out our mutual orgasms, Kelseean used the counter for support, her sweat-tinged body pliant in my hands, her eyes still focused on us.

When I was ready to pull out, I placed one of her knees on the counter in a partial split. Taking the soft paper towel, I cleaned her cum-filled pussy. Placing her foot back on the floor, I helped her to straighten up and moved her toward the toilet. “You pee while I wipe up,” I ordered.

She sat on the toilet, but I eyed her speculatively when I didn’t hear anything. “Do you need me to order you to pee, lass?”

Her face was flaming. “I’ve never peed in front of anyone before. I’m just really embarrassed.”

I leaned back, crossing my arms. “That pussy just choked my dick, and you’re worried about me hearing you tinkle. Don’t be ridiculous. Pee, Kelseean. I have no doubt our lunch is waiting for us. Come on, lass, you have nothing to be embarrassed about.” I turned and opened the faucets to drown out the sound and watched as she relaxed, her expression one of utter bliss.

Chuckling, I turned back to the paper dispenser and took care of myself. Once we were ready, we exited the bathroom. I was ready to see knowing looks, but if anyone was smirking, they were doing it behind their curtains.

I was buckling up Kelseean’s seatbelt when Donna arrived with a small cart containing two trays.

“Lunch is served.” She set the cart in front of us and opened the tray for Kelseean to place her meal down.

I could tell this was my girl’s first time in first class as everything was observed with a chewed lip or a look of surprise.

Next was mine. Donna scampered away with the cart and a wink at Kelseean who leaned over the steak and breathed in the aroma. “I haven’t had a steak since I left home,” she confided. “My mouth is literally watering.”

“Dig in,” I invited, amused.

She grabbed her utensils, sawing off a large bite and smothering it in the garlic compote before stuffing it in her mouth. “Oh my god,” she groaned, “this is the best steak I’ve ever had.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” I joked, but for what it was, it wasn’t bad. Scottish Airlines served the very best.

She shoved in another bite and leaned back in her seat, closing her eyes to savor her meal. When she was done, she pushed the button on her chair and moved into a full recline. “There’s so much I want to ask you,” she began, and fell asleep almost at once.

Chapter 3

Kelsey-Ann

I couldn't believe I'd fallen asleep so fast and so hard. Everything had been going so well, like a romance movie, and I slept through all the best parts, waking only as we were landing. A blur of disembarking and luggage claim and the next thing I knew, we were parting ways.

"Be a good girl," he'd whispered in my ear as I stepped onto the bus steps, making us almost equal height.

"I'll do my best," I whispered, trying to hold back the tears. I climbed onto the bus and headed to the very back so I could watch him until he was gone from my sight. Pathetic! But somehow, in just a few hours, I'd become completely addicted to the giant Scotsman, and being separated from him was the last thing I wanted.

He did say he was staying close to my location, and promised we would meet the next day. This worked out well, because I wouldn't know most of those attending the wedding, except for her parents and a few others. As I didn't know many of them well, having Declan all to myself for a day sounded like pure bliss.

Being bereft of his company gave me time to play over the events from the coffee bar to his tipping the bus driver to ensure I had what I needed and couldn't help but smile. He was stern and sweet, and exactly what I wanted from a man.

We'd only been on the road a few minutes when my phone pinged with a new message from Declan.

Are you being good?

I could imagine that sexy burr if his words had been spoken aloud, and my insides melted.

I had to fish for the consequences of being bad. I wanted more of what he did at the airport and in the bathroom. *If I said no, what would you do to me?*

His reply sent a shiver down my spine. *That is for me to know you and you to experience, my little brat.*

His reply was perfect. Another man would have given me a list of things, which also would have been fine, but Declan was daring me to find out. And I fully intended on accepting any dare he issued.

The bus brought us to Sandals and I quickly checked in and found my room, which was far superior to the photos on their website. Considering my last bed had been a lumpy old sofa with suspiciously crusty stains and the lingering aroma of pizza farts baked into the cushions, I didn't need a four-poster king-size bed overlooking a tropical garden, but it was still damned good to see it.

Quickly unpacking and locating my swimsuit, I looked around for something suitable to pull on over top. My suitcase, which sadly contained all of my belongings, not just what was needed for this trip, were mostly jeans and t-shirts, and a party dress I planned on wearing for the wedding. As it was a beach

wedding, we weren't required to wear anything too formal, thank goodness.

My table phone rang, and I nearly leaped out of my skin. The ring was so loud. Who would be calling me on the hotel phone? "Hello?" I answered tentatively.

"Miss Kelsey–Ann Monahan?"

"This is she," I replied.

"Our system selected your name in a random drawing to win a shopping trip valued at two-thousand dollars to be used here at Sandals. When you're ready, you can claim your in-house shopping card at the concierge."

"Oh, my god! Thank you so much! Can I come now?"

The woman's tone shifted, becoming warmer. "Yes. And if there is anything I can do for you to make your stay more comfortable, please let me know."

The pool could wait. I hung up the phone and threw my bra, dress and a fresh pair of undies on, and opted for flip flops instead of heels. New shoes would be first on my list and then something cute for the pool, maybe even a bikini, and oh, something to wear over it. This was quickly turning out to be the best trip of my life. Okay, the only trip of my life, but the choice to come was definitely the best choice of my life!

Stepping out into the late afternoon sun, I wound my way through the pathways to the retail section of the resort. Most of what they offered was resort wear, which after this trip I couldn't see myself needing. And why not treat myself and buy some non-necessities for a change?

I entered a lingerie store first and nearly fainted by the prices. I couldn't help fingering a red lace corset with matching garters and stockings. Casually flipping the price

tag, I quickly walked away. No way in hell was I spending almost half my budget on that, no matter how sexy it would make me!

New undies, that's what I needed, especially if Declan was going to continue ripping them. So many to choose from but in the end, I purchased two pairs of red satin bikini panties I thought he'd like and four pairs of Calvin Kleins, two in black and two in white.

The rest of the trip became a blur of trying on one dress after the other in search of something more seasonably appropriate to a beach wedding besides a little black cocktail dress.

I'd almost given up, when I spotted a light blue, retro 50's-style dress, with a tight bodice and a flared skirt. The color reminded me of Declan's eyes. Grabbing my size, I went back into the changing room.

"That looks spectacular on you," the salesclerk said when I came out.

Trying a few spins, I decided I loved the way the skirt flared and danced around my thighs, and I had to agree with her, it did look really good on me.

"You don't happen to have shoes that would go with this do you? Comfortable and not too high?"

She produced a few options including a little clutch that was a few shades darker of the same color. Putting on the low-heeled sandals and holding the clutch I looked like a different woman. My image held me for a long time as I pondered what a little money could do for a flailing self-image.

"I'll take it all." After paying the bill, I kept my fingers crossed that I still had enough for a new bikini and wrap.

Luckily the next store I went into was having a huge sale. And I walked out with both items and a new pair of flip flops to match. I was so excited to wear my new items, I hustled back toward the hotel.

Later that night, I made it to the pool in my new bikini. The poolside was empty, but that was not surprising. The resort had seven of them and by this time of night, I assumed most were done with the pool and had moved on to the bars, getting their fill of rum punch cocktails.

Stepping into the water, I remained still, watching the subtle ripple that spread out from my body in a ring. Torches arranged around the pool cast flickering light on the surface.

It felt strange being so still and present. The warm salt of the pool embraced me, and laying back, I allowed myself to float. Being on my back offered a new perspective, as the stars overhead were too numerous to count. Even the sky was prettier in Barbados than back in the States, I mused.

How often did we lie back and look up? For me, I hadn't done it once since college began. There was no time for pleasurable moments was my excuse, but being here showed me that was bullshit. Before today, everything seemed dismal; since I met Declan, everything seemed brighter. He made this trip better in so many ways. Gratitude filled my heart as I gazed up at the never-ending sky.

"I wish I may," I murmured, as I floated under the expanse of stars, "I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight."

I pictured Declan in my mind and sent my prayer to the moon and the stars.

A rustling in the tropical bushes by the pool side brought me abruptly out of my musings.

“Who’s there?” I called out. I stared in the direction the rustling came from but couldn’t see anyone. My heart began to pound as I squinted into the shadows, every news story I’d ever heard about people going missing (or worse) on vacation. The resort was in a very safe area, but it was a luxury resort, and wherever there are rich people having fun, there are desperate people looking for an opportunity to prey on them. “Probably an animal, Kelsey, relax.”

Just to be on the safe side, I exited the pool and, grabbing my new wrap, quickly exited the pool deck. Looking back as I barreled through the door, I hit a wall, bouncing off the hard surface. I lost my footing and would have landed on my ass, if an arm hadn’t reached out and kept me on my feet.

“Are you alright, lass?”

It couldn’t be. But it was.

“Declan? What are you doing here?”

“I told you I would check in on you and when you didn’t answer, I worried.”

His brogue thickened as he spoke – *when ye didnae answer, I worrit* – and I almost smiled hearing it before I realized he wasn’t doing it to be cute. He was genuinely concerned.

“Oh. I’m sorry, but you’ll never believe what happened today.”

His eyes narrowed. “Oh? And is what happened today an excuse for not answering me?”

And there it was, what was now becoming that familiar rush down my spine and directly to my clit. I wanted to yell out ‘strike!’ but that would be so inappropriate right now.

“Um.”

“There is only one answer, Kelseean, and um isn’t one of them. I think you need a reminder of your promise.”

He tossed me over his shoulder and stomped down to the elevator. Seriously, this was happening, my fantasy boxes being ticked off one after the other with the giant Scotsman, but not in any way I’d ever imagined.

“Declan! This is embarrassing. What will people think?”

He slapped my ass, the sound ringing out in the empty hallway.

“That my naughty girl needs a lesson,” he growled.

There was no one in the elevator when the doors opened. He dropped me on my feet and pinned me against the wall with his body, while one hand scooped both of my wrists easily in his.

“Is this what you wanted, little girl? Is this your way of getting my attention?”

It was a fair question. I did know he was going to call me, and I didn’t bring my phone with me to the pool. And I had made that wish, but wow, was that was a fast reply! I needed to offer up prayers to the night sky more often. I couldn’t help the giggle that seemed ripped from my very depths.

Confused, Declan pulled back.

“I think it was, although I didn’t realize it at the time. By the way, I just want to tell you, that I am so grateful for you and, well, everything really.”

I didn’t know the word for the look in his eyes, but I knew how it felt, because it burned in my heart, making me feel all

kinds of things I couldn't describe. I was happy, yet sad, and mostly turned on, so horny that I wanted to rip his clothes off.

He must have felt the same way. His mouth descended over mine, his tongue invaded and thank goodness he still had a hold of my wrists or I would have sunk to my ass on the elevator floor.

His kiss was so possessive. My lips parted for him like a flower spreading its petals. His heat was my sun and his power was my earth, and when he slipped a finger inside the seam of my bikini, his touch was my nourishment and I couldn't get enough.

I thrust into his hand, my body showing him how badly I craved his touch, when the elevator announced my floor. No words required. He scooped me up and carried me down the hall, stopping in front of my room.

“Card,” he demanded.

I slipped my hand into the pocket of my cover up and handed over the key. He held it to the sensor and the light switched to green.

Pushing open the door, he whistled. “Nice digs.”

I blushed. “Yeah, who knew? I got upgraded when I checked in. Not only that, but I was also trying to tell you downstairs. I won a shopping trip, and that's where I was most of the evening.”

Declan opened the blinds and placed me over the couch end. “Look,” he demanded. Gazing at the glass, all I could see was our reflection. It was like in the bathroom on the plane. “Keep your gaze on us, Kelseean.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Daddy.”

“Excuse me?”

“Call me Daddy from now on.”

Holy hell, that prayer thing was delivering overtime!

“Yes, Daddy,” I cooed.

He tugged my cover up out of the way and pulled my bikini bottoms off. I watched his reflection in the window as he undid his belt. His eyes sought mine and held them while he pulled the belt from the loops, the hiss of the leather somehow soothing my nerves.

Finally, a voice inside of me spoke. *I got what I've always wanted, a Daddy to call my own.* A happy tear tracked down my cheek. But wait, maybe he only wants me to call him Daddy, maybe this is just a thing and after our thing ends, he won't be my Daddy.

“Wait!” I cried. “I can't call you Daddy, unless... unless you really mean it, like after today and the next. Keeping me for reals. I thought I had that before, but it wasn't true and no matter how badly I want you, I won't make that mistake again.”

His eyes softened. “You've been mine since I first saw your perfectly rounded bottom perched on the stool at the coffee bar.”

His reflection showed me he meant every word. “Now are ye ready, lass?”

I quietly offered up a prayer of thanks to whoever was listening. “Yes, Daddy, very ready.”

His wolfish grin widened and his eyes smoldered as he flicked the belt. It landed across the center of my bottom with

a resounding slap. He proceeded to paint my backside, his strokes even and precise. I found the kiss of the leather hypnotic, and my hips naturally arching to meet each stroke.

“Oh, that feels really good, like I’m melting inwards.”

He chuckled. “Well now, what kind of lesson would this be if all you felt was good?” The intensity almost doubled with the next stroke, startling me out of my languid state.

“Ouch!”

“Music to my ears, little one. After each stroke I want you to say, ‘Sorry Daddy, I will answer your messages immediately from now on.’”

The leather slapped the underside of my cheeks, lifting me up onto my toes. I quickly recited the required words and steeled myself.

“Spread your legs, babygirl.”

My toes were no longer able to reach the floor. I leaned heavily on my forearms on the couch seat, while my ass was high over the arm. The leather landed between my legs on my sensitive center.

An entirely new sensation that had my eyes rounding with shock and took long moments to process. Before I could speak, the leather tip smacked my swollen nether lips. It didn’t hurt as much this time and the burn it left behind travelled to all the right places.

The belt landed on my ass next, then several more times before it flicked between my legs once again. The heat from behind and between were now mingling and causing a riot in my womb.

A series of ass smacks and once again between my legs. The sting left behind by the leather quickly morphed into heat, each one propelled me closer to the edge of abandon.

“Daddy,” I panted, “I need to let go.”

“Only a few to go lass. When I say *an-dràsta fhèin*, that is your cue.”

“What does it mean, Daddy?”

“It means right now.”

The belt landed three times in quick succession with my last three lines coming in one stream of gibberish just before the leather flicked between my legs.

“*An-dràsta fhèin!*”

The floodgates retreated on command and the dam inside of me burst. A deep keening sound, foreign to my ears erupted from me along with the most intense orgasm of my life. While I indulged in the sensations moving through me, a small piece of my brain marveled at what had just happened.

Declan hadn't touched me with his fingers, and he hadn't sunk his cock inside of me, in fact there had been no skin to skin at all. Just him mastering my body with a piece of leather. The man completely blew me away.

Chapter 4

Declan

“Close your eyes, Kelseean.” We were on day three of the trip and each one was proving better than the one before. Today I’d booked a private tour and luncheon at Hunte’s Gardens, a multi-sensory experience filled with enough lush, tropical trees, plants and flowers to feel like you were in the center of the jungle.

The air was different here, richer, and the delicate bouquets of florals mixed with the deep earthy tones were exquisite. I removed the silk scarf from her eyes. “Okay, you can open them.”

She blinked several times before, her face lit with a beatific smile. “Declan, it’s gorgeous! Where are we?”

My chest expanded with her happiness. Each day had given me a treasure, when the light shone in her eyes like right now. Kelseean was beautiful, but not in any way traditional. Her beauty was raw, unfiltered, and unrefined. I liked her dressed the way she was right now, simple, with clean lines so as not to take away but imbued with all manner of natural endowment.

“I’m sure there are plenty of plaques about for you to read, but right now, we have an appointment calling us.”

She pretended to pout. “Really? You brought me here just to make me leave?”

She should know me better by now. The last thing I wanted to do was torment her. “I assure you; we aren’t leaving quite yet. I have a hankering to lay you down in the middle of all this nature and fuck you raw.”

Her eyes glittered with hunger. “I think I need lunch early, Daddy.” She licked her lips, glancing down at my cock, which was rock hard in my shorts. She made as if to get on her knees, but I stopped her.

“Patience, little one. Despite wanting you this minute, I plan on taking my time.”

“Yes, Daddy.” She turned that pretend pout right side up into a brilliant smile. I took her hand, and we wove our way through the tall palms towards a garden filled with tiny birds, trickling water and exotic flowers. As we moved closer the air shifted again, it was cooler, but still, and the fragrance was thicker, completely enveloping.

Kelseean’s eyes were everywhere at once, not wanting to miss a single thing. I loved to see the wonder in her eyes with each new sight. A deeply rooted desire to spoil her and show her the world tugged at me to outdo whatever I’d shown her the day before.

Yesterday had been an easy hike up the cliffs hovering above Bathsheba Beach. The view had been extraordinary, and I had a great time bending her over a bolder and spanking her round bottom before plunging my cock into her slick entrance. Today I was taking more from her, giving her more than I had.

Today was the glue that would bind us together for the few remaining days of the trip.

We rounded a corner to the designated space for our lunch. I was happy that everything I'd ordered was in place. And from the gasp and rounded eyes from Kelseean, it was a good surprise.

“Declan, how did you...?” She shook her head, happily confused. “Dinner on a secluded portion of the beach last night and today this? We've been together and I haven't seen you as much as make a phone call. Are you a magician, conjuring up these amazing experiences?”

Oh, if only she knew what I was working on. “Come.” I guided her to the table and pulled out her white wicker chair and once she was seated, settled her into place. Once I'd taken the seat opposite her, a server appeared as if out of nowhere.

“Mr. Campbell, sir, everything is ready. May I proceed?”

When I nodded, he flicked the rose shaped linen napkin expertly and placed it on Kelseean's lap, then repeated the action with mine. He poured cucumber and mint water for each of us and then disappeared.

“Wow. He's efficient,” Kelseean said after he left. Taking a sip of her water, she closed her eyes and savored the flavor. Even water was a new and exciting experience for her, and a cock-hardening one for me. She was the best porn I'd ever watched, and she was fully dressed.

Cocktails, appetizers and our meal came in unhurried time, giving us plenty of opportunity to enjoy each other's company in the beautiful setting. I was a patient man, but even I became antsy as dessert time approached, along with my next surprise.

Our server brought coffee and refilled our water. “Dessert will be just a moment, sir.” He winked as he walked away. When he came back, even I was impressed with what he placed in front of Kelseean.

A treasure chest made of chocolate. Inside, miniature macarons that looked like clams, dark and white chocolate shells with foamy seaweed dispersed between. In the center sat a 14 carat-gold chain boasting a heart locket with *Declan’s Little Lass* engraved on the front.

Kelseean was speechless, her eyes moving from her plate to me several times before the waterworks started. “What is this?” she asked, her voice quavering with emotion.

“It looks like a treasure to me, lass. Maybe you should try it on.”

Following my instructions, she lifted the heavy chain out of the treasure box and clasped it around her neck. I’d made the right choice in the size, big enough to be noticed and small enough not to make her look burdened.

“Perfection.” I snapped a picture with my phone and showed it to her.

A watery smile lit her face. “Thank you, Declan, it’s so beautiful, but I don’t feel like I deserve it. I mean it’s only been a few days and I know I’m your babygirl, but I never thought you’d claim me and make it public so quickly.”

“Claim you? Oh, I’ve only begun to claim you, little one.” I stood. “Come to me.”

She quickly rose and stood before me.

“I plan on claiming that little button of yours, Kelseean.”

Her eyes filled with desire.

“Bend over that moss covered rock and lift your dress over your hips for Daddy.”

This had all been planned in advance. The staff was now gone and would be returning at sunset. Until then, I had the place, and her, all to myself. “Spread your legs.”

She widened her stance giving me a view of her excitement. My girl was more than ready for me. Swiping my finger through the whipped icing, I ran it down her slit. Getting on my knees behind her, I traced my tongue along the icing trail.

“Oh.” She hissed in a breath and groaned it out. “Mmm, that feels so good.”

I darted my tongue and slowly circled her clit. She clenched, ready to come. “Tsk, tsk little one, not until I say so.” I continued to circle her clit and clamped down over her needy bud.

She gushed, overpowered by an orgasm. Her essence dripped down my chin and was fucking delicious. Scooping the excess, I massaged it into her tight little hole, gradually working past the tight ring of muscle.

“Who do you belong to, Kelseean?”

“You, Daddy, only you!”

I tugged her off the rock and over my lap as I sat down on the rock. “That’s right and who owns your pleasure?”

I brought my hand down on her back side with some force, covering her bottom and thighs with quick, hard strokes.

Moans, grunts and squeals poured from her along with a few tears. “Ow, Daddy it hurts.”

“You’ll appreciate the sting when I’m buried inside your tight little button.”

Her squeals and tears quickly morphed into moans of desire with my dirty words.

Her bouncy backside was sufficiently colored in ribbons of pink and red. I took the little tube of lube from my pocket and popped the cap. “This will feel cool in comparison to the heat of your bottom.”

“Mmm, that feels so good,” she crooned. She gently swayed her bottom as I massaged the lube past the tight ring of muscle.

I moved her off my lap and onto her knees on the soft mossy bed of grass that surrounded the rock. I wanted her to be comfortable, and her sensory organs fully engaged to make her first time memorable.

I added some lube to my hand and stroked my cock. Not that it needed encouragement. Her glistening pussy was all the motivation I needed. I pressed the tip of my shaft against her tight rosebud.

“Ready for me, babygirl?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she purred.

Gripping her hips, I sunk my cock, inch by inch until I was fully seated inside. Using restraint, I held still, giving her a moment to catch up. “I’ve got you, Kelseean, just let go. Reach between your legs and play with your kitty for Daddy.”

“I feel so full, but it feels so good.”

That was my cue. Pulling out I thrust back inside her tight tunnel.

“Yes. Yes! More, Daddy, more!”

No more restraint. I held her still and fucked her hard as she writhed and bucked chasing her orgasm.

“Please, I need to fly.”

I released one of her hips, slapping her ass hard. “Then fly!”

As her orgasm ripped through her, Kelseean lost all control. Her body spasmed and bucked, her essence coating her sweet pussy lips and trickling down her thighs.

She squeezed my cock in a death grip that had me following her seconds later, roaring with my release and filling her sweet ass with my cum. It took long seconds for my cock to calm the hell down, but when it did, I pulled out and rolled onto my side, taking her with me.

With one arm wrapped around her chest and the other her waist, I kept her tightly held until every last spasm left her body with a final shuddering breath. We lay like this for a long time, and I imagined her and I just like this tucked safely away in my castle in Scotland while the wind and rain whipped around outside the safety of our haven.

“How are you feeling?” I finally asked.

She twisted in my arms to face me. “Amazing. That was mind-blowing. I want to do it again, Daddy.”

Her collar shone in the light and cast a golden hue on her sun kissed skin.

“You’re mind-blowing, lass. Everything about you is sheer perfection.”

She grinned shyly, her golden hue quickly turning pink.

“Let’s sit. I have something I need to discuss with ye.” Rolling up, I purposely sat her opposite me so I could gage her

reaction to what I was about to say. “Do you remember when we first met, I mentioned I had a project here that needed tweaking?”

She nodded uncertainly.

“I will be in meetings these next two days, but I promise you, we will be together after that.”

“But I have the wedding and then I fly out the next day!” she cried in a panicked voice.

“I understand, lass, but this can’t wait. I’ve put them off as it is to spend time with you. Do you feel safe going back to your hotel room? I promise I will meet you there after the wedding and then we can talk about our next steps.”

She sighed and nodded. “Okay, that’s fair. I mean, neither of us expected to find our soulmates on this trip. But I’m sure happy I did.” She reached out a hand, taking my much larger one in hers. “I’m sure I’ll be fine, Daddy. Besides, Marilee has been texting me complaining that she hasn’t seen me yet. So maybe this is for the best.”

I pulled her into my arms and held her tight. “That’s my girl,” I murmured in her ear. “And I promise, it will be worth it.”

She pulled back, letting lose a giggle. “Oh, oh, sounds like Daddy is up to something again.”

“That’s for Daddy to know, and you to experience. Now, one other thing... I have put down a credit card on your room. I want you to buy anything your heart desires, the sky’s the limit. Maybe something sexy for Saturday when we meet up again?”

Her face turned eager. My girl was definitely action-oriented and having something to focus on suited her.

“I can!” she said excitedly. “I saw some nice stuff when I was shopping with my in-house credit. You wait, Daddy, I will have the sexiest outfit ever!”

“I don’t doubt it,” I replied climbing to my feet with her in my arms. “Now, let’s clean up the best we can and get going. We have a few hours left and I’m not nearly finished with you yet.”

She clapped her hands excitedly, covering my jaw with kisses. “I love you, Daddy.”

I stopped walking and gazed down at her. She chewed her lip, looking uncertain again, but before she could take it back, I smoothed her hair away from those eyes and said, “I love you too, Kelsey-Ann Monahan.”

A grin split her face. “You said my name right this time.”

Laughing, I spun her around before placing her on her feet. “I could always say your name right, I just choose not to.”

“Bad Daddy!” She pouted playfully.

Wrapping her in my arms, I held her tight. “Destined Daddy, as I was always meant to be yours, babygirl.”

A happy tear glistened in the corner of one eye. “I know,” she whispered. “I can feel it in my heart.”

Chapter 5

Kelsey-Ann

“How do I look from the back?” Marilee fretted. She looked amazing, of course. Tall with a lithe athletic build, there wasn’t much she wouldn’t look good in, but in that slinky white dress with her hair pinned up with tropical flowers, she was stunning.

“Woman, would you relax?” I demanded, laughing. “Matthew’s eyes are going to pop out when he gets a look at you in this.”

“I mean can you see any panty lines from back there?”

“Nope, you’re good to go. By the way, did Matthew’s best man ever arrive?”

Marilee whirled around, her eyes flashing with barely contained irritation. “Can you believe that? His flight had been rerouted several times. You’d think owning your own airline would get you better service, but apparently not. But in answer to your question, yes, he arrived this morning, but I haven’t seen him yet. I heard from Matt’s brother that they’d been holed up together all morning, rehashing college stories.”

“College buddies, that’s nice.”

She rolled her eyes. “Stories better be all they’re doing. If he brings my husband to the altar drunk, I’ll throw both of them into the ocean.”

I suppressed a laugh; Marilee was the same as always. We couldn’t have been more different, but I loved her take-no-nonsense attitude and had channeled it many times in my job at the bar. I wouldn’t have made it through many a shift had I not.

“I hear he’s super-hot,” she remarked.

Declan was the hottest man that had ever lived or ever would, but I managed a polite “Oh?”

She pulled me close like back in our school days when she was about to share some juicy gossip. “Jane was in the spa and overheard one of the masseuse’s say the cleaning staff said the guy who just checked in for the wedding was huge and hung like a horse.”

“Marilee!” I swatted her shoulder, pretending to be outraged before we both broke out in a peal of giggles. “Did he check in naked?”

“Apparently, it could not be hidden. We’re talking David Bowie in Labyrinth levels of dickage. Who knows,” she said wagging her eyebrows at me. “Maybe you’ll be the lucky recipient. You know how weddings go, there are always hook ups.”

I pretended to be interested but in reality, the only horse, erm, man I was thinking of was my great Scotsman. My tender back hole had stopped burning later that night and despite my altruistic statement to him about maybe this being for the best, the truth was, I missed him desperately.

“I need a cocktail,” Marilee announced. “Can you grab us one?”

“Of course. What did you want, rum punch?”

She blanched. “Oh, hell to the no on that one. On my second day here, I nursed a rum punch hangover and I’m not repeating that mistake on my wedding day. I’ll have a Chi-Chi or a Pina Colada.”

Wasn’t that the same thing with just a different name? But I didn’t argue and left her in the dressing suite at the beach, making my way up the path to the hotel. I heard rustling just before a hand went around my mouth.

“Don’t scream and I won’t hurt you,” a voice hoarsely whispered.

Shit! Could this be the same person I heard on my first night here?

“I’ll pull my hand away, but if you scream, I’ll cut you,” the voice warned and let me feel the cold point of his knife against my back.

Tears welled, but I swallowed my fear, just like I often had to do at the bar when guys got too handsy or thought a tip earned them the right to also cop a feel.

I nodded, and he slowly removed his foul-smelling hand from my mouth. “Now, walk straight into the hotel, smile and nod, but under no circumstances do you stop walking or speak with anyone. Got that?”

“Okay.”

We moved towards the hotel and once inside, he moved me directly to the elevators. *Please, please, please*, I silently begged. *Let someone see and call hotel security.*

When the elevator pinged and the doors opened there stood Matthew and Declan, laughing together in a friendly way. I almost forgot the guy behind me and asked him how the hell he knew Matthew, but the knife pressed harder into my skin.

Declan saw me wince, but played it cool, pretending to get off the elevator with Marilee's soon to be husband. But as we entered, Declan casually said, "Your fly's unzipped, my man," and in the mirrored panel of the elevator's interior, I saw the blurry reflection of my assailant look down.

A split-second later, Declan seized him by the arm and hurled him away from me, bouncing him off the hall wall.

"Watch out, he has a knife!" I yelled, garnering quite a bit of attention, but by then, the knife was already clattering on the floor and Declan had the man in a head-lock, calmly waiting for security to rush over.

"What's happening here?" one guard asked, looking from me to Declan.

"He accosted the young lady and held her at knife point," Declan replied, ignoring his prisoner's weak slaps and struggles.

The guard looked at the knife on the floor, then at me, then got on the radio clipped to his shoulder and alerted medical services. "Do you know where the infirmary is?" he asked me.

"I do," said Declan.

"I'm okay," I assured him. "I felt, uh, pressure, but I'm not hurt."

The crowd was growing, concerned faces surrounding me. Coming out of his shocked stupor, Matthew first pulled me into a quick hug, then turned me around.

“This might need stitches,” I heard him say, and only then did I begin to process the stinging heat on my back.

I looked at the floor, first at the knife, and then at the drops of blood arranged around it, almost artfully. “Is that mine?” I asked stupidly.

The security took the man from Declan’s arms and as soon as he did, he was at my side. “Babygirl, we need to get you to the medic now.”

I felt faint, having never been good with blood, but with effort, I was able to clear my head and get my priorities in line. “What about the wedding? I have to be there.”

“Declan, you take her to the infirmary, and I’ll hold off the wedding until you’re back.” Matthew turned away, paused and looked back. “And then maybe you can explain why you’re calling my soon-to-be wife’s best friend ‘babygirl’.”

“And maybe you can explain how you happen to know my bestie’s fiancée,” I added to Declan, crossing my arms so he knew I meant business.

“We’ll be there as soon as we can.” Declan scooped me off my feet and followed the remaining guard to the resort infirmary.

The cut turned out to be not very serious, nothing a little first aid cream and a bandage couldn’t patch. I was assured it wouldn’t even leave a scar, but I did need a tetanus shot, just in case. As the doctor worked, Declan shared that when he found out I was headed to Barbados for his best friend’s wedding, he figured it was serendipitous and after our session in the lounge, decided to keep it a secret.

“I wanted to woo you outside of the wedding party and get to know you without them clamoring around us, lass. I hope

you can forgive me.”

How could I not? When I thought back to all he had done since we met, I realized everything had been with me in mind. “But what have you been doing these past two days?” I asked.

“That is the surprise, but we’ve a wedding to get to, lass. Can you wait for after? I promise, you won’t be disappointed.”

I wanted to continue pretending annoyance, but his eagerness touched my heart. Whatever he had been up to, again I was sure it was with me in mind. I fingered my collar. “Fine. But I want the whole truth.”

“And ye will have it, I swear.”

Needing a change of clothing as the dress I had been wearing was ruined, we went to my room. I rummaged through the hangars containing my newly purchased items, compliments of Declan’s gold card and found the sexy little sundress I was going to show off the next day when he promised we’d meet again.

“Jesus, woman! You’re not wearing that in public, are you? Every man that sees ya, will want ya.”

I spun around a few times. “You like it, Daddy? I bought it with you in mind.” I blushed. When he raised his eyebrow in that all seeing, discerning kinda way. “What I meant to say is, I imagined you sliding the silky material over my hips and slamming your big cock into my needy kitten when I said, ‘with you in mind.’”

“Kelseean,” he growled. “Now you’ve done it. Come over here and bend over the bed.”

“But the wedding! We can’t possibly make them wait any longer.”

Declan reached out and nabbed my wrist, pulling me to him. “Aye, we can, lass, and we will. Seeing you in that, I must mark you with my scent right now.”

Well, when he put it that way, how could I argue?

“Yes, Daddy.” I bent over the bed and wiggled my ass suggestively. The truth was, my panties were soaked from just his words, and I couldn’t wait another second for him to take me, mark me, own me.

When he filled me with his thick length, my sheath latched on like it had been starving and his cock was the only acceptable nourishment. Our adrenaline from what had happened in the lobby pushed us both to a record pace, diving off the cliff together and hanging for long moments before descending back down to earth.

When he pulled out, he smacked my ass a few times. “Stay, I will wipe ye.” He left me and I stayed obediently where I was, my legs trembling in the aftermath of my orgasm.

“That’s my good girl,” he growled, wiping my entrance with a warm cloth and patting me with a dry one. Closing my eyes, the feeling of utter contentment filled me. Could life get any better than this?

I stood at my Marilee’s side, opposite Declan who stood beside Matthew, as the minister went through the statement of purpose, declaration of intent, vows and finally called for the rings. And through it all, Declan had eyes only for me.

“You may kiss the bride,” was announced and Matthew dipped his new wife so far backward before claiming her

mouth, I was worried they'd both fall. When he brought her upright, she wore a huge smile.

“I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. Withington.”

The small crowd that had all just been crying broke out into cheers and laughter, and people began to move forward to offer the new couple congratulations. Declan at once was at my side. “Come, lass, it is time for your surprise.”

Mathew noticed Declan taking my arm and moving me away. “What are you up to now, Campbell?” he asked with a knowing smile.

“Weil, if you doona mind,” he drawled, thickening his accent much to everyone’s enjoyment. “I’d like to make a proposal.”

Marilee giggled and hugged onto her new husband’s arm, her eyes twinkling with anticipation. The crowd went quiet as Declan got down on one knee in front of me.

“Kelsey-Ann, you have already agreed to be my Little lass, and now I’m asking if you’ll be my wife.”

He pulled a gorgeous ring box out of his pocket and opened it. I sucked in a breath at the intricate art that sat before me. More than just a ring, the rose gold band was carved with the Campbell and Monahan heraldic ribbon with diamonds spread throughout. In the center in the shape of a crown were seven large diamonds, one for each point in our combined heraldic shields. It was the most stunning piece of jewelry I’d ever seen.

He removed the ring and held it between his two fingers. “I had to fly to Scotland and get this made especially for you, lass. That was why I needed those few days apart. If you accept me for now and evermore, I promise I’ll never leave

you behind again. What do you say, lass? Will you let me care, cherish and love ye for the rest of your life?”

“Yes,” came out in such a low husk that I had to clear my throat of emotion and speak louder for the benefit of the guests. “Yes, I do, for now and evermore.”

Declan slid the ring on my finger and stood up, pulling me gently in for a hug, careful not to touch my back.

“I love you, Daddy. I don’t think this day could get any better.”

“Well then, you won’t be wanting your other surprise then?”

“Declan Campbell, don’t you hold out on me!”

His eyes sparkled with amusement when he pulled an ancient looking key out of his pocket and held it in front of me.

“Have you ever fancied living in a Scottish Castle, lass?”

“No. Friggin. Way! You live in a castle in Scotland? That’s, like, my dream place.”

He was gloating and loving every minute of it.

“You rascal, keeping that from me.” I took the key from his hand, then looked up at him with a weepy, goofy, and utterly in love smile. “I can’t wait to see your home.”

“Our home, lass, and I can’t wait to show you. As a lad, I’d dreamt of one day having a castle all to myself and this side trip was meant as a moment to catch my breath before going home for a well-deserved rest. I never expected it would be with the woman of my dreams at my side, I’m truly blessed.”

His lips sought mine, scorching my insides when he claimed of my mouth. It was a kiss full of promises and of naughty nights to come.

Epilogue

Declan

Rain hammered against the windowpanes. I peered through the thick gloom, watching for my wife's return. I didn't like her driving alone in this weather as she was still adjusting to being on the opposite side of the road, but she'd insisted on it today because she was returning with a surprise. I tried not to indulge her every desire, but it was hard not to when the storm in her eyes begged me for permission. When I gave it, the storm clouds cleared and the tranquil dark blue of her irises returned.

Giving in the majority of the time would have to change. The past few months I'd spent a lot of time observing Kelseean and learned a lot about her behavior, triggers and self-regulation. In particular, I'd learned she had very little of the latter. She needed me to keep her on track with her goals and I wasn't about to let her down.

An hour late and no phone call. She'd definitely be receiving a punishment. But I'd hold back until she shared her surprise. Regardless of her bad decision making, and the consequences, my woman needed support and encouragement.

She'd never had much of that growing up and almost none as an adult until we met.

She was a sweet, sensitive soul who'd been forced to hide her inner Little, denying a vital part of herself in the process. But here with me, she could be her true self, and each day showed me something new about her, and deepened the love I felt for her, both as her husband and her Daddy.

I'd never really thought about being married, but if I had, I never could have expected to honeymoon at home. My friends and business associates tried to tease me, "Leave it to Declan to put the honeymoon before the wedding, for efficiency's sake," but there was nowhere else I'd rather be and no more beautiful sight than my wife exploring her new home with wonder and delight. Those first few weeks of our marriage had been taken up with sightseeing and shopping trips, followed by time at the castle, getting comfortable with each other and learning more about our new lives as a couple. I'd given Kelseean duties that she needed to perform and rules to adhere to, and for the most part, she had adjusted well, although she had tested me a few times by being deliberately disobedient.

Now could be one of those times, I reasoned with myself as I brooded over the empty, rain-choked road, but it didn't feel like that. She wouldn't want me fearing for her life; that would be cruel, and that was something she was not. A brat, yes, but never cruel.

Headlights appeared through the thickening mist. Finally! I watched her pull up under the porte cochere and quickly exit the vehicle. She ripped her phone out of her pocket and quickly typed something.

A moment later my phone pinged with a notification.

It's me. I'm home.

No point in responding as I heard the door open and close. She was shaking the water from her hair when I entered the foyer.

“I hope it was worth it, lass.”

Kelseean nearly jumped out of her skin. I crossed my arms smirking in anticipation of her excuse.

“You scared me,” she accused.

“I’ll be doing more than that shortly, I can assure you.”

Her face instantly flamed as pink as her backside soon would be.

“Uh. I have no excuse,” she said, quickly adding, “but I will say that my surprise took longer than anticipated. My phone was in my purse in the back seat. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to worry you, Daddy.” Her bottom lip quivered, and her eyes filled with tears. “Are you mad?”

I uncrossed my arms. “I’m not mad, only upset that you didn’t keep your word and at least let me know you were okay and on your way home.”

The tears spilled over and tracked down her cheek. “I wasn’t trying to test you, I swear. I’ve just been overly excited today to share my surprise.”

“Come here, lass.”

I opened my arms and she ran to me, burying her face in my chest. “I love you, my little lass,” I assured her. “Now you best share this surprise so we can get your punishment out of the way.”

She pulled back, offering me a sly watery smile. “Can we go upstairs? I want to show you in our room.”

I scooped her up in my arms and raced up the reclaimed wood staircase and down the hall to our room which was more like a suite. Almost two thousand square feet with the massive walk-in and bathroom and sitting room complete with a massive stone fireplace. Truthfully, it was my favorite spot in the entire castle, especially when Kelseean was in it with me.

“Put me there, Daddy and you go and sit on the sofa.”

I placed her on her feet in front of the fireplace.

“Okay, now close your eyes,” she ordered.

Playing along, I sat on the couch and closed my eyes, patiently waiting as I listened to her rustling around.

“Okay,” she said at last. “Now open them!”

Standing in an almost nude, rose-gold corset with matching undies, garter and stocking, with the light of the fire behind her, she glowed like a pale angel. It was similar in style to the one she’d surprised me with the night of our wedding. That one had been deep red, inspiring me to do all manner of naughty things to her. This one showed her dark peach nipples through the sheer fabric. It fit her like a glove, one I couldn’t wait to take it off.

“You are truly a vision, my lovely lass, but why were you an hour late?”

As she strutted toward me, my cock became instantly hard, but when I tried to unwrap my present, she surprised me with another one.

“For this!” she said and whipped a folded piece of paper out from behind her back.

I unfolded it and saw it was from the women’s clinic in Inverness.

Pregnancy confirmed, approximately seven weeks along. Expected due date, August 20th, 2024.

I glanced from her to paper and back again. “You’re pregnant?”

She nodded her head enthusiastically. We’d talked about children and how I hoped to fill the castle with them, but so soon? She’d truly surprised me.

“Lass.” I carefully set the paper aside and tugged her onto my lap. “Why didn’t you tell me before?”

She chewed her bottom lip thoughtfully. “I wanted to make sure, because I know how much you want children and I didn’t want you to get your hopes up only to be disappointed. You know, just in case I was wrong. Are you happy?”

“Happy? I’m more than happy.”

Her eyes softened. “I’m so excited to have a little Declan running around the castle. Thank you for rescuing me and being my everything, Daddy.”

I tightened my grip and crushed her lips with mine, only letting up when her lips were swollen from my attention. “No thanks, lass, just a promise of a lifetime of love and pleasure, and now family. You make me a verry happy man.”

“Aye,” she replied, giggling at her attempt to sound Scottish, before I claimed her lips again and then her body. Wind gusted and rain battered the windows, but nothing outside mattered at that moment. I was complete—*We* were complete, just ourselves and the precious life growing in her belly, such an unexpected end to such an ordinary beginning, as if it had always been destined to be.

The End

About Rogue London

Rogue London is an author of naughty romance designed to awaken your sensual side.

Rogue has a flair for writing about the D/s dynamic and as a true romantic at heart, her books have an HEA.

She also writes as Skylar West.

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Zombie Daddy by
Leslie Ayla

A MFF story by Leslie Ayla

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Chapter 1

Mika

Oh goody! He's back.

I try to keep the smirk from crossing my features when I see him shuffling in.

There he is. Daddy perfection.

Cleaning the counter of the cute coffee shop I absolutely adore working at, I take my time to study Mr. Tall, Dark, and Mysterious.

He's been coming in since last week. Every day, without fail. From about nine till four, he would be there, sitting in a booth in the back, brooding over his laptop, shutting off the world with a large set of headphones.

And every single time he comes into the shop, he would shuffle up to the counter I man, mumble his order into his chest, and practically hide away in his jacket's collar until I handed him his large Americano with an extra shot of espresso. Then, once he has his beverage in his hand, he would run away like the hellhounds of Lucifer himself are on his tail.

And each time he does, I smile like my world hasn't just tumbled down a crap shoot.

But it does. He is perfect.

He looks so sweet and wonderful. And his delicious shyness only attracts me more.

I am so enamored with him that I'd even shared my fantasies with Zara.

She'd scoffed at me, rolled her eyes, and turned back to the massive Lego bookshelf she'd been building. I'd nearly thrown an epic tantrum and knocked over her massive project, but managed to shove it back down.

I couldn't really blame her. Why on earth should she get excited about some random stranger that was too scared to look at me, let alone talk to me and make Zara and I his Little girls?

But there is nothing wrong with dreaming a bit.

And boy have I dreamed. Those hands are the stuff of dreams. Strong. Protective. Deliciously scarred and calloused, so you just *knew* that they'd worked hard in their lifetime.

Zara and I had been in love and together for just over a year.

She is... exquisite.

Her long red hair is so smooth and perfectly curly that I've always felt a little naughty for messing it up. But the good kind of naughty. Her sharp green eyes can pierce through me with a single glance, but when she is in Little space, they resemble those of an angel.

And she chose me. She loves me. Nothing could make her any more perfect for me than she already was.

The only problem is, I am a greedy Little. *Very* greedy. And I want more. So much more.

The good news? So does she. Both Zara and I believe that we deserved a Mommy or Daddy to keep us in check because together we are a menace. We hardly ever get anything important done that isn't related to work. We eat like pigs, and we run out of clean clothes a little more often than I like to admit.

I need... no, *we* need a Caregiver. Someone that can take both their Little girls into their fierce, protective arms.

Knowing I'm not going to get anywhere as is, I push aside the doubt and fear. I am on my umpteenth attempt at drawing out a conversation with the mystery man, but alas, as always, I strike out.

He barely spares me a glance.

Le sigh.

As a consolation prize for him snubbing me *again*, I take my phone from my apron and sneakily hold it out above the counter so I can just barely get a shot in.

His dark, handsome features are evident in the sneaky photo I take. His gruff, grizzly beard looks so manly that I can already feel it between my thighs, leaving a delightful rash.

I send the photo off to Zara before sitting my ass down on the stool behind the counter so I can rest my chin on my hand and ogle the sexy stranger. Within minutes, my phone pings, and I look down at the screen where the messaging app is still open.

Zara: Who is that, and why are you taking photos of Daddies in the wild?

With a smile, I check the time and pick up the phone to respond to her text.

Mika: It's your break time soon, isn't it? Why not come over for a cuppa and a slice of cake, then you can ogle him in real life?

I watch the speech bubble hopping around on my phone in anticipation of her message coming through and let out a soft squeal of excitement when she lets me know she'll be around in ten.

She indulges me too often, and I love her for it.

Within minutes, my studious girlfriend steps into the coffee shop, the bells jingling signaling her arrival.

And like the perfect girl she is, she avoids looking at the Daddy and steps straight up to the counter, giving me a whopping kiss to greet me.

“Hey, lover. What’s good today?” Her sultry voice, such a contradiction to everything else she is, warms me from my toes up.

“Hmmm. Apparently, you,” I reply with a smirk. “We have fresh chocolate ganache.”

“Sold.” She leans over the counter for another kiss before taking a seat at her usual spot facing the door so she can ogle all she wants.

After finishing her iced coffee concoction with way too much syrup and sweetness, I head over to her table and take a seat with her, shouting to my manager that I’m taking my break too.

The matronly woman scoffs and shakes her head at me before returning back to her latest bodice ripper.

“So...” I ask, trying to stealthily nod to the sexy beast.

“Yeah, he’s a fine specimen. He’s also a zombie, Mika.”
She rolls her eyes at my shocked expression.

“Shut up!”

“No, seriously. Look at him. No way that is a living human being.” She shrugs at me when I look at her like she’s high on something.

“How the hell can you tell by one glance? I’ve seen him every day for a whole week, and I couldn’t tell.”

“I don’t know, I guess I just can. But you know the rules. Those bad boys are off-limits unless you’re their *counterpart*. You don’t want to go catching that particular virus.”

I sit back in my seat with a huff, staring at the zombie in question with a frown on my face.

Why can nothing in life ever go the way we need it to? Or more importantly, why can’t a girl just find her perfect Daddy?

Chapter 2

Rome

The damn girl just won't leave me alone.

I don't know how I can make it more obvious that all I want is my fucking coffee and nothing else.

Her bright smile and inviting dark brown eyes remind me of everything I've lost. Her way-too-kissable lips curve into a wider smile as I grunt my thanks.

“Are you sure I can't get you a nice piece of moist cake with that?” she asks as if she is offering me a bite of her delectable body.

If only she knew... that taking a bite of her is exactly what I want to do.

Without answering, I turn my back on her and head toward the corner booth I've made my home away from home every day this past week.

I could have found a different coffee shop to do my work at, one that doesn't have temptation eye fucking me every day, but I am nothing if not a glutton for punishment.

Everything about Mika—as her name badge proclaims—is perfection. Her every move, gesture, and words shout at me. Begging me to take her, claim her, and make her mine.

I just know she is a Little. Or at the very least a submissive.

What I also know, without a doubt, is that she is human. As alive and vital as someone can be. Which means she is so very off-limits. Not to mention, I am just not the right guy for her. I might have been before my life had turned upside down.

I put my headphones back on my head and climb back into the work that's kept me with fresh brains to eat.

Oh, that. Right.

I'm a bit of an anomaly. One of only about five thousand in the world. Fuck knows what I've done to deserve it. But one morning, after one hell of a rugby match, I woke up with a huge fucking headache, a sensitivity to bright lights, and a need to take a bite out of the mailman.

At first, I thought I was sick and even took my ass to the team doctor. I mean, there was no possible way I contracted the virus. I hadn't been in contact with *anyone*. It had to be a cold or something else.

Gave Doc the fright of his life because apparently, I had no heartbeat.

No heartbeat and no blood pumping in my veins.

Have you made the connection yet?

Yeah. I was fucked. I was a zombie. And lacking the blood flow to perform certain tasks. You got that right folks. No stiffie for this stiff.

As soon as the doc confirmed the diagnosis, he put me in touch with some online support groups and a mentor that would talk me through it all.

He also offered to do all my follow-up consults at no charge, even though I had to be let go from the national rugby team because of my undead status.

After that, things kind of just... happened. I got hooked up with a new job I could do from home until I got my urges under control. I get weekly shipments of fresh meat, and in return, I have to check in with my mentor and a police officer every two weeks to confirm I haven't had any illegal contact with anyone human.

In other words, I have not chomped on a live human or turned anyone else. I suppose, in the big scheme of things, it isn't so bad. The generation before us had it way worse. When the first zombies were discovered, obviously everyone had thought it was the end of the world. Thousands of innocent people were locked up and experimented on if they weren't just gunned down in the street like wild animals.

Until someone figured it out.

We were harmless. Yes, it spreads through bodily fluids, but not everyone that comes into contact with it is guaranteed to catch it. We aren't mindless, thoughtless creatures that only think about their next meal. We are functioning humanoids that want what everyone else does. Their happily ever after. Something we, unfortunately, can't have. Not as easily as everyone else.

Cue the rumors about undead being dead in bed. Jokes started, and we were the stuff of internet memes.

Until we weren't. Because as it so happened, a zombie found his match. Like a physiological match. The perfect counterpart to our undeadness. But until you find that counterpart, you are destined to just shuffle along. The few zombies out there come together sometimes. Form couples out of necessity. I was told by my mentor I could find someone to live my life with. We could use toys and be happy.

I'm not interested.

I don't want a happily ever after.

What I want is to be left alone.

It's something that I've successfully managed for a while now. Until I apparently needed to have my house fumigated. I could have stayed while they did it, it's not like I could be killed twice, but the smell was atrocious, so I found myself in this cute little coffee shop. The first time I saw Mika, I almost thought I'd found it. My counterpart. But as much as the spark was there, my dick just wasn't playing along. So she could flirt and be as fucking cute as she wanted, but it isn't going anywhere.

Once again, she's watching me with longing eyes and apparently trying to take photos of me like I won't notice.

Pulling my attention back to my computer screen, I focus on my work. Until that bell jingles again.

It jingles a million times a day. And later, should you ask me why this time it drew my attention, there is no way I could tell you.

But it does. And I look.

And my world upends.

I don't know how to describe it other than a black-and-white movie suddenly going full color.

It takes everything in me to stay in my seat. Even more so when the newcomer walks up to the counter and gives Mika a warm kiss. My entire world comes into focus on the two women sharing a moment over a coffee-shop counter.

What the fuck is this even?

If my heart was still beating, I just know it would be going insane in my chest right now. I kept my eyes glued on my screen, keeping them in my peripheral, not willing to have them notice they have my attention.

They move to a table, and Mika brings over an iced coffee drink, calling to someone about taking a break. Putting their heads together, I can tell they're talking about me. And not for the first time since being turned into a creature from nightmares do I wish it came with other perks like super hearing or super speed. I'd give my undead life to know what they are talking about. The cute blonde gasps in shock at something the pert redhead with the glasses tells her.

They go back and forth a bit before Mika stares at me like she can unravel my secrets with a single glance.

Shaking off this jolt of life urging me to jump up, I push myself to stay seated.

After a few minutes, Mika gets up without a word, pulling her... *girlfriend?* along with her. To me.

To me. They're coming to me. What the fuck.

The friend pulls on Mika's hand as if she's trying to stop her from coming any closer to me. So obviously, even though Mika must have missed it, the redhead could tell what I am. Clever girl.

And then they are there. Standing in front of me.

The series of events that followed is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

The bell jingles.

A cool, welcome breeze blows into the shop.

And I can smell them. Sweet summer blossoms and a hint of coconut butter.

My cock chooses that exact moment to come back to life.

Chapter 3

Zara

I am going to kill her.

I love her. And I'm pretty sure I would be able to bring her back to life. But either way, I'm killing my girlfriend.

Who the fuck does that? I tell her the gruff—admittedly sexy—guy she's been crushing on is a zombie. And what does she do?

She pulls me over to meet him. No discussion. No warning. Just jumps up, grabs my hand, and drags me along with her.

The poor guy looks at us like we're about to attack him, and if I wasn't deathly afraid of him myself, I might have laughed. His fear is valid. Mika is a force to be reckoned with.

And then he just stands up, grabs his laptop, and rushes past us so quickly I nearly get whiplash from it.

What happened?

We both look at each other with confused, shocked expressions before Mika's face falls into a mask of sadness.

“Seriously?” my sensitive girlfriend asks, her voice wavering. “He’s just going to run away like that? What the hell. Do I stink?”

I pull her into my embrace and guide her to the back room, ignoring her manager’s scowl at me going back there.

“Honey, you have to know this isn’t about you. He *cannot* mix with us. It’s against the law, and it’s not safe for us. He could turn us too. Or kill us.”

“Or nothing could happen!” she shouts back at me with a bite of anger in her tone. “I know the statistics as well as you do. You have a one-in-three chance of either turning, dying, or nothing happening!”

I can feel the fear racing up my spine at what she’s saying. Is she so desperate for a Daddy that she’s willing to risk her life on one? Surely not.

“Mika! You can’t mean that. That means there is a thirty-three-percent chance of you dying! I could live with you turning into a zombie. But not having your beauty, your brilliance, in this world? That’s a travesty.”

She sniffs, pulling herself up right. “Of course I won’t risk it. But for him to run away like that is just... hurtful!”

“I know, honey. I know. But it’s better this way,” I try to soothe her, but it doesn’t work. My little jack-in-the-box is up and roaring. Her moods as mercurial as the weather on the coast.

“I don’t care how long it takes, but he’ll be back. Everyone always comes back here in the end. And when he does, I’ll give him a piece of my mind. Teach him exactly how cowardly he is for running like that.” Mika looks at me, fierce

fire in her eyes before carrying on. “Even Daddies struggle sometimes. He just needs to learn.”

Worry for my girlfriend races through me. She’s always letting her feelings rule her, and it was one of the things I love most about her. But this is something entirely different. This is more. It’s like she’s ignoring facts in favor of fantasy.

But I let myself rest easy because at the way that man had looked at us, I don’t see him returning any time soon.

“Okay, honey. But until then, how about I treat you tonight? I’ll grab some of your favorite snacks on the way home. We can pop some nuggets and fries in the oven and then veg out all night. I’ll even let you pick what we watch,” I say, cringing at the thought of whatever awful, sweet toons she’ll pick.

She nods in response, her face splitting into a beautiful smile. “Deal!”

“Okay, I need to get back to work. You’re good?” I ask, grabbing her hand in mine.

“Yup. I’m good.” She pulls me close for a kiss, and I wrap my arms around her slight frame. Her shape molds against mine as we trade a long luxurious kiss that leaves me breathless.

“Now you have something to think about in that stuffy old bookshop of yours.” She winks as she sends me on my way.

I nod and wave at Marge-the-manager who rolls her eyes at me, but I can see the corners of her mouth slightly turn up. She can pretend to be a grump all she wants. She loves us.

After that kiss in the backroom of the coffee shop, the rest of the day drags. Even though I promised Mika a Little night,

all I can think about is slowly undressing her and having my wicked way with her.

But this too could happen. Even after we veg out and overdose on silly cartoons and sweet stuff.

The day is a monotonous blur of customers shuffling around the shelves and Charlie, the owner of the book shop, chasing me around for one cup of terrible tasting instant coffee after another.

Don't get me wrong. I love my job. I love watching the different customers come into the shop and reading them like I would my books. And when I match them up with their perfect read? It's like the best feeling in the world.

But after our morning meeting with Mr. Zombie and the stupid kiss Mika had gifted me, I do not want to be trapped inside these four walls today.

Finally the time comes to clock out. I drop by Charlie and place a kiss on his wrinkly, old cheek, grinning when he waves me away. A quick stop at the local shop to grab my provisions and then I'm on my way to the light of my life, ready to spoil her, to help her forget the grumpy asshole.

Until I bump right into him as I walk out of the shop.

He looks at me with large blinking eyes.

Large blue eyes.

Wait.

Don't zombies lose their eye color until their heart starts beating again? In other words, when they have their *counterparts*?

No wonder the poor guy ran from us so quickly. He probably had to get back to his wife or whatever before Mika

fell all over him.

He takes a startled step backwards and looks like he's about to flee again when I hold up my hand.

“Stop!” I blurt out. “Please don't run.”

The look he gives me is suspicious at best.

“No, seriously. I just wanted to apologize. Mika gets kind of... excited at times.” I shrug at the understatement, but that's the best way to describe it. “And when she does, it's very hard to put the brakes on. I don't know what she was thinking this morning coming to you, but I know she didn't mean to cause you harm or freak you out.”

He grunts in response but gives me nothing else. He's still standing there though, so I'll take it as a win and push on.

“I see now that you're very taken, and I'll speak to her about it. You're welcome to come back to the shop, and she'll leave you alone now.” I stop and rethink my statement before sending a sheepish grin his way. “Okay, she probably won't, but she'll more than likely go back to her usual perky self. You'll be safe there. I promise.”

He looks mildly taken aback, and I guess that makes sense as I have a habit of being slightly verbose when I'm on a tangent, so I just nod a greeting at him and slip by him to get back home to Mika.

Chapter 4

Mika

Zara stumbles into our little flat with bags of our favorite stuff. I hop around her like an excited bunny, waiting for her to put it down on the kitchen counter. It had only taken, oh... three times for me to make all the groceries fall, trying to help her carry it, for that particular lesson to settle in.

Once everything has been unpacked, we head to our bedroom to change into something a little less work-like.

And as always, shedding my day-to-day outfits is like shedding the years.

As each item of clothing lands on the floor, I feel lighter and lighter. Until I am just Little Mika. Ready for her play date with her best friend and girlfriend. I grab one of my favorite rompers and rush to the lounge with Zara close on my heels.

She is so pretty. And when she has her long, red curls up into those adorable pigtails with her large framed glasses and her Power Puff Girls PJ's, she's just the bestest.

We pop some nuggies and fries into the airfryer—the only way we don't burn the apartment down thanks to the timer—

so now we are settled on the floor in front of the television ready for toon night.

As always, Zara has to keep her hands busy because she is a busy bee, so she is playing with her Lego blocks, building another addition to her pretty awesome bookshelf. Each one she makes is a different color and a different theme. She even has a shelf that's made up of all the colors of the rainbow running from one side to the other like a wave, and it's the best!

The evening is spent right there on our tiny living room floor, lost in toon land and Little world, and it's wonderful. Until my tummy shouts at me that it's super-duper hungry, and I look up at the clock and realize our food should have been done hours ago.

Ew. Cold nuggies.

“What's wrong?” Zara asks at the disgusted noise I let out.

“We forgot the food again,” I say with a pout. This is why we need a keeper. I've gotten way too used to eating cold or burnt dinner. Or having our power shut off because we forgot to pay the bill.

Then there was that one time when we were so into a video game that we played until our alarms alerted us to the fact that we should have been asleep ages ago... because it was time to wake up.

That was not a fun day.

Zara scrunches up her nose when I remind her of the forgotten dinner before jumping up and grabbing my hand to pull me along.

“It's okay. We'll fix it.”

She grabs the tray from the fryer and plonks all the food inside on a large serving plate before heading to the microwave. Only to be reminded that it isn't working because of the last time we tried to use it and accidentally put a foil takeout container in it.

“I know!” I shout eagerly. “Mayo fixes everything!”

This time, Zara pulls the disgusted face before opting for her favorite tomato sauce instead.

We each pour a liberal portion of our condiment of choice on the large plate we share. Sitting at the small dinette table, we scarf down our cold, dry, and pretty disgusting nuggies. But at least we're eating.

My phone chirps, and I reach over to see one of the preset alarms telling us it's time to pack up and head to bed.

The things two Littles must do when in desperate need of a Caregiver.

We both sigh as I shut up the phone. With quick easy movements, our evening chores get done. No point in arguing or pouting when there is no one to pout to.

And as always, the mundane tasks pull me right out of the headspace I'd been working toward all night.

Just once I'd like to go to bed Little, curled up in my Mommy or Daddy's arms.

But... At least I have my Zara.

My sexy, currently undressing Zara.

She's a sight to behold. Her beautifully pale skin is dotted with freckles, and she has just a hint of curves that drive me mad. She's kicked off her PJ's and is pulling her hair ties out, letting those long gorgeous curls fall down her naked back.

And I can't resist any longer.

I quickly undress myself and slip up behind her, wrapping my arms around her small waist.

"Hmmm. Hello there, beautiful. Fancy seeing you here," I whisper into her ear. She rewards me with a warm laugh at my incredibly lame attempt at flirting.

She turns into my embrace, pressing her perfectly pert, just-a-handful breasts up against mine.

"Your pick-up lines are getting worse each time, baby girl." She smiles, lifting her lips up to mine.

I quickly open my mouth to give her the access she silently demands, and our tongues begin a slow, languid dance as I dig my hands into her hair, drawing a moan from her lips.

"You love my flirting," I finally respond when I pull back from her kiss.

Her fingers trail up from my waist and around to the front so she can cup my breasts before bending and taking a nipple in her mouth. When the little bud is erect, she looks up at me. "I love you," she murmurs before turning her attention on the other breast.

Once she's satisfied with her task, she grabs my hand, and we both fall into the bed, lost among the pillows and blankets we both insist we need.

Our kisses evolve from lazy, lusty exchanges to eager, urgent demands for more.

My hands trail down her chest, tracing circles around her dusky pink nipples before letting my fingers trail down to her bare pussy. I find her wet, so very wet, and my thumb quickly

slips into the folds, picking up the moisture before returning to her clit to gently stroke at the little nub.

Soon Zara is a mewling, writhing mess, and all it takes is a gentle pinch to pull her into her first climax.

I let her come down, slowly stroking the insides of her thighs, waiting for her to open her beautiful green eyes and look at me.

When she blinks up at me, I grin before diving in.

With slow, practiced movements, my tongue dives into her folds, sucking and licking up every bit of her moisture. She hands grip onto the blankets around her as she struggles not to grind up into my mouth.

She tastes like she always does. Heaven. And I can't get enough of it. I use my thumb on her clit again as I slowly fuck her with my tongue, pulling her back up to the clouds to chase her next orgasm. It doesn't take much for her to fall over, but this time when she does, she cries out my name.

Sweet, sweet music.

She grabs my hand and pulls me up against her, drawing me in for a kiss as her fingers find my own wet slit. She knows just what I like and how to give it to me good because it doesn't take much for me to follow her into bliss.

We're both too lazy and satisfied to get up and get dressed, and I only hope I'd set an alarm for tomorrow morning. But at the time, all I can think of is Zara and how perfectly perfect she is.

We don't need a Daddy. We have each other.

Right?

Chapter 5

Rome

Well, this was complete and utter bullshit.

How am I supposed to focus on anything with this stupid, raging hard-on?

How the fuck did I ever get anything done before I was turned into a zombie?

My brain focuses back on my pre-turned years. All of the insane workout hours, the time spent in dark, pulsing clubs, finding for the perfect Little girl while still trying to keep my anonymity. Other than rugby, working out, and meaningless one-night stands with club babies, I didn't really have much of a life.

However, losing it was a hit. At the time, I thought I'd lost everything. Now I know how useless and meaningless it all was. Not that my current life is any kind of improvement. I wake, jog, work, eat, sleep, and repeat. Sometimes I shake things up and go out onto the lake to go rowing.

But that is the sum of my life.

Except last week, going to the coffee shop was new, exciting, and so fucking terrifying.

And now this *thing* that just won't fucking go down.

I'm not an idiot. I know what it means. Well, kind of.

My body clock starting again, the blood pumping again, means I've found my counterpart.

It doesn't bring me to life, and I'm still infectious to anyone but my counterpart.

The problem is, I'm pretty sure that the redhead isn't my *only* counterpart. It's like my body had been waiting for the two of them together to wake up.

And how fucked up is that? My perfect match is a pair of perfect women that are already mated off. To each other.

I know I have very little chance of keeping myself from going back there. Now that I've found them, I will not be able to stay away.

But they don't have to know what they are to me. I can hide that.

Right?

I'm still very much in my internal debate when I push into the damn coffee shop, and the bell above the door signals my arrival. I feel like the worst kind of asshole when Mika doesn't smile as wide at my entrance as she has been doing all week. I did that. Because I'm a fucking jackass.

I suck up a bolstering breath—not that I need the oxygen—and make my way to the counter.

“Morning.” I clear my throat when my voice comes out a hoarse croak. “Morning, Mika.”

She stares at me with large brown eyes. Her mouth hangs open adorably, and I have to suppress the urge to lean over and gently close it.

“Mika, you going to help the customer or what?” a crotchety old lady says from behind the counter, shaking the beautiful blonde from her confused haze.

“Uh... hi. What can I get you today?” She grabs the large cup and is on the verge of making me my usual before I even answer her.

“What do you suggest?” We’re back to the owlish blinking, and I have to admit I find it quite adorable. If I’d known it would only take me asking her some questions to shut her up, I might have tried it earlier in the week. “If it’s too much trouble, you can just make me the usual,” I say softly, hoping to not spook her any further.

She shakes her head and wets her bottom lip before biting down on it and looking at the cup in her hand.

“Can I surprise you?”

“Sure,” I grunt, forcing a smile.

From the knit brows on her, I don’t quite pull off the smile.

“Any allergies?”

I look at her before she blushes, obviously realizing she’s asking an undead creature if he has any allergies.

I shrug in response, and she takes a deep breath, lifting her lush breasts up higher, straining the tight T-shirt she’s wearing to within an inch of its life. My aching, demanding cock, pulses in my pants, and I know from experience no amount of dark, depressing thoughts—or jacking off—will get it to back down.

Mika seems to have shaken off her surprise, shock, and hurt because she's smiling again, the same one I've grown so used to seeing.

“So this is probably an ignorant question... but I didn't know you could drink coffee.”

“Uh... that's not really a question,” I point out.

“Sure it is, silly. That's when you explain to me why or how it is that you do drink the glug-glug juice of life.”

She's smirking at me, and I can't help but smile back at her. A real one this time, and I can actually feel it reaching my eyes.

“I can eat normal food, drink all the usual beverages, but I get no nutritional value from it. But somehow the organs in my body still work they way they used to, so caffeine still gives me a jolt the same way alcohol still makes me drunk. But I need about three times the amount to make it effective.”

She seems to be sucking up all the information I'm giving her, and I idly realize, other than with my mentor and the biweekly cop appointments, this is the most I've spoken with anyone in years. I don't even talk to the people I work with because everything is done remotely.

Mika puts a cup down on the counter in front of me, her face split into that familiar, beautiful smile. I reach to take it from her, but she doesn't take her hand away. Our fingers graze, and I feel a spark race up my spine, and I nearly come in my damn pants.

“Can I ask you something else?” Mika's chest is raising and falling at a faster pace, and her lips are slightly parted. I feel like I'm about five seconds away from leaning over and kissing her as the girl from the day before had.

But she's taken. And she's too perfect for someone like me.

I nod in response to her request, unable to force another word past the sudden knot in my throat.

“What's your name?”

“Rome,” I grunt out.

“Hi, Rome. So... weren't your eyes like black yesterday?”

Her words bring the entire world to a halt. It's one thing to say I will avoid them. Not say anything to them. But I don't know that I can outright lie to them. Some integral part of my being feels like I'd be tearing myself in two if I told her a bald-faced lie.

I pull my hand away from hers around the coffee cup like I'd been burnt—ha! —and take a cautionary step backwards.

“I...” I try, but the words fail me. I slowly shuffle backwards, and her eyes grow large as she realizes I'm making a bolt for it again. “I... Dammit. I'm sorry.” I finally push the words out.

What am I doing? Am I really going to run away from one half of my counterpart?

Looking down at my feet, I push a hand through my hair, trying to buy myself a moment. I take another bolstering breath before walking back toward Mika and her magical coffee.

“Do you know all zombies wake up with black eyes?” I ask instead of answering her question.

“Yeah?”

“Do you know why their eye color changes?” I look up from my feet to meet her gaze, and I watch as she puts two and two together.

“But it only went blue yesterday...” she says as if in thought. “Does that—” She looks up at me with a shocked, pained expression. “Does that mean Zara is your counterpart?” The words are broken, and her eyes are filling with tears at an alarming rate.

“No! No, no, no! Shit. I’m not doing this right. I wasn’t even going to do it. Fuck.” I look toward the old biddy and decide she can go get fucked because I quickly vault over the counter and grab the little thing into my arms and hold her tightly to me. “Mika, darling, I’m sorry. She’s not. You’re not. Fuck!” I pull back from her and force her to look up at me with a finger under her chin. “You both are.”

“Huh?”

Goodness, she’s adorable.

“You and... Zara? You both are my counterparts.”

“Is that a thing?”

“It is now,” is the only response I have for her. I’d been researching all night. I could find no literature to support what is happening with us. But there is no denying it. Once I saw the two of them together, smelled them together, my body woke up. And it recognized her.

What happens next is one of the cutest, most absurd moments of my life.

She smiles, a beautiful radiant smile that lights up her face. And then she looks at me, really looks at me, and scowls before smacking me on the chest.

“What do you mean you weren’t going to tell us?”

Chapter 6

Zara

Well, this is something else.

Mika and I wake up this morning, a tangled mess of limbs. Only to startle at the time on the alarm clock that we never set before bed.

We end up being late. Again.

Which is slightly disastrous because we actually have a thing planned with Rome.

Rome the zombie.

It's still surreal. Mika and I have been doing our own research the last few days, but so far, there is nothing anywhere about a zombie having two counterparts.

This means we're all kind of scared to say anything because we do not want to be the next group of specimens to be examined. The problem with that, though, is that Rome will have to check in with his mentor and the authorities at some point. And they so closely regulate zombies and their interactions with humans.

Zombies may not have ended up being the scary apocalypse people had always expected. However, the zombie virus is one of the leading causes of death in the previous generation.

“We’re late, Zara!” Mika’s frantic words reach me from the bathroom where she’s busy tying her glossy blonde hair up into a messy bun. Even though we are running late, she still takes the time to dab on some makeup after brushing her teeth at the speed of light.

My fashion doll.

“I know, baby. But I messaged him, and he told us to take our time. Relax, and take a breath.”

She rolls her eyes at me as if I’m an idiot for even suggesting she not stress. “I don’t care *what* he says. It’s our first date. Well, kind of. And being late out of the gate is not a good sign.”

I squeeze by her, grab my toothbrush and lean a hip against the sink as I watch her dab some blush on her cheeks.

“What exactly can we do about it now, though? We’re already late. No point in showing up all rushed and a mess. The damage is done. Might as well make the best of it,” I say, shrugging before brushing my teeth while ogling my girl.

We’d spent too long last night trying to figure out what to wear to today’s get-together. We had no clue what to expect. All he’d said is to dress comfortably and to make sure we had something for the cold weather.

Mika does the finishing touches on her face before leaning against the sink facing me. She has her brows raised, and I just about see her mentally tapping her foot.

Not like she's the one that was doing makeup she doesn't need. Oh no. But I'm holding us up because I dare brush my teeth.

By the time I'm done and rinsing my mouth, she has her hand in mine, and I'm being dragged behind her to the front door.

"Mika! Our stuff!" I pause, tugging on her hand to wait so I can grab our phones, keys, and bags. The last time we'd been this eager to get out the door, we needed the superintendent to come and unlock the apartment for us with his spare key.

Mika pulls on my hand again, dragging me behind her, barely giving me time to shut and lock our front door. Soon, we're armed with all our stuff and running down the stairs, causing us both to be breathless by the time we get down the stairs in the front foyer.

With arms intertwined, we step into the brisk morning air and head up in the direction of the coffee and bookshop. We'd agreed to meet there as it is the one central location we all have in common. This meant we could still keep our home secret, in case he ended up being the psychotic kind of zombie. You know, the ones that cut you up into little pieces to feed you to their goldfish or something.

"Mika, baby. *Slow down*," I try to urge her. "I'm excited too. We won't be able to enjoy our date if one of us gets hurt."

That seems to get through to her because she instantly slows to a *sedate* speed walk, making me laugh out loud. A few steps later and she's bouncing up and down again, practically floating away.

I love this about her. She's the most excitable, fun-loving person I have ever met, and there is this big part of me that is

worried this man... this *zombie* is going to take some of that shine off if he hurts her.

But I won't allow that. I'd rather take his head off and end his undead life than let him hurt my Mika-Moo.

We near the block our two shops are located on, and my eyes travel to him without my permission.

He really is one fine individual. He's got this deliciously gruff, grizzly beard that does wonders to hide his face and expressions, but those eyes. Oh my goodness, those eyes spoke so loud they were practically shouting.

I just couldn't tell what they were saying.

"Rome! Hi!" Mika squeals when she spots him, and his beard splits with a small grin. Against my own reservations, my heartbeat speeds up at observing their interactions.

We don't even *know know* if he's a Daddy. But everything we've read up and seen on the news about counterparts told us that they're pretty much a guaranteed perfect match in everything. So even if he isn't currently a Daddy, he probably—at the very least—would be open to it.

"Hi, Mika. Hi, Zara." He sends a tentative smile my way too. "Thank you for joining me."

"Hi," I whisper, suddenly very shy now that I'm faced with him wearing a dark jean, button-down shirt, buttoned so you can see a peek of his printed T-shirt underneath. "How are you?"

"Uh, I'm good, thank you. So I didn't know for sure what you guys were into, but I heard..." He paused and rubbed his hand through the hair at the back of his head. "Uh, fuck. So... there is a huge Lego exhibit at the City Museum."

Oh.

My.

Hot.

Daddy.

He didn't, did he?

Mika looks back at me with a large smile, jumping up and down and clapping her hands. "Zara!" is all she says. But she doesn't need to say any more. We were dying to go. Well, I was, but we didn't feel like it was something we could do by ourselves. It was bound to put both of us deeply into Little space, and being in a public space without someone tempering our enthusiasm, there was no telling what we would end up doing.

"I know!" I shout back excitedly before reminding myself it's probably best not to show this new beau all our crazy up-front. I clear my throat before looking at him again. "Yeah, that would definitely be okay."

The museum is only one short bus ride away, but Rome asks us if we would rather walk and stop for ice cream on the way there.

No way I'm being dumb enough to tell him that feeding Mika sugar before going into an enclosed space is a bad idea.

That's a lesson he will have to learn the hard way.

Chapter 7

Mika

This is *epic!*

Rome is the bestest, best Daddy I've ever met. I mean I haven't met loads. And the bar is pretty low admittedly. But he took us for ice cream. And then he brought us to the Lego exhibit.

I have no clue how Zara is not bouncing up the walls in excitement. Lego is her life. She has already replaced all but one of our cheap dime-store bookshelves with ones built with Lego. Most of our money—not spent on rent and food—goes toward the expensive building blocks.

The exhibit spans across three of the large rooms, all flowing into one another. A large set dedicated to a famous doll from the fifty's is so large and involved that we spend more than an hour staring at all the little details.

Okay. Zara and Rome stare. I flit from one end of the room to the other, too impatient and hyped up on the double scoop of caramel and chocolate ice cream Rome had treated me to.

“Does she ever just... stand?” Rome asks Zara, who responds with a full-bellied laugh.

“Not when you feed her ice cream, and don’t stop her from having two scoops.”

“Oh.” His cheeks redden with a blush before he looks over at me. “You know, you could have warned me.”

“Now where would the fun be in that?” I snark back at him.

“Oh, I don’t know, maybe naughty Li—” he stops and clears his throat before looking around us, “*girls* should know when it would be in their best interest to... inform their dates of things like this.”

Is he?

He is, isn’t he? Inferring that Littles should tell their potential Daddy of things that may cause them to act out or misbehave.

I take a slow step into his personal space, the first time since we’d walked into the large building that I’m not bouncing up and down.

“And what would happen to *girls* if they don’t tell their *dates*?” I ask, my voice a soft, low whisper.

My world shrinks into the small bubble that’s surrounding Rome, Zara, and me. All the other patrons around us cease to exist.

“Your *date* would have to find a way to make sure you don’t do it again,” he threatens me, and I feel a very inappropriate flush of lust flooding my system.

Oh, I could climb this man like a tree, if only we were in a less public space, that is.

I lick my lips and feel myself grow wet when he growls at me.

My zombie growled at me.

What is my life even right now?

“I seriously hate to be the voice of reason right now,” Zara speaks up, drawing my attention to her. “But I think it’s best if we get ourselves through this exhibit before we permanently scar young minds.”

She’s blushing, her fair, porcelain skin pink with heat. She’s been a little skeptical about Rome since the beginning, but I think he’s starting to get to her too. Which is just *amazing*.

Rome clears his throat and takes a concentrated step back from me, nearly bumping into the exhibit behind him. After a few awkwardly silent moments, we get back into the groove of things, and I’m jumping around the rooms again. The second display is even better than the bright pink of the first. Because it’s all wild animals. Everywhere. Entire cornucopia of creatures and creepy crawlies in their habitats.

The wildlife park even has walkways with miniature men and women milling about.

“He’s eating an ice cream!” I squeal out excitedly. Zara rushes over to me, her arm wrapping around my waist as she peers at the figurine I’m pointing at.

“Show some respect!” an old voice hisses out from behind us. I look back in shocked exasperation at a granny with such a thick layer of makeup on that her wrinkles sit on her face like cracked furrows in a dry wasteland.

“Excuse me?” I ask, sure that I have to be overreacting.

“No, you most certainly are not excused. Show some decency in front of all these respectable folks and impressionable young minds,” she chides us, pointedly looking at Zara’s arm still around my waist. Her fingers loosen, but before she can even think of taking her hand away or stepping away, I grab it and hold on to it.

I’m two split seconds away from giving her a piece of my mind when Rome steps up next to us and wraps his arms around both of us from behind.

“I’ll beg you, ma’am, to leave me and my two girlfriends alone. We don’t go telling you to stop sticking your face in the bucket of makeup every morning. We’d appreciate it if you kept your disgusting bigoted opinions to yourself.”

I know my jaw is hanging open. There is no way it’s not because Rome didn’t just stand up for us, he went to the mat.

I don’t know who’s more shocked by Rome’s actions. Zara or the old fart. Zara pulls away slightly and stares up at Rome, her eyes wide with awe. My gaze turns to the biddy to find her gaping like a fish, unable to form any words.

She lets out an indignant huff, and I can tell she’s trying to figure out what the hell to retort when Rome grabs both our hands and pulls us along with him out of the room we’re currently in. We still have one more large exhibit to go, and I don’t want our interaction to spoil the good time we’re having, and it seems Rome is of the same mind.

“I’m sorry for interjecting like that, and for...” he clears his throat before continuing, “calling you my girlfriends. It was very presumptuous. I just couldn’t just stand there and watch her spill her bile all over you.”

The room we walk into is empty save for a bored looking guard sitting back in his plastic chair.

“That’s okay,” I whisper before standing on my tiptoes so I can speak directly into his ear. Even though I’m stretched as far up as I can go, he still has to bend down for me. “It was hot. The exact kind of thing I’d expect a Daddy to do for his girls.”

And he blushes again.

Oh my gosh. I’m keeping him. We both are.

“Mika!” Zara exclaims. “You can’t say that.” She looks around us all paranoid before coming to the same conclusion I did. We are alone. Then she just looks at Rome all worried that he may reject our premise that he is a Daddy Dom.

“You are one, right?” I ask, no longer hesitant. I just need him to confirm it for my Zara-pants.

“Yeah, little one. I am. And I suddenly feel even more lucky to have found the two of you. How are you still without someone to look after you?”

I shrug nonchalantly, even though it’s a hard question to answer.

“I’m a handful,” I whisper, but the words are hardly out before Zara cries out in protest.

“Shush, Mika-Moo. You are not!” She wraps her arm around my shoulders before looking at Rome. “Most Mommies or Daddies are not interested in a pre-existing couple. That’s what I think anyway.”

She always says that. I think mostly to make me feel better about myself. But I know how busy, anxious, and all over the place I can be.

“Hmmm. I think,” Rome pauses when a family of four walks into the room with us. “I think,” he starts again, “that if we were to continue this relationship and you wanted me to stay your *date*, then we would have to make a rule about not saying nasty things about ourselves.”

I squirm in Zara’s arms at the thought of him making rules for me.

I need rules. I mean, I have them, but they just aren’t good enough because Zara is pretty crap at enforcing them because she doesn’t want to follow them either.

Rome seems to be waiting for me to respond to his statement, so I quickly nod, and he smiles at me.

Oh. This was definitely the start of something good.

Chapter 8

Rome

They really are Littles.

Which is probably a dream come true.

I am living that one-in-a-million life, and I don't know who I have to thank for it because this has never been my experience. Even as a pretty successful athlete, I still had to work for it.

So, instead of overthinking and questioning it, I am going to enjoy it.

After we completed a double circuit of the exhibits in the museum, Zara drawing it out for as long as possible, we finally agreed it's probably time to call it. It wasn't overly late, but I didn't want to push things on our first date.

They are going to be my forever. I could wait a little while longer.

My place is finally bug and fumes free, so I don't technically need to go to the coffee shop anymore, but I can't pass up an opportunity to see Mika, and if I time it right, Zara again.

But when I step into the shop, Mika isn't behind the counter.

And try as I might, the manager on duty refuses to give me any info on her whereabouts. No worries, though, because I know where Zara works. It's close by, so I tuck my laptop under my arm and jog out the door of the coffee shop without ordering my usual. It's not like I'm there for the coffee anyway.

My heart is beating fast when I reach the door to the bookshop Zara assists at, but not because I'm out of breath. No, not that. In the short jog to my destination, my brain had conjured a million bad reasons for them to not be there.

I fall into the bookshop and frantically look around the dark, quaint little shop for my red headed goddess.

She's nowhere to be found.

Trying my luck with the owner of the shop, I strike out again.

Like an idiot, I remember I actually have their numbers on my phone. I've just been trying to avoid using it too much so I don't come across as some kind of creeper.

I would be breathless with angst if I had breath in my lungs as I dial Zara's number and wait for it to ring. After way too long, it goes to voicemail, and I swear as I scroll through my phone to find Mika's number. Her contact looms up at me with her gorgeous smile, as she'd seen fit to take a selfie when she'd added her details to my phone.

On the verge of pushing the green button, my screen lights up with an incoming call from the very girl I was about to phone.

“Daddy!”

I feel my ever-hard cock jump at that one word, but I force it to behave when I hear the panicked tone of her voice.

“What’s up, darling? What’s wrong? Where are you?” No point in asking if they are okay because obviously they aren’t.

“I’m at the police station! Zara is on her way to the hospital, and I don’t know what to do because they want me to answer questions, but I need to be there for her, and she’s probably freaking out all alone, in an ambulance and... Daddy!” she cries out again, and if I wasn’t already dead, I may have keeled over right then. “First things first. Are you hurt, little one?” I ask, keeping my tone gruff and even. No need to alarm her even more by being panicked myself.

“Nuh-uh. I’m fine. But it’s scary here,” she says softly, as if she’s whispering into the phone.

“I know, darling. Now tell me what happened to Zara,” I order firmly, hoping to ground her.

“Uhm, we were on our way to work when a car came racing down the street. They were swerving all over the place, and we tried to get out of the way, Daddy, I promise! But then it was coming straight for us, and... she pushed me out of the way!”

Fuck. A. Fucking. Duck.

No.

Just *no*.

“Honey, I need you to tell me if she’s seriously injured.”

There’s a loud sob on the other end of the phone, and I start to rush toward the direction of the closest police station while keeping the phone glued to my ear. I needed to get to my girl so we can get to the hospital and be there for *our* girl.

“There was so much blood. I don’t know. Rome. Daddy.” Her words are broken up by sobs, and I shush her while promising that I’m on my way.

“Don’t hang up!” she begs me hysterically.

“Never, little one. I’m around the corner.”

And I am. Storming into the police station, I’m forced to slow down and take a careful step in when all the officers in the reception area go on high alert.

“I’m here, darling. Can you tell the officer with you that I’m here for you?”

There’s a muffled conversation in the background before she returns to the call. “He’s coming to you, Daddy”

“Okay, my brave girl. Just hold on for me, okay? I’ll be right there.”

Staying on the call, listening to her labored breaths as she struggles to control her sobbing, I keep my eyes peeled until I spot a large blond guy in a suit come toward me.

“Rome?” he asks, holding out his hand to me.

“Yes.” My eyes fall down to the badge clipped onto his belt. “Detective?”

“Yes, sir. Detective Sanders.” He shakes my hand and leads me behind the saddle door that separates the reception from the rest of the precinct. “You’re Mika’s dad?”

“No. Boyfriend.”

He’s silent as we walk to wherever they are keeping Mika. I know he’s trying to figure out our dynamic, but there is no way I’m going to enlighten him right now. It has nothing to do with him.

“Okay, well Ms. Matheson is over here. She’s a little distraught about the state of her *girlfriend*, but I need to get a few more questions answered.”

I don’t like his inflection on the word girlfriend. I’m not sure if he doesn’t believe me being Mika’s boyfriend or if he’s doubting their relationship, but enlightening a cop is not on my agenda today.

“And it can’t wait? Can’t you join her at the hospital and ask her the questions there, once we’ve ascertained how bad Zara’s injuries are?” I make my disdain clear, and he stumbles a bit as we reach the desk where Mika is sitting. Our arrival pulls her from her quiet sobs, and she drops the phone she’s still clutching to her ear to the floor.

“Daddy!” she calls out as she jumps up into my arms.

“Hello, darling girl.” Wrapping my arms around her, I stroke her hair, reaffirming that she’s alive and well. I look up at the cop watching us with his brows drawn together in confusion. “I’m taking her to the hospital. You can come or stay, but we need to check on Zara first.”

He nods in agreement, and I turn Mika to head back out the way I’d come, but before we can go too far, the cop clears his throat.

“Uh. I can take you. You can follow me out the back, and we can head straight there,” he offers, and I send a grateful smile his way.

Maybe he isn’t so bad after all.

Detective something or other escorts us out and into his nondescript sedan before hitting the mid-morning traffic.

Time to go check on our girl.

Chapter 9

Zara

Everything hurts. And I'm not even exaggerating. Even the beeping of the machine next to me is too much for my ears.

Wait.

What machine? Why is it beeping? Did we sleep past our alarms again?

I try to force my eyes open to check on Mika and get her ass up so she can phone my boss to tell him I'm phoning in sick today.

Blinking slowly, the stark white room around me comes into focus. My hand searches the bed next to me, looking for Mika, but I come up empty, and when I look over, all I see is a railing.

I go to shoot up in bed, but the sudden lance of pain through my head forces me back down.

“Ugh! What the fuck.”

“Nurse! She's awake,” a familiar voice calls out at the same time as Mika's sweet voice says, “Zara-pants, baby!”

Her soft hand wraps around the one that I was using to look for her, and I attempt a peek through squinting lids.

“Where—” My throat is so dry it’s actually painful to speak, so I try to swallow down some spit when a cold ice block is placed against my lips.

“There you go, babygirl.” There’s that familiar voice again. I can’t quite place it, but it warms my heart and settles me in a way nothing but Mika can.

And then it all comes crashing back.

A car. Screeching breaks. The sound of wind rushing past me and then the sudden impact of my body hitting the pavement behind me.

Mika’s frantic crying and then nothing.

My eyes open wide in panic. “Mika! Baby! You okay?”

Taking in her face, I note the only thing out of place are the red-rimmed eyes, probably from crying. Other than that and a badly bruised lip—again, a stress reaction; she likes to bite it when worried—she looks okay.

“Of course you’re worried about me,” she says, her words coming out rushed and frantic. “You’re an idiot, Zara. Pushing me out of the way like that.”

“I love you too, Mika-Moo,” I respond with a smile, knowing that will get a return one from her.

“Damn right you do. Now don’t you ever scare me like that again.”

“Me either.” This time, that voice sounds slightly angry and put out. I look up at the man the voice belongs to.

Rome.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper. “I had to save her. You understand that, right?”

“I understand that if you ever put yourself in harm’s way again, I’ll have to tan your hide.”

The teensy tiny bit of brat in me wants to stick my tongue out at him and tell him he has no right to punish me, but I know that’s complete and utter bull dust. He’s ours. We’re his. There’s no denying chemistry. Nor the wicked feeling of belonging I have whenever I’m around him and Mika together.

“I’m sorry, Daddy.” I want to say more, but a hurried looking nurse comes walking in, pushing a disgruntled Rome away from the bed so she can check on me.

When she’s done, she looks at him, trying to decide if he’s the one to give the update to.

“The doc will be by soon. He’s just with another patient. And he’ll also be able to give you a better update, so don’t ask me what all is wrong because I don’t know,” she says in a no-nonsense tone.

“Are one of these girls your counterpart?” she asks Rome, and I watch him straighten his shoulders, gearing up for an argument. I can’t imagine the judgement and issues he faces as a zombie.

“We both are,” I decide to speak up, drawing a shocked look from the nurse.

“You’ve declared this?”

“Not yet,” Rome answers. “My next check-in isn’t until Friday.”

“Fine. Make sure you stay in this room. I don’t even know how you got in here, but if someone other than me or the doc

sees you, you will likely get kicked out.”

“Thank you.”

She nods at his response before turning back to me.

“How’s your pain, sweetheart? On a scale from one to ten?”

“A solid fifteen,” I joke, but it falls flat because she frowns at me. “Uh. A five?”

“Okay. I’ll mention that to the doc so he can up your pain meds.”

“Thank you.”

She nods again and moves out of the room, pulling the door shut behind her. “What does she mean you’ll get kicked out?”

“Zombies aren’t allowed in hospitals, babygirl. We’re too big of a health risk. But I couldn’t *not* come when you were hurt. And Mika needed me, so I bribed the security guard at the entrance, and he snuck me in. Luckily, he had a brother that got turned a few years ago, so he understands some of the prejudice we face.”

“Thank you for coming,” I whisper, and my gratitude warms his face.

“You’re very welcome. Now you just need to get better so we can get you back home.”

We talk for a few more minutes until there’s a soft knock on the door before a tall, handsome man walks in.

“Hi, Zara. Glad to see you awake. You gave everyone a fright. My name is Doctor Watson.” His face is split into a

large, welcoming smile, and his entire demeanor sets me at ease.

Rome stands up and steps close to the bed so he's within touching distance, but the doctor barely spares him a glance.

"Nurse Simons mentioned you are in a bit of pain; can you tell me where?"

I take a quick moment to assess so I can give him accurate feedback.

"My left leg is killing me, it's pounding. And I have a killer headache."

"Oh, the headache would be from the nasty head wound you sustained when you went head-to-head with a car."

I forced a chuckle for the doc's joke, and he pushes forward.

"As for your leg, let's have a look." He steps forward and then only looks at Rome. "I'm going to lift the blanket to look at the leg," he says as if warning Rome.

The grumpy zombie nods his understanding.

"Ready, Zara?"

"Yes, thanks, Doctor."

He pulls back the blanket, exposing my left leg, and I realize why it was in such pain.

It's wrapped in a cast. A large pink cast that goes from above my knee all the way to my foot.

Shit.

The doctor examines my foot and leg before smiling at me again.

“Everything seems to be in order. It is quite a nasty break, so some pain and discomfort is definitely to be expected.”

“Thank you, Doc,” Rome says, taking my hand. “How long is the recovery time?”

“Six to eight weeks. She needs to stay off it as much as possible, especially in the beginning.”

“Wait! What?” I cry out. “I can still work, right?”

“As long as your work doesn’t require you to be on your feet for most of the day.”

The doctor’s words have my heart sinking. With a heavy heart, I look at Mika, who has large, fear-filled eyes.

We very much live paycheck-to-paycheck. I can’t afford to not work for two months. For sure my job will still be there when I get back. But that’s two months’ worth of paychecks that we won’t have.

“It’s okay, babygirl. We’ve got this.” Rome’s smooth voice soothes me while his fingers stroke across the screen on the back of my hand. “I’m sure you can negotiate with your boss. If not, I will help in any way I can.”

He’s so controlled, so sure of himself, I can’t do anything but believe him.

If he says he will make it work, then it can’t do anything but end up exactly as it’s supposed to be.

Chapter 10

Mika

We are moving in with Daddy!

Like, it isn't permanent... for now. But... eeeeeeeep. We are moving in with Daddy.

Zara's leg is well and truly stuffed. And she won't be able to go to work for the next two weeks at all, but Daddy (that's the only way I have managed to think of him since the accident) had sorted it, so after the first two weeks off, Zara will be able to go into work. It'll be at a reduced rate because they have to get another person to be on shift with her to help the customers on the floor, but she could work behind the counter just fine.

The only problem is, we live on the second floor. And there is no way that Daddy would allow Zara to go up and down those stairs every day *and* then walk to work afterwards.

His solution, which is rather ingenious if you ask me, is to have us move in with him until her cast comes off and she's more mobile.

Obviously Zara put up a fuss.

She's levelheaded and likes to think things through. She wants to weigh all the pros and cons. The only time I've ever seen her dive in headfirst was when she asked me on that first date about five minutes after we met.

But between Daddy and me, we convinced her this was the best move. It would also save us some money on utilities and food, which would make up for the pay cut.

And at the end of the day.... we are moving in with Daddy!

Zara is sitting on our couch, a frown on her face as she watches me running around like a crazy thing, trying to collect all of our most important belongings before Daddy shows up to pick us up. He dropped us off at home after Zara was discharged from the hospital.

"You know, you're not going to remember to pack half of the stuff we need if you keep jumping around like that." She scoffs at me, barely managing to stop herself from rolling her eyes at me.

She can be so adorably bratty when she wants to be.

"What did you eat, Mika-Moo?"

I stop, blush beet red, and shuffle my one foot in front of the other before peeking up at her from under my lashes.

"Promise you won't tell?"

"Uh-huh. Spill."

"I snuck a candy bar from the vending machine while Daddy was talking to the nurse about your care instructions."

"Oh, you're going to be in trouble when Rome finds out." She laughs, but her statement draws a frown from me.

“Don’t you want him to be our Daddy, Zara-pants?” I ask her with a lump in my throat. “Do you want me to phone him and tell him not to fetch us? We can do this by ourselves. I know I can look after you,” I tell her, putting on a brave face.

I’ve fallen in love with this new man. Yes, it’s quick, but everything about him talks to my soul.

But if Zara doesn’t feel the same way, then I can’t force her into a relationship with him too.

It would suck, but I could give him up for her.

I think.

Probably.

Maybe.

Dammit.

A tear leaks out against my best guard, and Zara notices it, holding out a hand to me. When I don’t immediately grab it, she waves it around like a toddler trying to get their parents’ attention.

“Oh, for Pete’s sake, Mika, come here,” she cries out in frustration. When I take her hand, she pulls me down so I’m sitting on the edge of the couch. “I want a Daddy too, you know that. And he’s the perfect Daddy. But honey, I can’t just jump in like you. I am going to need a moment to wrap my head around it. We’re moving. For now. Now, wipe that tear, and come give me a cuddle so we can figure out what you’ve forgotten to pack for us.”

With a wobbly smile, I kiss her soft lips before looking at the bags on the floor that seem to have exploded all over our lounge.

“I think it might actually just be easier to start from scratch.”

Her giggle lights up the room before she gives me a push so I land on my tush.

“Now get. Our bags aren’t gonna pack themselves.”

“Brat!” I bark out before rolling over and jumping up from a kneeling position.

This time, I get a bit more packing done with Zara’s careful guidance. By the time Daddy is knocking on our door, I’m still not done with the packing, but most of it is done, and at least it’s not lying all over the floor anymore.

As with the first time he stepped into our small place when he helped Zara in a few hours ago, he totally dwarfs the space.

It’s not so much his size—which is rather impressive—but more his personality. He’s just larger than life, now that he’s letting us past that grumpy guard of his.

And the guard makes total sense.

People are assholes. They either ogle him and treat him like some kind of oddity, or they treat him like trash and throw dirty slurs his way.

It’s insanity. I never realized there was so much hatred for his species.

“Uh, I hate to point out the obvious, ladies, but it does *not* look like you guys are packed and ready.”

“We basically are...” I hedge, biting my bottom lip, trying to remember what else I could have possibly left out.

“Toothbrushes?” he asks, and I nod my response. “Pajamas?” Another affirmative. “Toiletries?”

“Ah, darn it.” I rush back to the bathroom and grab our shower stuff and chuck it into a bag along with a few other essentials.

“Good.” Daddy smiles at me before asking me if I’ve packed shoes for work. He chuckles when I rush back into our bedroom to grab the comfy pair I like to work in. Zara still has her two weeks at home, so she’s getting nothing but comfy lounge outfits, basically pajamas and some very cute Little outfits that she likes to play in.

Once he’s satisfied we’ve grabbed all our essentials, he takes a detour to the fridge to check for any perishables.

Probably a good call.

I was never planning on coming back.

Chapter 11

Rome

If you had told me a month ago that I would be here, in my lonely home with not just one, but two perfect Little girls with me, I'd have laughed in your face.

Not true. I'd probably have grunted, turned around, and stormed off because even a month ago, I didn't think I was capable of laughing. At anything.

Now my life is filled with laughter and joy. Giggling girls and squeals of excitement.

Nothing I've ever dreamed has come close to how amazing real life is turning out to be.

Zara and Mika have been living with me for two weeks now. Zara will go back to work tomorrow, and it's one of the hardest things in the world for me to let her go back, even though I know it's important to her. And she really does love her job very much.

We've had some fun in the last two weeks. Mornings are always a chaotic mess with Mika running around, constantly in a state of excitement. She's always leaving things lying

around, and then ‘losing’ it. She’s so busy and sweet and just... alive that she makes me feel younger.

Zara is a studious, serious woman, but her Little is naughty and mischievous. On more than one occasion, I’ve had to reprimand her for the pranks that she pulls on her—no, *our*—girlfriend.

Not that Mika minded.

Once Mika goes to work, Zara and I would spend the day together quietly. I gave her access to my Kindle reader and an unlimited library of amazing books published by indie authors. So she mostly reads while I log on and get my tasks for the day complete.

Once that’s ticked off, I would make us some lunch before taking her out into the little garden for some fresh air and sunlight. And by the time the late afternoon comes about, Mika would be jumping back through the front door with her boundless energy livening up the place in the way only she could do.

I’ve had my check-in, and the officer and mentor both looked at me like their heads might explode with the news of me having two counterparts.

I’d been living in a constant state of fear that the authorities would swoop in soon and take all three of us in for some kind of crazy testing that would leave us permanently traumatized.

In a week, I would need to go for another check-in, and no matter how many pep talks I’d given myself in the mirror, I can’t stop picturing them swooping in during the middle of the interview and cuffing me without letting me warn the girls to run.

It isn't likely to happen; there is too much publicity on zombies and the 'free' lives they are allowed to live.

Then, in the evenings, the three of us would spend time together. Both Zara and Mika would normally relax and fall into their Little space, and it made me deliriously happy that they feel comfortable enough to do it.

About halfway through our two-week mark, Zara also started calling me Daddy.

Everything is good.

Except for the fact that we haven't *done* anything yet.

I haven't even kissed them yet.

I'm in a constant state of arousal. My cock is so hard I could pound nails with it. But there is *always* that voice in the back of my head terrified that I am wrong, that we're all wrong and that I will infect them. And kill them.

And they are starting to get impatient with me. So I have to get my shit in order.

I'd just gotten off a phone call with a zombie buddy I'd made online. He'd found his counterpart a few months ago, during a speed-dating thing they held in one of the bigger cities as a kind of zombie-awareness deal.

He confirmed he had the same fear, but once he got over it, everything was amazing. The best ever. Almost—snort—like they were made for each other.

So I needed to suck it up. And make the first move.

Step one: Make a romantic dinner for three.

Step two: Woo my girls and then spend as much time as I can pleasing them so they don't ever want to leave me.

Step three: Don't forget to fetch them from work.

The alarm I'd preset to remind me when to head over to pick them up goes off, so I grab my keys and wallet and head over to pick up my two favorite people in the world.

The second I step into the bookshop, I realize how dumb I am to plan my big courting evening on today of all days.

Zara looks ready to drop, the poor thing.

When she sees me, her face lights up, her mouth stretching into a beautiful smile.

"Rome!"

"Hello, babygirl," I respond before bending over and softly kissing her lips.

When I pull away, her eyes are huge. "You ready to go home?"

She nods her head in answer, her eyes huge and still reflecting her shock at my simple greeting.

"Let's fetch our Mika-Moo, shall we?"

"No need!" the blonde in question calls out as she flounces into the shop. "I saw you skulking in here and came bounding right over." At my scowl, she hurries to add, "I didn't run. Only like a fast walk. At most. Promise." She looks over at Zara, and her stunning face falls into a frown. "Oh no, boo. Long day? How's the leg?"

"I mean, it's been better. But it's not so bad. I've just been spoiled the last two weeks having Daddy dearest carrying me around everywhere."

"Oh, I can just imagine. Maybe I need to fake an injury so I can get your special treatment." Mika's mischievous smile

warms my heart, even as her teasing words send a spark of fear through me.

“Don’t you dare, brat,” I growl, and she lets out a laugh. “Now come, let’s head home before you come up with any more bad ideas.”

I walk around the counter without a second’s thought and bend over so Zara can wrap her arm around my neck. Lifting her up in my arms, I carry her out the shop, paying no mind to the people staring at us.

“Bye, everyone!” she calls over my shoulder, waving at them.

“So…” Mika says when we get into the car. “What are we going to *do* tonight?”

“I made dinner,” I respond, feeling stupid about the candles and stuff I’d set up now.

“Oh, I was kind of hoping you’d say you would *do* us. But dinner is good too.” She giggles again after I growl in response to her barb.

“Shush, Mika-moo. Give Daddy a break.”

“Fine,” the naughty brat says, rolling her eyes as I pull into traffic.

Time to get them home and shut them up for good.

Chapter 12

Zara

Our Daddy is an odd duck. I love that about him.

But tonight, he's acting even stranger. I can't quite put my finger on it, but he seems extra edgy.

And then we step into the house, and I understand why.

The entire entry way is littered with dried flower petals... because he knows I'd be sad at the wasted fresh flowers. And on every available countertop, shelf, and table there are little electric candles shimmering their fake light all over the place.

I look over at Rome in shocked awe, and by the way he's looking at anywhere except Mika and me, I am one hundred percent sure that he'd be blushing right now if he could.

"You did this for us?"

"Pfffft. No, Zara-pants. He did it for our neighbors." Mika bumped my shoulder with hers, lightly waggling her eyebrows at me like the loon she is.

"I'm sorry, it's too much. And you had a long day today. My timing is shit," he responds to me, completely ignoring Mika's teasing.

“No!” I cry out, not wanting him to feel bad. “This is perfect. Your timing is perfect. We’re all... perfect.” I feel stupid for my repetitive wording, but I’m at a loss for anything better and more flowery to say.

He *is* the perfect Daddy though. Everything about him is just right.

Our life, Mika’s and mine, has turned into a fairy tale, and I am not mad about it at all.

“Yeah?” His voice is so unsure breaks my heart. I hate that life has thrown him so many curveballs. He deserves this happily ever after just as much as I do.

“Yeah,” I respond, and his beautiful smile lights up his face again.

Gently, he places me down at a chair in the lounge and directs Mika to her own little throne made of pillows.

He then proceeds to spoil us with a never-ending parade of spectacularly made foods. See... I have more words in my vocabulary.

And when we’re done? He picks me up and situates me on his lap, holding his hand out for Mika.

“I’ve been an idiot.” Of all the things I’d expected him to say, that was not very high on the list. “I have,” he says again when neither Mika or I have anything to say to his ridiculous statement. “I have been reluctant. Worried about infecting you, even though I know that’s never going to be a problem for us.”

“Oh.” Mika speaks up first. “That. Yeah, you are an idiot.”

“Mika!” I smack her arm lightly, admonishing her for being so forward. Not that I truly mind. That’s who she is, and I’d never have her change in a million years.

“Does that mean we can kiss now?”

“Yes!” he blurts out so quickly that we all laugh breaking the tension.

And then we sit there staring at each other. Well, this isn't awkward at all.

Luckily, our little spark takes the initiative and leans closer to me, claiming my mouth in a soft succulent kiss. As if by some silent agreement, we both grab hold of Rome's shirt and pull him closer to us. His lips, tongue, and teeth join us in a slow mating dance that has my breath hitching and my heart stuck in my throat.

I don't know how long we sit there like that trading kisses. We break apart and take turns, first Rome kissing me while Mika nibbles and sucks at the sensitive skin underneath my earlobe, then we trade places, and I feast on Rome's skin while he dominates Mika with a sexy kiss.

By the time we all pull away panting, I'm a needy, sopping, wet mess, ready for someone to just fuck me.

Mika's hands start exploring. I see one moving down Rome's chest, slipping over him and zeroing in between my legs. But she doesn't do more than barely graze my needy pussy, instead pushing in and cupping the hard cock that is firmly nestled between my legs.

Her other hand slips up my shirt and cups my breast, drawing a labored groan from me.

“Fuck, you two are stunning,” Rome whispers before leaning over and nuzzling my less than ample cleavage.

Between the two of them, I'm so turned on it would take very little to send me over the edge, but it's as if they've both turned into master torturers and are out to tease me to death.

I'm grinding down on Rome's erection, but he's just out of reach, and my efforts never quite reach my needy clit. And Mika's hand, cupping and kneading my breasts, stays just the right amount of distance away from my nipples to have me moaning in desperation.

"Okay, loves. I don't know about you, but I think we need to move this to somewhere a little more comfortable." Daddy pulls away from our kisses and gently lifts us off the couch. Mika quickly jumps up and heads to the bedroom.

"I've been planning for *just* this eventuality. I know *exactly* what we can do."

"Is that so, little one? Who says your Daddy doesn't have things figured out?"

Mika looks at him, her eyes large. This is the closest he's ever come to reprimanding her for running ahead with things, as he normally lets her have her fun.

I suddenly see a life ahead of us with him indulging us—mostly her—until she pushes him too far. Watching her being punished would be *so* much fun.

He shuffles me so he's holding me in one arm—can you say swoon? —and then lifts her chin with a finger before giving her a kiss.

"Let me take care of us tonight. We can play your games later, Mika-moo. Okay?"

For once, completely silent, she nods at him, but her eyes are hooded, filled with a hunger I recognize because I'm feeling it within my bones.

Daddy turns his attention to me, his gaze burning into mine. "And if anything we do hurts in any way, I expect you to tell me immediately. Do we understand each other?"

I nod up at him mutely. He's not let out this dominant side with us before, and I have to admit, it's incredibly hot.

“Good girl. Let's get to bed.”

We do just that, where there are more petals strewn about, and the bedroom is alight with those same candles.

“Now, beautiful. There are very few things we can do that won't jostle your leg too much, and I'm very sure that any kind of fucking will do just that, so you're going to have to be a good girl for Daddy and lie on that bed so Mika can eat that pretty pussy of yours while I fuck her. And if you're very good, I'll let you suck Daddy's cock after.”

Holy shit.

Holy shit.

Chapter 13

Mika

Oh. My. Gosh.

Dominant Daddy alert.

Daddy gently lays Zara on the bed and orders her to stay still. Then he turns to me with a determined look in his eyes. “Take off your clothes, Mika baby.”

I am powerless to resist.

With jerky, excited movements, I shuck my outfit, sure that I look like a fool, but the hungry look in his and Zara’s eyes ensure me that they’re more than satisfied with what they see.

“Such a pretty girl,” he praises me, actually earning a blush from me. “Get on the bed, and help me undress our Zara.”

I rush to obey and am rewarded with a slow stroke down my side when I walk past him.

Together we go about taking off the soft flowy skirt Zara had dressed in this morning and the cute tank top that shows the most teasing glimpses of her soft swells.

After getting rid of her underwear, I can't help but stare at my stunning girlfriend. Her fair skin begs to be tasted and explored, and I've spent hours in the past doing just that. I doubt I will ever get enough of her.

"She's beautiful, isn't she?" I say to Daddy, sharing a hungry look with him.

"You both are, sweet girl. Now, you know what you need to do. Show our pretty Zara how much you like the way she looks. Worship her."

Just his words are enough to amp up my lust about ten levels. I descend on Zara with abandon. There will be plenty of occasions for me to take my time later.

Tonight I just need to feast. And feast I do. She's so wet that at my first lick, she nearly bucks herself off the bed.

Daddy *tsks* at her, ordering her to stay still, or we would have to stop our fun. She quickly settles herself back down before nodding her consent for me to carry on.

I dive right back in and am rewarded with two rough hands moving up on the insides of my thighs behind me. I'm almost worried that he will tease me like I'd done to him earlier, but he goes in for the kill, his fingers dipping directly to my own wet core.

First one finger slips in, quickly followed by another, and he slowly thrusts them in and out. I struggle to concentrate on the delight in front of me while he slowly fucks me with his fingers, but when I stop at my task completely, he withdraws his fingers.

"Now, now, Mika baby. You need to help our pretty girl too. Daddy can't reward you if you don't."

Without further preamble, I set about earning my reward, even though feasting on a writhing, horny Zara is already a pretty good reward.

This time, when I feel him at my entrance, I don't pause, even though I can feel it's the blunt head of his cock, and not his nimble finger.

Zara's sweet, sweet begging reaches my ears as I plunge two fingers into her clenching slit. I fill her as he fills me, and it's as if I suddenly wake up.

Everything that was wrong in my life, everything that was missing, no longer is.

I have the perfect Daddy filling my needy pussy. Owning me and making me his. And I have my Zara-pants. My girlfriend, my partner in crime, crying out underneath me, barely keeping still with her hands fisted into my hair so I keep my face buried in her folds.

Daddy fucks me, slowly at first, rocking my body back and forth in a gentle rhythm. Until his pace slowly picks up and his fingers dig into my waist, bringing me back onto his cock faster and faster.

The contradiction of soft and gentle versus rough is what eventually does it. I suck down on Zara's clit, my teeth gently grazing it, and I pull her over the cliff into a huge orgasm that has her crying out at the top of her lungs.

Finally free, I take a deep breath and beg my Daddy with sweet, beautiful words.

"Come for Daddy, sweet girl," he growls right next to my ear, causing me to explode into a million little pieces.

While my body slowly returns to itself, I'm vaguely aware of Daddy grunting as he fills me with his cum.

Idly, I wonder if we will be able to get to our second round tonight because I think I need a breather first.

Withdrawing from me, he places a soft kiss on my shoulder. “You were stunning, you both were.”

“That was amazing,” I finally manage to groan out after collapsing onto the bed next to Zara, being careful not to jostle her leg.

“It really was,” she responds, her voice wistful.

Rome returns after fetching a cloth to clean us up, and throwing it in the direction of the bathroom, he curls in next to me, reaching over me to touch Zara’s naked tummy.

“This certainly beats the news I had to share with you tonight,” Zara speaks up after a few minutes of contemplative silence.

Daddy lifts his head slightly and looks at our redhead over my naked, lazy body. “Yeah, what’s that?”

“Oh... nothing. Just that I’ve found three other instances in the country alone where a zombie has found more than one counterpart.”

“What?” I manage to get out past the shock.

“Yup. I reached out today via email. Guess we’re not as unique as we thought. We have friends out there.”

The End

About Leslie Ayla

Leslie Ayla is a new author living on the sunny coast of KZN South Africa, with her two daughters, doggies, and a loving, incredibly patient husband. Books have always been her escape from her day job but she also loves baking and TV shows like Castle and Bones.

She loves interacting with other authors and readers, so feel free to reach out on any of the following platforms:

Facebook Reader Group: [Leslie's Little Lounge](#)

Newsletter sign-up: <https://www.subscribepage.com/leslieayla>



Rock: The Prequel by
Becca Jameson

A MF story By Becca Jameson

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, places, locales, and events are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, and events are purely coincidental.

Prologue

Forty years ago...

“Get out, punk.”

Lyla lifted her face to glare in the direction her brother would soon make his appearance. He hadn't even fully descended the stairs and rounded the corner before he was already demanding she leave the basement. Why he thought he owned the basement she would never understand, but every time he had friends over, he kicked her out and made her go upstairs. As if she wanted to hang with their parents any more than he did.

She could hear two sets of footsteps pounding down the wooden stairs, which meant he only had one friend with him this afternoon. Hopefully it wasn't Mark or Jeff. Both of them were douchebags. The others were usually friendly or indifferent toward her.

Gaze narrowed, she caught his eyes as soon as he came into view. “I'm in the middle of something.”

“Don't care. Do it upstairs in your room,” Jackson demanded.

A second later, his friend stepped into her line of sight, and Lyla's breath hitched. This wasn't Mark or Jeff or any other friend she'd ever met. This guy was new. He was also hot.

Lyla set her pencil down on the table and quickly closed her sketchbook. She didn't like anyone seeing her drawings. Ever. She returned her gaze to the newcomer. It was hard to look away.

He was tall. Six foot. Broad. His brown hair was in need of a cut. He hadn't shaved for a few days. Or perhaps he simply hadn't shaved today. The guy had on a worn black leather jacket with some kind of patch, and when he took it off seconds later and draped it over his arm, her breath hitched again.

His arms were huge, much bigger than any other boy she knew at school. And he had a tattoo.

Lyla's mouth went completely dry. She had no idea why she was so attracted to this guy. Her parents would shit if she ever dated someone like him, and that thought alone almost made her giggle.

At sixteen, she'd only been permitted to date for the past month, and so far, it hadn't happened anyway. It was kind of a moot issue. Lyla wasn't exactly a member of the "in" crowd. She had stringy brown hair, glasses, and braces. Boys weren't lined up, waiting for her to turn sixteen, so she could go on dates.

Jackson snatched an apple from the basket across from her, the fruit basket she'd been sketching for art class. He took a bite, the crunch sounding loud in the silence.

She jerked her attention back to him. "Hey, I was using that."

He shrugged. “You know Mom and Dad are never going to let you go to art school. I don’t know why you bother sitting around drawing shit.” He took another bite.

She flinched. She was well aware her parents thought she should become a teacher or a nurse. That didn’t mean she intended to ignore her passion. She could always sketch as a hobby.

Jackson nodded toward the stairs. “Rock and I have homework to do. Beat it.”

Her eyes widened as she shifted her attention back to the tattooed hunk. *Rock*. Even his name was sexy. “Homework...” she deadpanned.

Rock smirked. “Calculus.”

“So, you’re here to help my brother.” She gathered her own books and her sketch pad. She’d already finished all her homework earlier, and she knew her brother well enough to surmise he’d asked this new guy over to help him. Math wasn’t his strongest subject.

Rock’s brows went up as he stared at her. Finally, he shrugged. “We’re just going to study together.”

Interesting. The guy didn’t want to throw her brother under the bus.

Jackson finished his apple and tossed the core into the trashcan. “You can leave now.”

Lyla shot him another glare. “Don’t get your panties in a wad. I’m going. And I won’t tell anyone you have a math tutor either.” After stepping around the table, she hugged her books to her chest and headed for the stairs.

Maybe she walked a bit closer to Rock than absolutely necessary. Maybe she inhaled deeply as she approached him. Maybe she would never forget his scent as it filled her nose. He was no boy. He was a man. He was undoubtedly a senior like her brother and probably eighteen, but he gave off a vibe of someone older. Wiser. More solid.

“Shit. Forgot drinks and snacks. I’ll be right back,” Jackson declared before he bounded back up the stairs.

“Sorry,” Rock murmured.

She paused next to him. “For what?”

“Didn’t mean to kick you out. You were here first.”

She smiled, even though she knew she was nowhere close to being in his league, what with her mouthful of braces and total lack of makeup. She pushed her glasses up on her nose. “It’s okay. I’m used to it. Jackson’s a good guy. He just likes to posture in front of his friends.”

“Mmm. Not sure I like how he speaks to you.”

A shiver wracked her body. Was this guy sticking up for her? She squeezed her books tighter against her small breasts, grateful the cover was keeping him from noticing how young she was or that her nipples were suddenly hard.

His voice. *Yikes*. Deep and sensual. He never looked away.

She licked her dry lips, unable to keep moving past him.

“You’re in calculus too, aren’t you?” Rock asked. “I think I’ve seen you coming out of the third-period class.”

Stunned didn’t begin to describe how she felt. She gaped at him. “Yes,” she whispered. “I could help my brother myself, but he doesn’t like it when I do. Emasculating or something.”

Rock chuckled, the deep resonating sound making her heart race. “I understand that.”

She lowered her gaze to the jacket draped over his arm to avoid the intensity of everything that was Rock. When her eyes landed on the sleeve, she leaned in closer. “Is that patch a teddy bear with wings?”

He held it up for her to see better. “Yep. I’m a member of the Shadowridge Guardians MC. It’s our logo.”

“A motorcycle club?” She felt stupid for asking. Duh. Obviously.

“Yep.”

She’d never known anyone from a motorcycle club, but she knew one existed in town. “Aren’t you kind of young to belong to an MC?” she asked before she could filter herself. *Shut up, Lyla. Just. Shut. Up.*

He didn’t seem upset by her question. He simply shrugged. “My parents are members.”

Ah. So he’s like a legacy or something.

He nodded toward the fruit bowl. “You’re an artist.”

She shook her head. “No. I just dabble. It’s nothing really.”

“Can I see?”

Eyes wide again, she gaped at him. “Not a chance.”

His lips rose in a slow smile before he reached up and tucked a lock of hair behind her ear. His rough fingers lingered. “Okay. Keep your secrets. But I’m going to ask again, and one day you’re going to show me what you’re hiding, Little Lyla.”

She sucked in a breath. Every inch of her body was on fire. The hottest boy/man she'd ever seen was standing inches away from her. He was still toying with her earlobe, and he was looking her right in the eye.

She glanced at his full lips, her overactive imagination wishing he would kiss her. That was absurd of course. He surely had women fawning all over him. Not girls. Women. Sexy women with nice boobs and skimpy skirts. Women with fancy hair, makeup, contacts, and perfect teeth.

"I should go upstairs," she murmured.

"Yeah, you probably should." His half smile caused her tummy to flutter. "Think of me when you're sketching. Remember: One day I'm going to look through that sketchpad, Little Lyla."

Why did he call her that? She couldn't make sense of it, but it did something to her. It made a knot form in her stomach. She didn't want to go upstairs. She wanted to stay down here with this man who was giving her his undivided attention. She wanted him to look at her like that for hours, stroke her hair, speak to her in that sexy, rough voice, and call her Little Lyla.

In your dreams.

The sound of her brother stomping back down the stairs made her flinch and take a giant step back. Her face flushed as if she'd done something naughty and was about to get caught.

She'd done a lot of naughty things, in her head at least. All sorts of naughty ideas flitted through her mind. She'd never kissed a boy before, but she'd bet this man could kiss like a real man. She'd bet he could do other things too, and she'd love to experience them.

Don't be ridiculous.

“Why are you still down here?” Jackson demanded as he jumped the last few steps to the basement floor.

“I’m going. I’m going.” She could feel Rock’s heavy stare on her. It never wavered as her brother rushed past them, his arms laden with cans of soft drinks and bags of chips.

As she turned toward the stairs, forcing herself not to look back at Rock one last time, he grabbed her hand and leaned in to whisper in her ear. “Tell me you’ll never stop sketching. Never stop following your heart.”

“Okay.” She bit her lower lip, frozen as his breath teased her ear.

“Good girl.”

Chapter 1

Two years later...

“Shit,” Lyla muttered under her breath as she parked her car in the driveway. She turned off the engine and stared out the passenger window at the Harley parked in the street in front of her house.

Normally, the sight of that Harley made her pulse race, her hands become clammy, and her panties dampen. But not tonight. Tonight she just wanted to be alone. She wanted to slink into the house, tiptoe up the stairs, lock her bedroom door, flop onto her bed, and wallow in self-pity.

She glanced at the dash clock. It was after eleven. The house was dark except for the small lamp in the front window her mother always left on at night. Thank God her parents were already in bed.

Now she had to get past Rock. And unfortunately, her brother. She wasn't in the mood for twenty questions. She needed a bath and a good cry so she could lick her wounds.

It didn't surprise her that Rock was here. He was here a lot. She'd never understood the relationship he had with her brother. It seemed to her like the two of them were polar

opposites. But they'd remained friends, even though her brother had just finished his sophomore year in college.

Rock had gone to school too. He'd gone to the local community college. She knew he'd gotten his associates in business and was about to do an internship somewhere this summer.

Taking a deep breath, Lyla finally opened the door of her coupe and carefully climbed out. She smoothed down the front of her tight black skirt and headed for the side door next to the garage. *Maybe I can sneak in undetected and slink up the stairs.*

The kitchen was quiet and dark. She shut the door as gently as possible, facing it as she turned the lock. The house was eerily silent. Instead of the usual music and laughter or television she expected to hear coming from the basement, she heard nothing.

“How was the prom, Little Lyla?”

The sound of Rock's deep voice coming from right behind her made her nearly jump out of her skin. She spun around so fast, she almost tripped on her three-inch heels. “You scared me.” She flattened her hand on her chest.

Rock's eyes widened as he took a step back. His gaze roamed up and down her body several times, blatantly checking her out. “Shit...” he breathed out.

She trembled as she watched him in the long beam of moonlight coming through the kitchen window.

They stood that way for long seconds, him fucking her with his gaze, her nearly melting. It was a wonder her knees held up. She'd had the hots for him for two years. He'd teased

and flirted with her off and on, but he'd never looked at her the way he was looking at her now.

"Come." He reached forward and took her hand. "I want to hear all about it, starting with why you're home so early and why you're alone. I know you went to the prom with that Brinkman kid, Casper or Jasper or whatever his name is."

Rock instantly chased away some of her sorrow with his silly comment, and she almost laughed as he dragged her toward the basement stairs. Then reality seeped in.

She tugged her hand to break the connection and backed up to flatten herself once again to the back door. She was breathing heavily as she shook her head. The last thing she needed or wanted was to sit down and talk to Rock right now. She was nursing wounds. He would suck the air out of the basement with his scent and his smile and his touch.

Rock had no idea she secretly harbored a crush on him unlike any other crush ever held by a girl in all of time. He had no idea the shit night she'd had or that she'd been on the verge of tears when she entered the house. He had no idea his kindness would cause her to slide into the ugliest ugly cry on earth, which would make her feel even worse when she woke up tomorrow, having let him see her vulnerable side.

No way was she going to the basement with Rock Monroe.

Rock turned back toward her and stepped closer. "What's wrong?"

"Where's Jackson?" she asked, ignoring his question.

Rock rolled his eyes. "Drank too much. Passed out in his room."

"Why are you here?"

“I waited for you.” His voice was so damn kind. Why was he always so kind to her?

“Why?”

He reached up and lifted one of the perfect curls still hanging from her updo, a ringlet that hadn't dared to collapse since it had enough hairspray on it to shellac the planet. His voice was soft when he met her gaze. “I couldn't leave until I knew you were home safe, and I want to hear about the prom.”

She held his gaze. They did this often. Stared at each other without speaking. She usually fled to her room after such an instance, threw herself on her bed, and stared at the ceiling, pretending the two of them were long-suffering forbidden lovers or some other sappy shit from romance novels.

She licked the seam of her lips, wondering if her bold red lipstick was still in place. “I can't, Rock. Not tonight. I'm exhausted and...” *Shit. Shit shit shit.* A tear escaped.

She lifted a hand to dash it away and turned her head to one side.

“Fuck,” he muttered before closing the distance even more. He cupped the side of her face. “I need you to talk to me, babygirl.”

Another tear fell, and another. She shook her head.

“Come with me,” he encouraged.

She looked toward the stairs.

“Not to the basement. Come to my apartment. You need someone to talk to. I want to be that man, Little Lyla. We'll go on my bike. If your parents look outside, they'll see your car and assume you got home safely.”

She didn't even blink as she held his gaze again. "You're serious."

"Totally. We can walk to the next block and I'll start up the bike there so it won't wake up anyone in the house. I'll bring you back in a few hours. Come with me."

She bit her bottom lip. She'd had a crush on Rock for two years. The king of all crushes. This was a horrible plan. There was no way he saw her as more than his friend's kid sister. Which she was.

In a few days, he was going to leave town for his internship. At the end of the summer, she would go away to college.

She might never have an opportunity like this again. A chance to be alone with Rock Monroe—sexiest man she'd ever seen. It didn't matter if this was the only night she ever got with him. At least she would have spent a few hours with him alone. That time could provide fodder for her daydreams for months or years.

It could also destroy her.

She hedged.

"Don't think. Come." He grabbed her hand again. "Say yes."

She swallowed. She knew this was a bad idea, but she couldn't say no to him. Ever. "Okay."

Chapter 2

“Sorry. I didn’t think about your dress,” Rock said five minutes later as soon as he’d led her around the corner to the next street.

Damn, she was smoking hot. This was probably the worst idea in the history of all ideas. What had he been thinking, insisting she go to his apartment with him?

He wasn’t about to stop now, though. She was here. Right next to him. Glancing around adorably, as if she was worried someone might see them.

And that dress. *Fuck. Me.* It should have been illegal. All black and silky and hugging her curves like it was made for her. Hell, considering who her parents were, maybe it had been made for her. Her family certainly had money.

The material clung to her amazing breasts and hips, making her look far older than her eighteen years. Her hair and makeup had been professionally styled and applied in a salon that afternoon. Her nails too. Fingers and toes.

He knew all of that because Jackson had grumbled about girls and their expensive needs earlier in the day. Rock knew her brother adored her, even though he never missed an opportunity to torment her.

Rock also knew Lyla was extremely low maintenance. If she wanted to take one day to doll herself up and go to a fancy prom, she deserved it. Hell, she'd earned it. She'd made straight A's all through school, gotten into an amazing university, and never caused her parents a single moment of worry.

She caused Rock, on the other hand, all kinds of worry. He'd spent the past two years keeping an eye on her, mostly to make sure no stupid boys gave her any trouble.

Luckily he'd never had to punch anyone in the face. Lyla never dated. She was shy and often preferred to be alone with her sketchpad and her books. He knew she thought she was invisible, but she was wrong. He certainly noticed her.

And he was noticing her now more than ever. After letting his gaze slide up her body from her dainty silver heels to the exposed cleavage of her dress, he cleared his throat. "You're going to have to hike your skirt up to your hips, babygirl."

She bit into the bottom corner of her lip and shifted her weight back and forth. Every time she bit that lip—and it was often—his cock got hard.

He leaned the bike on the kickstand, stepped toward her, palmed her cheek, and used his thumb to dislodge her lip. "Stop that," he whispered. "You have no idea what that does to me."

She gasped, her eyes adorably wide.

He turned and opened his saddlebag to pull out a spare helmet. When he grabbed it, he also accidentally wrapped his fingers around the fluffy paw of the teddy bear at the bottom of the bag.

Rock rarely opened this bag. He rarely needed the spare helmet. He hadn't thought about the teddy bear in the bottom in a long time. Every member of his MC carried one just in case they encountered a damsel in distress. In the case of the Shadowridge Guardians MC, the damsel would most likely be a Little girl. Not someone young but a full-grown adult who liked to be nurtured and cared for.

He hesitated before turning around. There was no way in hell Lyla had any knowledge of age play or Daddy Doms. Though she'd given him submissive vibes and tendencies for the past two years, she was far too innocent and ignorant about the fetish community.

She was, however, an adult. Judging by the tears and sadness he'd seen in her eyes, she was also a damsel in distress. *What the hell? Why not?*

Turning around, Rock held out the stuffed bear. "Hold this for me, Little Lyla."

She tentatively reached out and took it before bringing it to her chest. "Why do you have a stuffed animal in your saddlebag, Rock?" she asked while he settled the helmet over her hair.

He hated that he was ruining her expensive hairdo, but it was late. She surely would have taken it down soon anyway.

He shrugged, trying to be nonchalant as he fastened the buckle under her chin. "Never know when you might need a teddy bear." His gaze was on her lips, and he loved the way she slowly smiled.

"You're full of surprises tonight."

"Yep." *More than you can imagine.*

Granted, he had no thoughts about getting her naked. Not a chance in hell. She probably hadn't ever been kissed let alone fucked. He absolutely wasn't going to go down that path.

What the fuck are you doing then, asshole?

Okay, maybe he had *thought* about doing every imaginable dirty thing to her, but he'd never acted on it, and he wouldn't tonight either. Nope.

“You gonna pull that skirt up, babygirl, or do you want me to do it?”

Her breath hitched as she reached down and shimmied the skin-tight material up her legs until it was gathered just below her pussy.

Rock held his breath as he climbed onto his bike. He patted the seat behind him. “Have you ever ridden before, babygirl?” He knew she hadn't. Hell, her parents would probably have a fit if they knew this was happening.

Ward and June Cleaver were polite people who tolerated Rock, but even after two years of friendship with their son, they still eyed him skeptically. Rock was pretty sure the only reason they'd welcomed him into their home at all in the beginning was because they suspected Rock was the reason Jackson was passing calculus. They weren't wrong.

Lyla shook her head. “I have on heels and this dress is totally inappropriate.”

“You'll be fine.” He pointed to the rung just behind him. “Put your foot there and swing over. Don't take your feet off the rungs while I'm driving.”

This entire unplanned scenario had his dick harder than he could ever remember. His girl—okay, she wasn't his girl at all and never had been, but he'd thought of her as *his* for two

years—was standing next to his bike with her dress hiked up, her tits tormenting him, and that damn teddy bear clutched in her arms.

His heart nearly stopped when she planted her left foot and grabbed his shoulders to swing her other leg over. And it skipped a beat entirely when she tucked the bear between them, flattened her front to his back, and set her hands on his hips.

“I’m scared. What if I fall off?” There was a tremor in her voice.

He grabbed her hands and pulled them all the way around his middle. “You won’t fall, babygirl. I’d never let that happen. Hold on tight. Don’t let go. When I lean one way or the other, lean with me.”

When he fired up the engine, she nearly jumped off the seat. “*Oh*,” she exclaimed with no filter as she used her thighs to keep her cute ass suspended above the leather.

Fuck. Me.

His only reaction was a smirk over his shoulders. “Yeah. Now you know why chicks dig bikes.” With that, he took off, leaving her posh neighborhood.

Chapter 3

I can't believe this is happening.

Lyla held on to Rock for dear life. She was both scared and invigorated. She'd thought about riding into the sunset with him a million times, but she'd never seriously expected it to happen.

Granted, it certainly wasn't sunset. It was nearly midnight. She'd certainly never envisioned herself riding behind him in a prom dress and heels. And, perhaps most important, she'd had no idea what the vibration of his bike would do to her pussy.

She realized she had no clue where he lived, and she didn't care. She never wanted this ride to end. She inhaled his scent, let the wind hit her in the face, and grinned from ear to ear.

Fifteen minutes ago, she'd been a hot mess of nerves. Rock had blown everything that had happened tonight right out of the stratosphere. Fuck her prom date and his cronies. The guy was a dick. He didn't deserve to occupy another moment of her headspace.

When Rock pulled into an apartment complex, Lyla found herself disappointed. She'd rather stay on this bike all night. Instead, she had to face the next phase in this crazy idea.

Rock parked, turned off the bike, and twisted to lift her up over the seat and set her on the ground. He didn't release her hips too quickly either. "You steady, Little Lyla?"

She took a second and nodded. It seemed like her legs would hold her up, even though they were noodles, and she was wearing heels. She quickly shimmied and tugged the dress until it fell back into place around her legs. While he dismounted, she tucked the bear under her arm, unfastened the helmet, then handed it to him when he turned around.

"My hair must look like I went through a hurricane." She reached up with her free hand to touch the curls that had tumbled from the top all evening. She held one of the stuffed bear's legs in her other hand.

Rock stowed both helmets and faced her. "Your hair is gorgeous, babygirl. Don't fret." He took her hand and led her toward the building.

"These apartments look brand new," she commented.

"Yeah. They're nice. I'm glad I managed to get a unit."

"How long have you lived here?" It seemed awkward that she'd never asked where he lived. She was embarrassed now to realize she didn't know much about his life.

It was as if he were simply her brother's hot friend who materialized out of nowhere every once in a while and made her life a little sunnier. He did that without knowing it. He did it by looking at her with his smoldering gaze and speaking to her in his sultry voice. She was certain he had no idea.

When they reached the stairs, Rock turned toward her, bent at the knees, and swooped her off the ground to cradle her in his arms.

"*Rock,*" she squealed. "What are you doing?"

“Babygirl, you are so wobbly on those sexy heels, I’m afraid you might fall on the stairs. And then I’d have to take you to the hospital and face your parents to explain how you broke your leg in the middle of the night at my apartment. I’m not up for that tonight.” His voice was teasing.

Fine. If he was going to carry her, she was going to milk this strange night for every drop. She wrapped her arms around his neck and leaned her head on his shoulder.

Once again, she reminded herself he surely didn’t see her as more than his friend’s kid sister, but he didn’t know what was happening in her head. Her fantasies were none of his business.

When they reached the door to his apartment, he jostled her easily to one side a bit and pulled the keys out of his pocket. He didn’t set her down as he opened the door, nor did he set her down after he entered the apartment.

Rock Monroe carried her straight through the masculine living room and into the kitchen. Finally, he sat her on the counter next to the fridge.

She swayed slightly, feeling lightheaded from the shock of everything that was happening.

He planted his hands on the counter on both sides of her, crowding her and trapping her. “What would you like to drink, babygirl?”

She licked her lips. What was the right answer? What did this tattooed sexy man even have to drink in his apartment? “Uh, beer?”

He laughed before grabbing her waist and shaking his head. “Not a snowball’s chance in hell, little girl. Have you ever even tried beer?”

She shook her head as her face heated.

“Have you ever tried any alcohol?”

She looked down. She was a goody two-shoes, and everyone knew it, including Rock. She didn't break rules or curfew. She was a perfect student. Even in her art, she never colored outside the lines.

He lifted her chin with a finger. “I'm sorry I laughed. You probably didn't need that. I'm a complex guy. My fridge has more than beer in it, babygirl. How about lemon-lime soda or apple juice?”

Shocked by his choices, she asked, “Do you not drink caffeine?”

“Sure I do. I have several types of colas too, but little girls don't need caffeine this late at night.”

Her cheeks heated again. That was three times he'd called her a little girl. He'd started calling her Little Lyla the day she'd met him. The nickname had never bothered her. It was their thing. He never said it in front of other people. It made her feel special, like she meant something to him. It made her feel cherished.

But little girl?

“I'm not a baby, you know.” She straightened her spine and stared at him. “In fact, I'm not a child at all. I'm eighteen now.”

“Babygirl, I've never been more aware of anything in my life as I am about your age and your adult status. That's not going to stop me from calling you little girl. It's in my blood. I'm a nurturing guy by nature. My instinct is to take care of you and make sure you're safe.”

“Oh.” Her head was spinning. Half of his words didn’t make much sense to her, and the other half made her panties wet. What did he mean by being overly aware of her age?

“How about if I choose for you?” he suggested. Keeping one hand extended across her body and planted on the counter as if to keep her from falling, he used the other to pull the fridge open.

She didn’t look inside. She didn’t want to take her gaze off him. How long would he let her stay here? How many hours was this most perfect night of her life going to last?

When she saw the drink he’d pulled out, she giggled. “Why do you have juice boxes in your fridge?”

He shrugged as he put the straw in the hole. “Never hurts to be prepared. Never know when the prettiest little girl in the world might come by and need a drink.”

She took the juice box from him and sipped down most of it in one long drink. “I guess I was thirsty.”

“There’s plenty more. Help yourself if you want another or ask me to get it for you.”

“K.”

He pushed back a few inches and surprised her again when he lifted one of her feet and removed the shoe. He did the same to the other side before setting the stilettos on the floor next to the cabinets. “I bet your toes were screaming.”

“Yeah. They kind of were.”

“How much dancing did you do?”

She shrugged and looked away. “Not much,” she muttered. “I don’t really want to talk about the dance, Rock. Can’t we just pretend it didn’t happen and move on?”

“Nope. I want to hear the details. I want to know what happened to make you arrive home alone with tears in your eyes. Do I need to hunt down the boy you went to prom with and teach him some manners?”

She gasped, eyes going wide.

Rock snickered. “Babygirl, unless that boy did something worthy of a good hard lesson, I’m kidding.”

“Oh.” Shrugging as if she hadn’t totally taken him seriously, she continued, “I mean it’s not a bad idea.”

Rock drew in a breath. “Start from the beginning.” He scooped her off the counter, handed her the bear she’d placed next to the sink, and made sure she had a grip on her juice box. “Let’s go sit on the couch.”

As he deposited her on the sectional, she squirmed to adjust her dress. It was hard to sit comfortably in the damn thing. It was made for standing. Not even walking. The skirt had kept her from taking more than baby steps.

Rock leaned over her, setting both hands on the back of the sofa, pinning her in the way he’d done on the kitchen counter. “You’re uncomfortable. That dress is sexy as fuck but you’ve had enough of it, haven’t you?”

Her breath hitched. Had he just said she was sexy?

“You heard me, Little Lyla. And don’t act so surprised. You spent all day getting ready for the prom. At least four people worked on you, doing your hair and makeup and nails. Am I wrong?”

She shook her head.

“So yeah, sexy as fuck. Don’t ever doubt it. But I bet you’d like to get out of that dress. How about if I lend you one

of my T-shirts? It would hang low enough to keep you fully covered.”

“What if I don’t want to be fully covered?” she blurted before she could filter her thoughts. She slapped a hand over her mouth, mortified.

Rock groaned. “Baby girl... Don’t tempt me. You’ve been legal for like a minute. I’m not going to take advantage of you. I just want to make you comfortable.”

She glanced at his black-T-shirt-covered chest as she lowered her hand, feeling feisty and flirtatious. So out of her element. “Can I have the one you’re wearing?”

The groan that came from between his lips made her squeeze her legs together. She was going to self-combust. In addition, she was pretty sure he knew it.

Lyla had secrets. Sure, she presented herself as a total prude with her conservative clothes, high work ethic, and rule-following, but when she was alone in her bedroom at night, she let herself go into her fantasy mode.

Sometimes she read smutty books. Other times she simply closed her eyes and visualized every imaginable scenario with Rock. She liked to pretend he was her man. Meanwhile, she’d grown exceptionally capable of getting herself off with her fingers.

Rock stepped back, grabbed her hand, and pulled her to her feet. “Turn around.”

She spun away from him and held her breath while he lowered the zipper all the way down her back before turning her to face him once again. Releasing her, he hauled his T-shirt over his head and handed it to her. “Change, babygirl.”

She was reeling as he spun around.

Oh. He means here. Now. Take off the dress and put his shirt on.

Jesus, this was hot. Why was this so hot? Probably because everything Rock did was hot all the time.

Lyla dropped the dress, stepped out of the pile of silk, and hauled the T-shirt over her head. She even lifted the front of it to her nose to savor his scent.

“You good?”

“Yes.” She sat, tucked her legs up under her, settled the bear in her lap, and held on to him, hoping he would provide moral support and courage. She didn’t care if Rock judged her for keeping the bear close. Besides, he’d given it to her. What did he expect her to do?

The teddy bear felt like a lifeline, grounding her in the present.

Chapter 4

You've lost your mind, Monroe. What the hell are you doing?

Rock had not planned this. None of it. He'd waited for Lyla to get home for peace of mind. He hadn't been certain he would even approach her. He'd waited on the basement steps for an hour, expecting her to come in smiling and giddy from her big dance.

When she'd stepped into the kitchen with her shoulders drooping and head hung, he'd quietly risen to his feet. When she'd sniffled, he'd lost it. Who the fuck had hurt her and why?

Rock lowered himself onto the couch next to her, not giving her any space. He let his thigh touch her knee, twisted so he was more fully facing her, and set his arm behind her on the back of the couch.

Picking up one of the tendrils of hair at the base of her neck, he fingered it. "Tell me what happened, Little Lyla."

She sighed. "I'd rather not. It's embarrassing. Can't we just sit here and not talk?"

He met her gaze. Her eyes were watery again. Something happened tonight to upset her, and he didn't like it. "Was it that punk Casper?"

She gave him a small smile when he fucked up the name again. “Aspen.”

“Right. Aspen.” He rolled his eyes. “Who names their kid Aspen?”

She shrugged and looked down at the bear, plucking at his fur absentmindedly.

“Aspen’s a decent name for a stuffed bear,” Rock suggested as he rested his hand on top of hers.

She lifted her gaze, her face scrunched up in a sneer. Now they were getting somewhere.

“No? What should we name him?”

“The bear? Or my shitty prom date? Asshole works for the prom date. I’m not sure I’ve ever named a stuffed animal.”

Rock gasped dramatically. “You don’t name your stuffies?”

She shook her head, giggling, causing the lock of hair to slip from his fingers.

Continuing to cup the back of her hand over the bear, he squeezed her fingers and leaned forward. “You’ll hurt his feelings if you don’t name him.”

She giggled again. He loved it when she laughed. It was the sweetest sound in the world. When she looked down at the bear again, she asked, “Do I get to keep him?”

“Of course. I wouldn’t take back a little girl’s bear.”

“Then I’ll name him Rock, and when I’m away at school this fall, I’ll talk to him as if he’s you, and he’ll comfort me when I feel down.”

A lump formed in Rock's throat, and he cupped the back of her head and pulled her closer so her cheek rested on his shoulder. "Do I? Comfort you when you're down?"

She nodded. "Always."

"Good. I'm glad." He stroked her neck and shoulders. "Now, I'm not going to ask again. Tell me what's making you feel down tonight."

She tipped her head back and looked up at him. "You say that like you're my parent, and you're going to spank me if I don't comply." Her voice was joking.

His cock grew harder. She was so damn close to the truth. *She has no clue, Monroe. Be careful.*

"Hmm. Would you like that? It might make you feel better. A good spanking on a Little girl's bottom can help erase stress and anxiety."

She slowly pushed back from him, holding his gaze. "You're serious." A shudder wracked her body. A good one, he hoped.

Careful, Monroe. "Yep. But first I want you to talk to me. Afterward, if you'd like me to spank you to chase away the icky feelings, I'll be happy to do so. If you don't start talking, you're going to end up over my knees for a naughty-girl spanking instead."

Rock watched her so closely, afraid to even blink. He didn't want to miss a single nuance of her reaction. He was treading on thin ice here. Breaking every boundary he'd intended to keep between them tonight.

He meant to comfort her. Not Daddy her. At least not in a way she would notice. Suddenly, he found himself holding his girl in his arms on his couch in his apartment. She was

wearing his T-shirt over God-only-knew-what sexy scraps of lace. She was submitting to him in a way he'd only dreamed about. Her eyes were wide as saucers as she absorbed his words.

She licked those full lips again. "You're confusing me. You look at me like you want to undress me with your eyes. You're touching me like the woman I've always wanted you to see me as. But you're talking to me as though I was a child."

"Not a child, Little Lyla. Just someone who needs nurturing. There's a difference. I'm fully aware you're a grown adult now. That doesn't mean you don't crave being cared for by someone who worships the ground you walk on."

Her breath hitched and her lip trembled. She looked away again.

He wanted to pull her all the way onto his lap, but that would probably be a bad idea, and he still needed answers before anything else. "Did that Brinkman guy hurt you?"

She shook her head. "Only my pride. I'm pretty sure he only asked me to the prom on a bet. I'm also pretty sure I shocked him with my dress, hair, and makeup. I think I shocked the entire school." She lifted her gaze and grinned.

"Not surprising, babygirl. You were smoking hot in that dress. I almost couldn't get my legs to hold me up when I saw you walk in the kitchen door. If I'd been there and seen you before you'd left, I might not have let you go."

Her eyes went wide again.

"Go on. I guess you drove yourself to the dance?"

She drew in a breath. "Yeah. That was my father's idea. He said, that way, I could easily leave any time I wanted. He was right. I met a group of people for dinner first. It went okay.

Mostly the guys kept staring at my cleavage and the girls kept whispering to each other about me.” She shrugged. “I’m used to it. I ignored them and ate my meal.”

“Then what happened?”

“We went to the dance. Aspen barely paid attention to me. It was awkward and uncomfortable wandering around the dance hall by myself. I felt like everyone was staring at me and whispering.”

“Probably because you’re stunning and smart and funny and they’re all jealous.”

She rolled her eyes. “I don’t think that’s it, Rock.”

“Their loss. Go on.”

She drew in another breath. “When I decided to cut my losses and leave, I went in search of Aspen. I found him talking with two of his friends. They didn’t see me approach. As I got closer, I realized they were talking about me.”

Rock stiffened. “What did they say, Little Lyla?”

“Aspen said, ‘Pay up. I got her here.’ And then his friend said, ‘If you’re not going to tap that, you’re crazy. How about if...’ ” Lyla lowered her face again, but not before Rock saw the tears sliding down her cheeks.

“Finish,” Rock encouraged on a whisper. “Get it out.” He lowered his hand and rubbed her back.

Her voice was choked with emotion. “How about if I take over. I’ll let you know tomorrow how tight that virgin cunt was in the morning.”

Rock stopped breathing. Those assholes. Jesus.

Throwing caution to the wind, he scooped her up and settled her on his lap, holding her tight as she sniffled. He kissed the top of her head. “I’m sorry, babygirl. That was crude and uncalled for. Did you confront them?”

She shook her head and whimpered against his bare chest. “No, I turned and left the dance. I’m so glad I had a car.”

“Me too, Little Lyla. Me too.” He rocked her and kissed her temple several times. “It’s over now. You’re ten times more mature than any of those boys. Ten times more interesting and talented and smart. After school gets out next week, you’ll never see those assholes again.”

After a few minutes of silence, she tipped her head back again. “Did you mean it?”

“Mean what, babygirl?”

“Would you really spank me to chase away the icky feelings?”

Chapter 5

Lyla couldn't believe she'd just said that. She couldn't believe anything about this surreal night. She especially couldn't believe Rock seemed interested in her as more than just his friend's kid sister.

She had no idea when she might ever get a chance to experience something like this again. Perhaps never. So she wasn't going to let this opportunity slip away.

She'd had no idea Rock was such a kinky guy. Spanking? And why did the idea of him swatting her bottom make her panties wet?

Rock looked a bit stunned by her request, and she feared he might turn her down or tell her she'd misunderstood. Instead, he finally nodded. "If that's what you want, babygirl," he said in a soft voice.

She nodded, and before she could lose her nerve, she asked, "Will you have sex with me too?"

Rock's eyes shot wider than she'd ever seen them, and she wished she could take the question back. *He doesn't see you that way, you dimwit.*

Embarrassed beyond belief, she shoved at him to get off his lap. She needed to get out of here. She was mortified.

His grip tightened on her, and he held her fast. “Little girl, stop squirming around. Every time you move, your thigh rubs against my cock.”

She gasped and attempted to twist away again. But wait... If she was affecting him that way...

Rock wrapped his arms all the way around her slim body and held her closer. “Don’t panic,” he whispered. “I’m not rejecting you. I’m just shocked. Give me a second to process what you just asked me.”

She was breathing heavily as she stared down at his chest. This was the first time she’d seen him without a shirt on, and he was ripped. Plus, he had more tattoos than she’d known about. She knew he’d gotten several of them in the past two years since she’d met him.

“Forget I said anything,” she pleaded.

He chuckled, which vibrated her entire body. “No man alive could possibly forget a woman asking him to have sex, Baby girl.”

“You probably think I’m just some kid, your friend’s little sister. A nuisance. You’re just being nice to me because...” She lifted her gaze. “Why are you being nice to me?”

He set a finger under her chin and held her gaze. “Little Lyla, I have never for a second seen you as a nuisance, a kid, or anyone’s sister. From the moment I met you, I’ve been adjusting my cock.”

Her jaw fell open. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

“You were too young, babygirl. Your parents barely tolerate a guy like me as a friend of their son’s. They would’ve had me arrested if I’d approached you.”

“Oh.” He had a point. She’d never thought about that before. She’d always just wondered why he seemed to follow her around the room with his gaze and why he went out of his way to be so nice to her. Finally, she gave him a coy smile. “I’m eighteen now.”

He groaned. “Don’t I know it.” His hands slid to her lower back. “I’m equally certain I’m probably an ass for bringing you here and even considering introducing you to my world.”

She had no idea what he was talking about, but she wanted to know. “What world is that?”

“I’m a dominant, Lyla. I doubt you even know what that means.”

She shot him a glare. “I’m a smart gal. I know what a dominant is. You mean you like to tie women up, blindfold them, and flog them. Stuff like that?” The idea made her nipples harder than they’d already been. Sheesh.

He swallowed hard. “Lord, you do know more than I gave you credit for. But no. I’m not that kind of dominant. I’m a Daddy Dom.”

She furrowed her brow. “What’s a Daddy Dom?”

“A man who likes to nurture and protect his Little girl. Someone who likes her to submit to his rules and guidelines to keep her safe and happy.”

She tried to process his words. She’d never read anything about Daddy Doms. Now she wished she could put a pause on this conversation, freeze the world, and check out ten books from the library about the subject, if such books even existed. But that wasn’t going to happen. Instead, she was going to have to ask questions.

She inhaled slowly. “What kinds of rules?”

“Things like not going out alone at night, not using knives without supervision, not running in the house, not cussing or talking back to Daddy. Things that keep a Little girl safe mostly.”

She squirmed on his lap. Her panties were soaked by his tone and his serious manner. “How does not cussing keep me safe?”

He grinned. “It would keep your bottom from hurting when you sit down.”

She squeezed her legs together at another mention of spanking her. She needed more information. “Are there other people like that? Other Daddy Doms?”

“More than you can imagine. The Shadowridge Guardians MC has many members who practice some form of ageplay for example.”

“Ageplay...”

“That’s what we call relationships comprised of a Daddy and a Little girl.” He patted her back. “And again, let me stress, the term Little girl or Baby girl refers to an adult woman who enters into a relationship with a Daddy Dom with full consent and knowledge.”

Lyla nodded slowly. It was a lot to absorb. She shifted back to his original pronouncement about being a Dominant. “So you don’t want to tie me up and blindfold me?”

He chuckled. “If that was something you craved, I could certainly do so. Lots of people enjoy some form of restraint when they have sex. They like feeling as though they don’t have control over their own pleasure.”

Lyla flinched when he tipped his head back and groaned. “How the hell did we get into this deep discussion? You’re so

green and, fuck, probably a virgin.”

“Is that a problem?”

He dropped his forehead to hers. “No. Jesus, Lyla, no. Not a problem. It’s a *fact*, and I’m not sure it would be fair of me to take your virginity in the middle of the night while you’re so emotional and I’ve just dropped a few dozen bombs on your lap about my sexual preferences.”

She sat up straighter. “But that’s my decision.” Time to fill him in on a few other *facts*. “I’ve lusted over you for two years. I’ve spent countless hours wondering what it would be like to have sex with you. You’re going to leave town for your internship in a few days, and I’m going away to college this fall. I want my first time to be with *you*. Please don’t make me beg.”

He stared at her for several seconds before smoothing his giant hands up her back and back down to cup her butt over the T-shirt. “Okay, babygirl. Let’s start with the spanking and see how you feel afterward.”

He lifted her off his lap and stood her in front of him. “Turn around and kneel in front of me, babygirl. I want to pull these pins out of your hair. That hairdo can’t possibly be comfortable anymore.”

He was right. Her head was starting to throb. The thought of him taking it all down made her nipples stiffen again. She crossed her arms to hide the reaction, even though he surely couldn’t see her tight buds through her lace bra and the loose black T-shirt.

If she kneeled in front of him and let him play with her hair, she would end up moaning so loudly she’d embarrass herself. The visualization nearly made her orgasm.

“I can do it,” she whispered as she lifted her hands to the curls. She would need a mirror and probably half an hour, to be honest.

Rock wrapped his hands around her wrists and gently lowered them to her sides. “It’s the kind of thing Daddies like to do. Fix their Little girl’s hair. Comb it. Wash it. Braid it.”

She swallowed. This was the oddest conversation she’d ever had in her life, and she was so intrigued she wanted to shout: *Yes, please. Do all those things.* “Okay,” she whispered.

He lifted her hands to his lips and kissed her knuckles. “Okay, Daddy,” he corrected.

She shuddered. A full-body shudder that left her knees weak and her body heated. “Okay, Daddy,” she responded.

He gave her the brightest smile she’d ever seen. “I love the sound of that, babygirl. Now turn around and let Daddy take your hair down.”

She did as she was told, grateful when he dropped a throw pillow onto the floor between his feet. He spread his knees and helped her kneel in front of him, letting his knees slide under her arms.

“How many of these pins are there, Little Lyla?” he teased as he started deftly pulling them out.

She giggled. “I don’t know. A million?”

His deep chuckle rumbled against her where his knees gripped her sides. He was so careful pulling each pin out that he never once made her wince.

“You’re good at that,” she murmured as she let her eyes slide closed so she could enjoy the feel of his hands in her hair.

Eventually, he had them all out, and he carefully finger-combed her hair down around her shoulders. “You weren’t kidding about the shellac, Little girl. This hair was nearly glued in place.”

“Maybe you could wash it for me after you ravage me,” she suggested, uncertain who had taken over her body and turned her into a sex-starved nymph.

His responding groan pleased her immensely as he helped her to her feet. “One thing at a time, babygirl. You’re killing me.”

She grinned as she stepped between his legs, leaned against him, and wrapped her arms around his neck. “Please don’t die on me. I have a list of experiences I’d like to check off before the sun comes up.”

Standing like this between his legs put their faces at nearly the same level, and Rock looked like he was going to devour her for a few seconds before he grabbed the back of her head and did exactly that.

His lips landed on hers with more passion than she’d ever imagined. He didn’t just kiss her; he consumed her. He destroyed her. With a kiss.

He angled her head how he wanted it seconds later, licked along the seam of her lips to demand entrance, and slid his tongue in to dance with hers.

Moans filled the room, and she had no idea which of them they were coming from. Probably both. Her knees grew weak, but when she started to buckle, he tucked a hand under her butt and held her up.

Time stood still while she enjoyed every moment of this kiss. For a fleeting moment, she remembered those stupid boys

discussing her earlier in the evening, and she smirked inside, knowing none of them would ever have been able to kiss her like this.

When Rock finally broke free, he didn't go far. He continued to hold her close, panting and staring into her eyes with pure lust. "Jesus, Little Lyla."

A flush crawled up her cheeks. "Did I do it right?" *He* certainly had, but she had no idea if she measured up.

"Do it right?" His voice rose. "If you'd done it any more *right*, I would have come in my jeans. Was that your first kiss, babygirl?"

She nodded, embarrassed to admit her total inexperience.

He moaned and kissed her again, briefly this time. "I'm going to steal all your firsts tonight. You ready for that, babygirl?"

She nodded. "Yes, Daddy." It surprised her how easily the word slid from her tongue. Half an hour ago she'd never considered calling a lover *Daddy*, and here she was using it flippantly like it was totally normal.

The steamy look in his eyes told her he loved it.

Chapter 6

Rock was going to self-combust. She was beyond perfection. He'd imagined a scenario like this a million times over the past two years, but he'd never expected to be able to pile all this information on her in one hour and have her staring at him with those deep brown, sexy, please-fuck-me eyes.

His girl had barely flinched as he'd filled her in on his sexual preferences. She was eager and willing and leaning against him, begging to be ravished.

Was he making a mistake? God, he hoped not. If she'd shown any signs of wanting to run screaming from the apartment, he would have taken her home and kept his hands to himself. But that wasn't what had happened. Not by a long shot.

And damn. He was completely incapable of denying his girl what she wanted. He'd never be able to tell her *no* in his entire life.

The thought made him stiffen. What happened after tonight? He was leaving. When he got back, she would be gone. She needed to go to college, follow her dreams, get her degree. He would never suggest she give that up.

Nope. They would have to figure this out as they went along. For now, he had tonight, and he intended to make the most of it.

Easing her back, he guided her to one side. “Lie across my lap, babygirl. Daddy is going to spank your bottom and chase away all the bad feelings from earlier.”

She was trembling as she let him help her into position across his thighs. She was nervous, but he would take his time and watch her closely. With one hand on the small of her back, he patted the backs of her thighs with the other, easing his fingers closer to her bottom. “I’ll start easy, Little Lyla. Let you get used to the feeling. If you want me to stop at any time, just say *red*, okay?”

“Yes, Daddy.” Her voice was breathy, but every time she called him Daddy, his cock jumped. This was every dream he’d ever had wrapped up in one.

Rock held his breath as he pushed his T-shirt up her body until he slid the cotton under his palm at the small of her back. It took all his self-control not to flip her over and plant his face between her legs when he saw the fucking sexy black thong.

He rubbed her bare cheeks. “You naughty Little girl. That’s some seriously sexy lingerie.”

She shivered. “I couldn’t wear regular panties with that dress. Someone would have seen the lines. The sales lady sold me this bra and thong set when I bought the dress.”

“Do you have other panties like this at home, babygirl?” Why he needed to know that he had no idea, but he wanted to visualize what she normally wore under her jeans and dresses.

She shook her head. “No. Just these,” she whispered.

“Tell me what you normally wear, Little Lyla.” He needed to know. He couldn’t explain why.

“Just regular bikini panties. Pastel mostly.”

He stared at her fantastic ass while he pictured her in those pastel panties. He’d give anything to be the one to put them on her in the mornings. That wasn’t going to happen anytime soon, but he’d think about it every day.

After hooking his finger under the edge of the black lace, he slowly drew the thong over her bottom, down her thighs, and off.

She shuddered.

“When I spank you, it will always be on your bare bottom, babygirl. I’ll want to keep a close eye on your skin to make sure it turns hot and pink without bruising.” He rubbed her perfect globes again. He could do this all night. Removing the thong hadn’t been entirely necessary. It hadn’t been covering her fantastic ass cheeks, but he’d wanted them off her anyway.

She whimpered and squirmed on his lap.

“Spread your legs for me, Little Lyla.”

Her breathing picked up as she complied, opening her thighs a few inches.

“Good girl. I don’t want you to clench your legs together while I’m spanking you.” He lifted his hand and gave her a firm swat. Just hard enough to sting and surprise her.

She flinched, but the sound that came out of her mouth was musical.

He did it again. Jesus, she was responsive, and he’d bet his last dollar her pussy was soaked. He intended to find out soon. Would she have curls there or would she be bare? When he

leaned to the side to see between her legs better, he saw no evidence of hair.

He continued to spank her several more times, grateful he'd not only seen this done many times among club members, but he'd practiced on a few of the old ladies who enjoyed a good spanking. It had never been sexual with any of them, though. This was definitely sexual. Not just for him, but for Lyla.

When he paused to rub her heated skin and check on her, she was panting. "Rock..."

"Daddy," he reminded her. "Especially when you're over my knees, babygirl."

"Sorry, Daddy."

"More, Little Lyla?"

"Please," she murmured, as if it was difficult to admit.

He kept his palm spread solidly on her lower back so she couldn't squirm off his lap and onto the floor. The way she was wiggling told him she'd probably enjoy restraints. Little girls, who squirmed during a spanking like Lyla was, were usually silently begging to have their movements constrained.

He spanked her a dozen more times, watching her closely and stopping when she arched her back and lifted her legs. There was a good chance she was close to orgasm.

While she was totally off balance, he slid his hand from the back of her knee up to her pussy, coming just shy of touching her. Easing the last inch or so until he could barely stroke over her folds, his heart nearly stopped when he found her not only soaked but bare.

And the noise she made...

“Has anyone ever touched this sweet pussy, Little Lyla?”

She shook her head.

“What about you? Do you play with your pretty pussy when you’re alone?” He reached between her folds and dragged his finger through the wetness. Fuck, she was killing him. “Answer Daddy, babygirl. Do you touch yourself?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Can you make yourself come with your fingers, Lyla?”

Another whimper. “Yes, Daddy,” she whispered.

“What do you think about when you’re under the covers late at night playing with this sweet pussy?”

She moaned but didn’t respond fast enough.

He removed his fingers and gripped her bottom hard enough to bring attention to the burn. “Answer Daddy, babygirl.” He knew the answer. He wanted to hear her say it. He *needed* to hear her say it even if he came in his pants.

“You, Daddy,” she blurted. “I think of you. Please...”

He needed to be inside her more than his next breath. But not here. Not on the couch. This wasn’t where he was going to thrust into his precious Little girl for the first time.

Grabbing her around the waist, he rose to his feet. “Wrap your legs around me, babygirl.”

She complied, her wet pussy up high enough to rub directly against his belly. She even hooked her ankles together and ground herself against him.

Killing me.

Rock wasted no time getting to his bedroom where he aimed directly for his bed and lowered her onto her back. Her

legs were still hooked around him as he grabbed the hem of his shirt and pushed it up her body and over her head. He dragged it higher, forcing her arms together above her head.

Standing on the floor between her legs, he grabbed the tangle of cotton and tied a giant knot in it between her wrists. It forced her hands together and essentially restrained her. “Leave your hands here, babygirl.”

Her eyes were wide, and she was breathing heavily as he kissed the spot between her breasts before dragging his tongue along the edge of the lace.

She arched her chest and moaned. “Daddy...”

Fucking heaven.

Grateful for the front clasp on her bra, he made quick work of popping it open to reveal the tits he’d dreamed about for two fucking years.

Gorgeous. Jesus. Stunning. Her nipples were rosy points begging for attention, and he bent his head and flicked his tongue over first one and then the other.

She arched and bucked and squirmed and moaned.

“Such a wiggly Little girl.” He cupped both breasts and molded his fingers around them before flicking the nipples with his thumbs and finally pinching them both lightly.

“Oh. God...”

“Do you enjoy nipple play, Little Lyla? Do you like to pinch these tight buds while you finger your pussy?” He was being so crude. He’d never dreamed she’d be ready for this kind of dirty talk, but she wasn’t like other women. She was so sexual and needy.

She nodded. “Yes,” she whispered. “Not too hard, though. It feels better when you tap them or graze over them.”

Damn. He loved that she was able and willing to verbalize her needs. So fucking sensual. So far beyond her years for a virgin.

Rock listened to her and touched her the way she liked, teasing the little buds until she was writhing and losing her mind with need. “Let your legs fall open, babygirl.”

She complied, spreading herself wide for him.

He kissed a path down her belly until he reached her pussy. Holding her thighs parted, he set his gaze on her pussy for the first time.

There were no words for how pretty she was or how wet or how greedy. “Did you shave this pussy tonight? Or do you keep it bare all the time?” He trailed a finger along her folds, tormenting her to the point that he had to hold her down with his other hand on her pelvis.

Lyla dug her heels into the mattress and tried to lift her pussy right off the bed.

He removed his fingers. He loved the way he could get her to talk by withdrawing contact. “Answer Daddy,” he encouraged again. He knew she was having trouble focusing, but he wanted her to spill all her secrets.

She whimpered, rolling her head back and forth. “I’ve been shaving it for a while. I like how it feels,” she murmured. “Please touch me, Daddy.”

He trailed a finger around her clit, watching her face. “You’ve thought about this, haven’t you? You’ve thought about me touching your bare little pussy and making you scream.”

“Yes. A million times. Yes,” she cried out. “It’s so much better in real life.”

“Oh, babygirl. You have no idea. I haven’t even gotten started yet.” He lowered his head and sucked her clit into his mouth.

Lyla screamed. The most beautiful sound in the world.

Rock flicked his tongue over her captive clit as rapidly as possible as he eased one finger into her tight channel. That was all it took. Her orgasm had been building for an hour. It was a wonder she’d lasted this long. The sound and feel of her coming on his mouth and finger brought him to his knees.

While she was still panting and twitching, he added a second finger. Damn, she was tight. “So gorgeous. Prettiest Little girl in the world. Tell Daddy what’s been up inside this precious little cunt, babygirl.”

She shuddered, still moaning through the orgasm. Finally, she licked her lips. “My fingers, tampons, and... stuff.”

“Stuff?” His curiosity was piqued. “What stuff, Little Lyla?” Dragging information from her was his new favorite pastime. He loved how her cheeks turned pink with embarrassment.

She groaned. “Daddy...” She drew her restrained hands down to cover her eyes.

He reached up and pulled them back above her head and looked her in the eye, waiting with nothing more than a look.

She sighed heavily. “I have a set of thick markers I use for art class. They probably aren’t nearly as big as your, uh... as you. But I pretend.”

“My cock,” he teased, grinning at her. “I don’t think they make markers the size of my cock, Baby girl, but I give you kudos for the creativity.” She was so precious.

“Maybe you could take your pants off and show me.”

“You’re sure that’s what you want? There’s no going back. We don’t have to have sex just because you’re naked in my apartment.”

She rolled her eyes. “Stop stalling. I’m ready.”

He stood and watched her face as he popped the button on his jeans before lowering them and his underwear over his hips.

She bit her lip, stifling her gasp.

He shrugged out of the denim, leaving himself naked. With his cock bobbing demandingly in front of him, he yanked open the drawer next to his bed and snagged the box of condoms.

Damn. He wished he’d opened the box earlier. His hands were shaking as he tore into the cellophane and tossed it aside before ripping the cardboard nearly down the center.

“That’s a new box...” she commented.

He flinched as he snagged one of the foil packs and looked her in the eye.

“Why is the box new?”

“I’m not a virgin, if that’s what you’re wondering, Little Lyla, but I’m not a manwhore either. I don’t bring women to my apartment. You’re the first one.”

Her eyes were wide again. He loved shocking her. “Oh.”

He braced his hands on either side of her and lowered his face closer to hers. “You’re not a conquest, Lyla. You mean

something to me. I hope you know that.”

She nodded slowly. “Okay.”

Rising back to standing, he stroked his cock from base to tip while he tore the foil packet open with his teeth. “How many markers am I?”

She swallowed. “At least three, Daddy.”

He grinned.

“It’s going to hurt. I know that. I’ve heard other girls talking about it. It’s okay, you know. I’ll be fine.”

He rolled the condom on and cupped her face. “You’re right. It will burn for a minute, but you’ll adjust around me, and then it will feel so good.”

She licked her lips. “You won’t be disappointed if it doesn’t, though, right? I mean other girls talk like it’s a chore they don’t really care for. They do it for their boyfriends.”

He couldn’t keep from smirking. “That’s not going to happen. I’ll never do anything to you that you don’t thoroughly enjoy, babygirl. I don’t even like the idea of hurting you with my cock this first time, but it’s part of nature. I can’t help it. I promise you’re not going to be disappointed. Those girls you hear talking are having sex with greedy boys who don’t care about them. They only care about themselves and getting their rocks off. You mean far more to me than that.”

“Okay,” she whispered.

He knew she had her doubts, but all he could do was prove himself. And he fully intended to.

Chapter 7

Lyla was trembling as she stared at Rock's hard body and his enormous erection. No wonder girls spoke of sex with a grimace. He was crazy if he thought she was going to enjoy having that put inside her, but it had to happen at some point, and she wanted it to be him.

Her body was limp from the amazing orgasm he'd given her. It had blown the doors off every other orgasm she'd given herself. By a longshot.

"Can I have my hands, Daddy? I want to be able to touch you."

He reached above her and tugged the shirt free. "There. Are you going to leave marks on my back that will cause all the guys at the club to make fun of me if I take my shirt off?"

"Maybe?" She shrugged. She'd dreamed of making marks on him with her fingernails. "Will you be mad?"

"Fuck no. Never. I'll wear them with pride." He tucked his hands under her arms and dragged her to the center of the bed so he could climb up with her and nestle between her legs.

She grabbed his shoulders and held her breath, thinking he would thrust into her now.

But he didn't. Instead, he lowered his lips to hers and kissed her like he had earlier, like he was dying of thirst and she was his tall glass of water. By the time he broke free, his erection was lodged at her entrance.

"You can still say no, Little Lyla."

She shook her head. "Do it, Daddy. Show me."

He clearly gritted his teeth as he eased partway into her.

Fuck. He was so big. Too big. She gripped his shoulders firmly, trying not to react.

Rock pulled almost out before entering again, slightly deeper.

Her lip quivered uncontrollably. "Daddy?"

He froze. "Want me to stop, babygirl?" His voice was strained.

"No. I want you to just do it. Please. Stop teasing. Thrust all the way in."

He inhaled through his nose and lowered his forehead to hers. He gripped her face with both hands and thrust all the way in.

Lyla gasped. Her vision swam. *Jesus. Fuck.* Too big. Too big.

"Take a breath, babygirl."

She shook her head in his hands. There was no way she was going to breathe. Maybe never again.

"Lyla..." he warned. "Take a breath for Daddy. Relax your body. Let your cunt adjust to my cock. You're clenching me so hard you're strangling my dick."

That last part was said in jest, but she couldn't smile. She did manage to draw in a deep lungful of air and release it.

“Good girl. Again.”

She would never be able to disobey him if he was going to talk to her like that. She loved the way she felt when he called her his *good girl*.

After another breath, she loosened her grip on his shoulders.

He kissed her. First her lips, then all over her face. Finally, he eased partway out and back in.

She stiffened, but it didn't hurt like the first time.

He did it again.

Nerve endings she hadn't known existed came to life.

The next time, she whimpered and lifted her hips to meet him.

“That's my good girl. Let it feel good. Let your body accept me.”

Languidly, he eased in and out while her arousal grew. When he lowered one hand to tease her nipple before wedging it between their bodies until he found her clit, she moaned.

Holy shit.

“That's my girl. So precious. So pretty. So fucking sexy.” He kissed her again as he rubbed her clit.

She felt another orgasm building, stunning her. At the realization she might actually come again, she started bucking against him, loving the way he filled her and how the base of his penis rubbed against her with every pass. Even with his

fingers between them she could feel his pelvis making contact with hers.

“Come around my cock, babygirl. Come all over me before I release.”

His words did something to her. He had an odd ability to command her to do things, and this was no exception. Her orgasm slammed into her, sending her flying. The pulses of her release were so much more powerful with her channel wrapped around his erection.

“Jesus, Little Lyla. Fuck me.” Rock thrust several more times, faster now, with urgency and a driving need. It was so sexy watching him unravel. When he came with a loud grunt, his eyes rolled back and his mouth dropped open.

His entire body jerked with every squirt of his semen into the condom.

He was truly the most gorgeous man alive.

Chapter 8

Rock wrapped his arms around Lyla and rolled her to one side, managing to keep himself lodged inside her. He tucked one leg over her hips to keep her from escaping while he kissed her.

When he ran out of steam, he dropped his head next to hers, tucked a lock of hair behind her ear, and held her gaze. He knew he was grinning from ear to ear. “Were they right?” he asked in a gravelly voice.

“Who?” she whispered, her fingers trailing across his shoulder.

“The girls at school who said sex was a chore?”

Her face pinked adorably. “Uh, no. They need to try a better man.”

He chuckled and cupped her face. “How did I get so lucky?”

She shrugged. “I was thinking the same thing.”

He lifted his face to glance at the clock. “What time do you think you need to be home?”

“Never. Take me away. Let’s go to the Bahamas or someplace warm with a beach where I can waltz around all day in a bikini and tempt you with my feminine wiles.”

He laughed. “Sounds like heaven, but it’s not very practical.”

She sighed dramatically. “Fine.” She stuck out her bottom lip in a pout. “I want to stay a few more hours, though. Is that okay? Do you need to be somewhere in the morning?”

“I wouldn’t care if I had a fourteen-hour shift that started at seven and I got no sleep. I’m going to steal every single second with you and then box them up so I can pull them out and relive this night over and over while you’re halfway across the country from me.”

“Maybe going to college is overrated?”

He rose onto an elbow and stared down at her. “Little girl, do not talk like that. You need to get your degree and follow your dreams.”

“But...”

He covered her lips with his fingers. “No buts. Listen to your Daddy. Let’s not talk about tomorrow. I want my few more hours to be blissful. I want to create memories. Let’s take a shower.”

She grinned wide. “Are you going to wash my hair?”

“I’m going to wash your entire body, babygirl. And then you’re going to wash mine. And then I’m going to spread you out like a feast on this bed and eat your pussy until you scream again.”

She flushed. “Is that so?”

“Yep.”

“What about me? Do I get to suck your cock until you come against the back of my throat?”

He flinched at the visual. “Jesus, Little Lyla, where did that dirty mouth come from?”

She shrugged. “Bad language doesn’t count while we’re having sex, does it?”

He chuckled. “If cock is your idea of a naughty word, then no. I like the way it sounds coming from your lips. Such a dirty Little girl. We’d better get you cleaned up, dirty girl.”

He reached down to hold the condom in place and eased his semi-hard dick out of her, noticing her wince. “Sorry, babygirl. You’ll be sore for a few days. I promise it won’t hurt like that the next time.”

“Okay, Daddy.”

He slid off the side of the bed, removed the condom, and wrapped it in a tissue before he swooped down and lifted her into his arms. After carrying her to the bathroom, he turned on the water and gently set her on her feet next to the shower.

She crossed her arms, shivering.

He wrapped her in his embrace. “Cold?”

She shook her head. “It feels strange being naked with someone. I didn’t think about it while we were in your bed, but now that we’re not, I feel self-conscious.”

“Don’t. There’s no need. You’re the sexiest woman I’ve ever set eyes on. Every inch of you.”

“I’m a nerdy bookworm. You never even saw me with makeup, hair done, and a fancy dress until tonight.”

“Oh, babygirl, I saw you. I’ve always seen you. You don’t need makeup or clothes or hairdos to impress me. You impress me without any of that.” He tested the water and grabbed her hand. “Come.”

She stepped in with him, holding his hand in a tight grip. Her gaze ran up and down his body. “You’re like one of those statues of a god I’ve studied in art class.”

He smiled at her. “You could pose naked on a chaise lounge and hundreds of people would gather to sketch you.”

“Mmm. Should I do that?” she teased.

“Fuck no. Never.” He faced her under the water, cupped her breasts, and kissed her. “All mine,” he growled.

She shivered and bit her lip.

They stared at each other for a long time while the water ran over them. He knew they were thinking the same thing. Was she really his? For more than tonight? It was going to be complicated, but he vowed to make it work. Somehow.

Breaking the intense connection, he grabbed the shampoo, poured some in his palm and turned her around to wash her hair.

“God, that feels good. I’m going to smell like you. Do you think anyone will notice?”

“I don’t know. Guess you better take another shower when you get home and not test that theory.”

“Not a chance. I’m not going to bathe for days. I want your scent to linger on me.”

He chuckled as he angled her head under the stream of water. “Close your eyes, Little Lyla.”

“You make me feel so cherished,” she whispered.

“That’s the idea.”

He put conditioner in next and let it sit while he grabbed the body soap. He took his time, lingering on her breasts until

she was panting and arching toward him.

When he reached between her legs, he found her drenched and not just from the shower. She parted her feet for him and let him play with her folds until she grabbed his arm and started panting.

He stopped.

She whined. “Daddy. That’s mean.”

He laughed and tipped her head back again. “Your next orgasm will be even sweeter if I keep you on edge for a while.”

After a groan, she grabbed the shampoo and jerked it from the rack. “My turn.”

He took a step back and tipped his head forward so she could lather his hair. After he rinsed, she started on his body. She eventually found his cock and tormented him, turning the table and stroking his length until he thought he might come in her hand.

She released him. “You’re right. That’s kind of fun.”

He groaned and grabbed her for a kiss. “Naughty, naughty girl.”

She giggled, the sound going straight to his cock.

He turned off the water. “Come on. Let’s get out of here. I need to taste you again.”

Her smile was infectious as he dried her off and then himself. He tried to wring her hair out as much as possible before grabbing his comb. “Face the mirror, babygirl.”

She whimpered. “You’re going to comb my hair? We could do that later. How about we go back to bed first?”

He gave her pink bottom a swat. “How about you obey Daddy and face the mirror?”

Her breath hitched as she grabbed the edge of the counter. Her fucking hot breasts hung in front of her, enticing him to suckle them again.

Soon. Drag this out. Make her beg.

Rock took his time working all the tangles out of her hair before setting the comb down and crowding her against the vanity. He trapped her with his hands on top of hers and kissed behind her ear. “Good girl,” he whispered because he knew it would make her shiver.

“I need you, Daddy,” she murmured.

He held her in place with one hand still covering hers while he used the other to cup a breast and toy with her nipple.

He would never forget her whimpers. The tone. The way her eyes fluttered. The way her mouth hung open.

When he smoothed his hand down her tummy and cupped her pussy, she rose onto her toes.

“Legs wider, babygirl. Keep your feet flat.”

She obeyed like a perfectly seasoned submissive. He’d never anticipated this reaction from her. This deep need to please him that matched his need to nurture her so completely.

Her head fell forward, the thick locks of her hair tumbling over her shoulders as she trembled for him.

He wouldn’t penetrate her again tonight, but he would wring a few more orgasms out of her. Lips on her ear, he whispered, “Such a good girl for Daddy. So well behaved.”

“Mmmm.”

He played with her clit, driving her higher and higher, watching her every reaction and the way her tits were swinging in front of her. He loved the tight rosy tips. He loved her dainty, red-painted toes and her narrow waist and the flare of her hips.

He was suddenly the most possessive bastard on earth, and parting from her in a few hours was going to kill him. They had a few more days before he would leave for his internship, but there was very little chance they'd have the opportunity to spend this kind of time together again. Not without getting caught.

Her parents would lose their shit if they knew about this. It was a risk he was willing to take for this night of paradise, but he hoped for her sake they didn't get caught when he brought her home. He could take their wrath, but he didn't want her to suffer from their disappointment.

“Rock...”

“Do you need to come, babygirl?” He flattened his thumb to her clit.

“Yes, Daddy,” she murmured softly.

“Do it. Come on my hand while I watch you. I want to memorize the look on your face and the tremble of your sweet body.”

Her breath hitched and she gripped the edge of the counter tighter as she arched her chest forward and let the waves of her release take over.

Rock wasn't exactly an old guy. He was only twenty himself. But he'd seen a lot of things having been raised around the MC. He'd never seen anything this special. This precious. This humbling.

When she was sated, he gathered her in his arms and lifted her to carry her back to bed.

As soon as they were settled on their sides, she snuggled into him. “I wish I could stay. I wish we were in our mid-twenties and I lived here and no one would judge us. I wish I could fall asleep in your arms and wake up at noon still pressed against you.”

“I do too, Little Lyla.” He stroked her cheek. God, he was already choking back the pain of parting from her. She wasn’t like other women. She was an old soul. She knew her mind. She also knew her kink and wasn’t denying it.

She was so perfect for him. If only she wasn’t eighteen.

Suddenly, she pushed to sitting and gave him a shove so he fell onto his back. He would never forget her devious grin and the mischief in her gaze. “My turn.”

He groaned and settled on his back. “Explore away, Little Lyla. I won’t stop you.”

As she turned her attention to his fully stiff cock, he set a hand on her back and stroked her soft skin. His focus shifted to her tits. They swayed as she settled onto her knees, grasped his erection, and lowered her lips to his dick.

Jesus. Fuck. He wasn’t sure he would live through this.

She licked the tip, making him flinch before she lifted her gaze to stare at him through the curtain of her hair. “I have no idea what I’m doing.”

He smoothed his palm up her back. “You do whatever feels right and nothing more. I don’t need your lips on my cock to feel fulfilled, babygirl. Kiss it. Lick it. Suck it if you want. Or none of that. Your choice.”

He meant every word. He didn't need her to suck his cock if she didn't want to. He knew deep in his soul his job was to please her, and pleasing her was the only thing that mattered. It fueled him and filled his soul.

When his Little girl wrapped her lips around his cock and lowered her head down to suck him in deep, he groaned. He was still human.

She even hollowed her cheeks as she rose up and down. She wasted no time, and she didn't need any instructions. Apparently, blow jobs were instinctive, or he'd given her enough advice to build her confidence.

Lyla was a dream. His own personal wet dream.

All too soon, he was on the edge, and he gripped her hair. "babygirl, I'm going to come. If you don't want to swallow me, you need to pull off."

She lowered farther, sucking him deeper, doing something wicked with her tongue that had his eyes rolling back.

That was it. He couldn't hold back another second. He came harder than ever, emptying his seed against his girl's throat. There were no words for what she did to him. She unmanned him. She made him whole. She filled a part of him he'd known for a long time needed to be fulfilled.

He'd watched her for two years, and now she was in his bed, his cock in her mouth. He'd never felt this kind of peace and contentment as she lifted her face and smiled at him. "Did I do it right?"

Chapter 9

“Regrets?” Rock asked.

“God no. But when will I see you again?” she asked in barely a whisper. Her heart felt like it was going to break in two as she clutched her stilettos and the teddy bear in one hand.

It was five o’clock in the morning. She was leaning against the side of her house next to the door. She knew she could easily slip in and sneak up to her room without anyone knowing, mostly because she’d never once broken a rule or done something like this. She didn’t even have a curfew because there had never been a need.

Rock crowded her. He had her pinned with his feet planted on either side of hers and his elbows next to her head against the brick. He kissed her behind her ear. “I don’t know, babygirl. I’ll be around this weekend some with your brother. I’ll find a way to pin you to a wall and steal a kiss,” he teased.

She swallowed. “But I mean like after you leave for your internship and I go to school.” Her knees were weak.

Most people would probably say she was far too young to feel the things she was feeling. They would also say Rock was.

But she knew better. She knew in her soul she would never in her life feel the things she'd experienced for the last six hours.

Rock set a hand on her chest between her breasts. The V of her dress allowed him to touch her bare skin. He set his forehead against hers and looked her in the eyes. "I can't predict the future, Little Lyla. But I do know you have to get your education and follow your dreams. I also know I will never leave this town. You will always be able to find me. We share a bond that will never be broken. One day our happily ever after will begin."

She swallowed back tears. "It already has, Daddy."

The End... For Now...

There's more!

Dear readers,

This is a prequel for Rock's second-chance romance which will be released as *Rock* in the *Shadowridge Guardians MC* series in 2025. *Shadowridge Guardians MC* is a collaborative effort between Pepper North, Kate Oliver, and Becca Jameson. It currently has three books available: *Steele*, *Kade*, and *Atlas*. Watch for more books coming soon!

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Love, Becca

About the Author

Becca Jameson is a USA Today bestselling author of over 140 books. She is most well-known for her Wolf Masters series, her Fight Club series, and her Surrender series. She currently lives in Houston, Texas, with her husband and a kitten. Two grown kids pop in every once in a while too! She is loving this journey and has dabbled in a variety of genres, including paranormal, sports romance, military, reverse harem, dark romance, Daddy Dom, and BDSM.

A total night owl, Becca writes late at night, sequestering herself in her office with a glass of red wine and a bar of dark chocolate, her fingers flying across the keyboard as her characters weave their own stories.

During the day—which never starts before ten in the morning!—she can be found walking, running errands, or reading in her favorite hammock chair!

...where Alphas dominate...

Find me on social media:

Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/beccajameson>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/becca.jameson.18>

Facebook Author page: <https://www.facebook.com/beccajameson4>

Facebook Fan Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BeccasBibliomaniacs/>

website: <http://beccajameson.com/>

twitter: <https://twitter.com/beccajameson>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/becca.jameson/>

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Chase by Kate Oliver

A MF story by Kate Oliver

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Chapter 1

Chase

“Please? Please, please, please? It’s my birthday, and you haven’t come to any of the family dinners I’ve invited you to, but you have to come since it’s my birthday.”

Chase sat back in his plush leather executive chair and barely resisted the urge to roll his eyes at his assistant. She was more than an assistant, really. She was one of the few people he considered a friend, and he *had* turned down her previous invites to the family dinners. What kind of monster would he be if he turned her down yet again, especially on her birthday? He might be a ruthless attorney, but he did have a soft spot for Ava. Well, truthfully, he had a soft spot for any Little who batted their eyelashes at him. And Ava was batting those lashes so hard he was afraid she was going to lift off the ground for take-off soon.

“Fine. I’ll go. What do you want for your birthday?”

Ava grinned. “A unicorn.”

This time he couldn’t resist the urge to shake his head and roll his eyes. This woman was the best assistant he’d ever had but she was also a handful. He’d known she was a Little when

he'd hired her since she belonged to one of his best, longtime friends, but what he hadn't known was how much she would keep him on his toes.

“Do you remember the last time you tried to get a unicorn?”

Even though he hadn't been there, he'd heard all the stories about the trip she and the rest of the family had made to Rawhide Ranch for the Fourth of July. From everything she'd told him, it had been a total fiasco. Glitter and butt plugs and pure freaking chaos.

“I got a plug in my butt,” she replied sheepishly, her cheeks turning bright pink.

“And I'm pretty sure you also had a red butt. So let's leave the unicorns where they belong and why don't you give me a better idea for a gift?”

All she did was shrug and skip out of his office. “Dinner is at six at our house! See you Sunday!”

After he heard Ava leave through the back door of the legal office where he spent at least sixty hours a week, Chase sat back and sighed. It wasn't that he didn't want to go to family dinners. He loved the Javier family. All of them would give the shirts off their backs to help someone and their Littles were just as adorable as could be.

Even though Chase hadn't been adopted into the family like most of the men, he'd still practically lived at the Javier home for his teenage years. But while most of those men had grown up in shitty circumstances, Chase had been privileged. Even though he came from a totally different world, they had never treated him differently and he loved them for that. After

all, just because you had money, it didn't always mean you were living happily.

Leo was their dad, and he had been more of a father to Chase than his own father. He respected and loved the entire family. Each man had found their woman, and he was happy for them. But going to family dinner, surrounded by nine couples while he was still single, just stung, so he'd avoided the dinners as much as possible.

For a while, it had been easy because he'd been so busy with work. But now that he'd brought another attorney into the firm, he had more free time than he was used to. Not that he worked any less. He still camped out at the office for a lot of late nights so he wouldn't have to go home. And since he really did consider Ava a friend, he was truly stuck going to her birthday dinner. It would be fine, though. He'd make an appearance, bring her a gift, eat, and make up an excuse to leave right afterward. Who knew, maybe he would enjoy being around a bunch of Littles for a few hours.

Chapter 2

Bella

“So, you’re coming on Sunday, right?”

Bella hugged Theo, her most favorite stuffed owl, to her chest and sighed. She knew she would hurt Ava’s feelings if she turned her down, but going to a birthday party wasn’t really something she felt like doing. Not that she didn’t love parties normally, because she did. Especially Little parties. But with everything that had been going on, she wasn’t sure if she’d be able to really enjoy herself. Little Space had been more difficult to fall into lately.

“I know you’re sad and stressed about this divorce and your asshole of an ex-husband, but you can’t continue to let him get to you. You’ve been split up for nearly a year and he’s been fighting with you that entire time. You deserve to have some fun. Besides, we’re having unicorn cupcakes with glitter on the frosting! How can you say no to glitter unicorn cupcakes?” Ava asked.

A smile pulled at Bella’s lips. Glitter unicorn cupcakes did sound yummy. And she really did need to stop letting Jared control her emotions. She’d moved out of their house nine

months ago, and they'd been fighting in court the entire time but the low blow he'd pulled this past week had really affected her.

“Also, the lawyer I work for is going to stop by too, so you can meet him. I know he'll be willing to help you. You can trust him. He's a great lawyer and he can be totally ruthless in court. Jared won't stand a chance against him.”

Bella wished she had met Ava sooner. Maybe she could have hired the woman's boss to be her legal representative instead of the weasel of a lawyer she'd hired in the first place. Said weasel was now suddenly working for Jared. If she hadn't been paying such close attention, she probably would have lost everything because he'd tried to sabotage her and get her to sign over nearly all of her trust fund to the man who emotionally abused her for years.

When she had met Ava at The Playground a few months ago, they'd clicked instantly and become fast friends. From day one, they'd texted every day and met at the BDSM club every week for a playdate. Now Bella considered Ava to be her bestie. Ava had been a sounding board over the past five months, and never once made Bella feel like she was too much to deal with.

“Yes, okay. I'll come. Send me the address. What should I wear?”

Ava giggled. “Wear anything you want. I'm wearing a pink dress that has a super fluffy tulle skirt and matching ballet flats. And a tiara.”

“So you're dressing Little? What about everyone else?” Bella asked nervously.

“They’ll all be dressed Little too. We’re gonna have games and stuff too. It’s gonna be soooo fun. You’re gonna love it,” Ava replied, clearly in Little Space.

“What about your boss? Will he think it’s weird?”

That question made Ava snort. “No. Chase works with me. He’s used to my antics.”

Her friend’s reassurance made her feel better. And if the lawyer was only going to stop by, he probably wouldn’t stay long. She’d choose a dress that would make her feel Little without being too obvious. If the guy was going to represent her, she wanted him to respect her as an adult. She could fake it. Maybe. Hopefully. It would be hard, especially since her Little side peeked out involuntarily whenever she was feeling anxious, but it would be fine. She was sure of it. Even if she had to keep chanting it in her head until she actually believed it.

Chapter 3

Chase

Sunday rolled around much too quickly. He'd spent Saturday shopping, trying to figure out what to get Ava for her birthday. After going to five different toy stores around Seattle, he found the perfect thing. He couldn't wait to see what the brat had to say when she saw it.

After parking along the curb in front of Colt and Ava's house, Chase got out of the car and smiled when he heard Ava squeal as she ran down the driveway toward him, her frilly dress flowing in the wind along with her hair.

"You came! I didn't think you would actually show up. I was going to tell Daddy to kick your ass if you didn't, though. Did you get me a unicorn?"

He raised one of his eyebrows at her, giving her a stern look. "Are you allowed to say curse words?"

Ava blushed as she threaded her fingers together nervously. "No, but you won't tell on me because you love me too much. And you're just trying to avoid the question. When is my unicorn arriving?"

It was obvious she was deeply submersed in Little Space, which was just fine with him. She was a fun Little, and though she mostly stayed professional at the office, he enjoyed the times he got to see her other side peek out. Although, she could also be quite sassy when she was regressed.

When she started bouncing up and down on her toes, he couldn't resist popping the hatch of his SUV to reveal the enormous stuffed unicorn he'd found for her. It wasn't just large. It was so big, he'd had to flatten and stuff it into his trunk and slam the door closed before it re-fluffed and popped out. The second Ava saw the pink fur, she let out a high-pitched squeal.

“What are you screaming about out here?” Colt asked as he walked down the driveway.

Chase smirked at his friend, waiting for him to see the stuffed toy. The second Colt caught a glimpse of it, his eyes darted to Chase with a glare.

“What the hell? Dude! Why would you buy her a toy the size of my house?” Colt demanded.

Chase knew that even though Colt was trying to sound mad, he wasn't. Colt would give Ava the moon if she asked for it.

Ava grabbed the unicorn out of the SUV and scurried up toward the house. The stuffie was so big, part of it was dragging on the ground as she struggled to carry it. It made him smile as he watched her. When Colt slapped him on the back, he turned his attention to his friend.

“You know I'm going to get you back for this one day, right?” Colt asked.

Yeah, he knew. But it didn't matter. It was just how Chase, Colt, and the rest of the family did things. They talked shit, pulled pranks, fought, and irritated each other at times but no matter what, there was always love between them.

“She got her unicorn, though.”

Colt grinned and nodded. “Yeah. She did. Maybe now she'll stop asking me for one. Come on, let's go inside. Just a warning, the girls are all in Little Space, high on sugar, and it's loud and wild in there.”

Chase chuckled and nodded as he followed Colt, the noise of squeals and laughter filling his ears before he even stepped in the door. Colt was right. It was loud.

The next few minutes were spent hugging the men he considered his brothers. Unlike Chase, they were all covered in tattoos and looked intimidating as hell to the outside world. What most people didn't know was that the men could be ruthless when needed but inside, they were all a bunch of marshmallows.

Beau was Leo's only biological son. Knox, Ash, Wolf, Colt, Hawk, Maddox, and Angel had all been adopted into the family at some point in their teenage years. All of the men Leo had brought in had been through some sort of hell, but because of the life Leo and his late wife Sophia had given them, they'd all turned out to be wonderful human beings. Even if they did skirt the law. Chase knew they did it for good reason, which was the only reason he never asked questions or got involved unless absolutely necessary. There had been a time or two that he'd helped his brothers out of jams and even though it had gone against the oath he'd taken when he'd passed the bar exam, he would do it again in a heartbeat for any of these men.

Chase approached Leo, who was standing at the counter, and gave him a back-slapping hug before turning to the man next to him and holding his hand out. “Dr. Gillespie, good to see you again.”

Tate Gillespie had become friends with the family a few years before when his daughter had been kidnapped. The Javier men had found her and made the people who hurt her pay dearly.

“Nice to see you, Chase. I’ve been meaning to make an appointment with you. I need to get my will updated,” Tate said with a grin.

He raised an eyebrow, and when Tate pointed, his gaze followed to a small woman sitting on her knees at the coffee table playing a board game with Ash’s Little girl. A grin spread as he looked back at Tate and nodded. “Congratulations. Of course, just give me a call.”

Tate nodded and chuckled when Ava came bounding toward them, skidding to a halt on her socked feet.

“Ava! No running!” Colt boomed.

She rolled her eyes and grinned mischievously. “Sorry, Daddy!”

There was no doubt in Chase’s mind that she was absolutely not sorry, but he didn’t call her out.

“Chase, I want you to come meet my friend. She could use your help and I told her she can trust you,” Ava said as she grabbed his arm and started tugging.

His eyebrows furrowed as he let himself be pulled toward the back door. “What do you mean she needs my help?”

For the first time since he'd arrived, something besides excitement crossed Ava's face. Anger and sadness.

“She's been going through a divorce for a year. Her husband is a real twat-waffle and he's being really mean to her. Like *really* mean. Her previous attorney screwed her over and now she's not sure what to do.”

He'd ignore the twat-waffle comment and come back to that later. He was too busy feeling his own blood get hot. Divorces weren't typically his specialty, but he hated men who treated women poorly. His father was one of those men. He thought women were disposable possessions to use and abuse as he saw fit. It was the reason Chase hadn't spoken to the man since he'd left for college on a full-ride scholarship. He hadn't wanted a dime of his father's money once he was an adult.

Ava led him out to the back patio where torches lit the space, along with a gas fireplace. Several Littles were playing hopscotch on a chalk-drawn course. When his eyes landed on the only Little he didn't recognize, his world stopped, and time stood completely still.

Chapter 4

Bella

It was hard not to be sucked into the magic of the day at Colt and Ava's. There were games everywhere, snacks, desserts, candy, soda, movies, toys, balloons, and just about anything else you could imagine for a birthday party. The house looked like a tornado of pink had blown through. Add in ten other excited Littles, and Bella was having the best time.

When she'd first shown up, she was so nervous that she'd sat in her car trying to give herself a pep talk. The thing about being married to an emotionally abusive asshole was at some point, you start believing all the negative things that were said to you. Even a year later, she was still affected by his cruel words.

Ava had finally bounded out of the house and practically dragged Bella inside. She'd make sure to thank her friend later because if that hadn't happened, she was pretty sure she would have backed out and gone home. All of Ava's friends were so sweet and fun and treated her like she was part of their friend group from the second she'd walked in. Which was why she

was waiting for Lucy to finish her turn at hopscotch so she could go next.

Just as she was getting ready to go, the hair on the back of her neck stood up and goosebumps flared over her skin. The feeling of someone watching her had her turning around to see who it was. A set of steel-gray eyes was practically burning through her and she didn't feel like she could breathe.

“Bella!” Ava called, waving her over.

It was at least thirty seconds before she could get her feet to move. With each step closer to the intimidating man, her heart rate kicked up another notch. When she reached Ava, Bella had to crane her neck just to look up at the man. Everyone was tall compared to her five-foot frame, but he seemed much more imposing. She guessed he was at least six-foot-three or more.

“Bella, this is my boss, Chase. Chase, this is my friend, Bella. Bella's going through a divorce and she could really use a lawyer to help her...”

She stopped hearing whatever Ava was saying as she peered up at the man. He was the most gorgeous creature she'd ever seen. Besides his height, he had the most interesting eyes and a chiseled jaw that she was pretty sure could cut stone. His dark brown hair was tousled perfectly, with some silver mixed in at his temples. She let her eyes wander down to his chest and had to remind herself to take a breath. The navy-blue T-shirt looked soft and was tight enough she could see the lines of his muscled chest.

God, Chase was a freaking sight to see. She could have stared at him all day. Unlike Ava's Daddy, his arms weren't completely covered in tattoos. Instead, she only saw a half sleeve poking out from his shirt and she had to force herself

not to reach out and push that sleeve back so she could run her fingers over the ink and examine every inch of it.

“Bella? You okay?”

The feel of Ava’s hand on her arm made her startle slightly and she hoped he hadn’t noticed her staring. How embarrassing!

“What? Yeah, I’m good. What were you saying?” Bella asked.

Ava gave her a smug smile that told Bella her friend knew she was staring. “I was saying that Chase has an opening on Monday morning if you’d like to come in to talk about what’s been going on.”

Her eyes traveled up that muscular chest until she met his eyes, which were pinned to her face with an unreadable expression that made her squirm.

“Bella, it’s nice to meet you,” he said, holding out his hand.

That squirmy feeling had only intensified at his voice. Her nipples hardened and she was thankful her bra had enough padding to hide her aching peaks.

She wondered if she had drool coming out of her mouth as she stared at his enormous hand. It was one of those manly hands that you could tell he used for more than just office work. She wondered what he did to get the light callouses on his palms. Then she wondered what those palms would feel like on her bottom.

Ava’s shoulder bumping into hers made her realize she was still staring at his hand instead of shaking it. She was thankful for her friend’s silent shove so she wouldn’t embarrass herself more than she already was.

“It’s nice to meet you too,” she said as she slid her fingers into his grasp.

If it were possible to get an electrical shock from a person, she was pretty sure Chase was shocking the hell out of her based on the zing running through her entire body. Holy crap! That touch was...just wow. Suddenly she wasn’t as worried about the possibility of drool as she was about the wetness between her thighs. She was concerned it might soak through her panties and run down her leg.

“Monday would be great. Bring any documentation you have, and we’ll go through it,” Chase said as he kept his hold on her hand.

Sheesh, she was going to start panting if he didn’t let go soon. The man was sex on a stick. A very yummy stick.

Thankfully, one of the men in the house called his name, and he quickly excused himself. But not before giving her one of the most breathtaking smiles she’d ever seen.

“See you Monday, then, Bella,” he said before disappearing into the house.

Her eyes felt like they were going to pop out of her head as she turned to Ava, who was grinning like a fool.

“You never told me you work for a sex god,” she murmured.

Ava burst out laughing and wrapped her arms around Bella’s neck. “What, and ruin the fun that I just had watching you salivate over him?”

Bella closed her eyes and sighed. “Oh my God, I’m so embarrassed.”

“I was kidding. You were fine. Chase is like the nicest guy ever. Except in the courtroom. He scares the poop out of me when I watch him in court. Plus, he’s good friends with my Daddy, so you can trust him.”

That made her snort. “Yeah. I trusted Jared and look how that blew up in my face.”

Ava took her by the hand and led her back over to the hopscotch course. “Yeah, well, Jared is an idiot. Chase really is a good man. Colt wouldn’t be friends with someone who wasn’t, and he certainly wouldn’t let me work for him if he were a bad guy. Chase will help you. Just give him a chance and enjoy the gorgeous sights to be seen while doing it.”

The wink Ava gave her made her giggle and shake her head. “You’re a dork.”

Her friend shrugged and smiled. “I know. Now, back to having fun. Do you need a spare change of panties before we hopscotch?”

Bella burst out laughing, covering her face as she was pretty sure it turned beet red. She really did need a change of panties, but she wasn’t going to admit that to Ava. Instead, she shook her head and tried to bite back the grin that was plastered on her face.

Addie and Emma joined them then, and Bella was so thankful she could have hugged the women as they took the attention off her and started a new game of hopscotch with the four of them.

When it came to her turn, she slipped right back into the headspace she’d been in before meeting the sex god and started hopping through each box until she reached the end. Ava was jumping up and down excitedly as she crossed the

finish line. It was the best feeling having friends again. Jared had taken everything from her, but she was slowly rebuilding and she vowed to never let a man take anything from her ever again.

As Addie started her trip through the hopscotch squares, Bella looked toward the house. Her breath caught again as she met those steel-gray eyes. They were locked on her and though he was nodding at whatever Colt had just told him, he seemed to be focused completely on her. It made her feel squirmy again.

Ava leaned over and whispered, “By the way, he’s a Daddy. A very single Daddy.”

Her heart beat hard inside her chest but she just scoffed. “So? That has nothing to do with me.”

Ava giggled. “Okay, whatever you say. Might want to wipe the drool off your chin, though.”

She reached up to wipe her chin but thankfully it was dry. Ava burst into a fit of giggles as she skipped off toward the backyard play structure.

Chapter 5

Chase

It had been the longest weekend he could ever remember. And that had only been from Saturday night—when he'd left Colt's house—until Monday morning. He was dying to see Bella again. It was nearly ten at night by the time he'd left, and the only reason then was because Colt was having the girls get their pajamas on before he turned on a movie for them. It was a slumber party, after all.

Even though he hadn't talked to Bella after they'd been introduced, he'd watched her. Like a moth to a flame, his eyes found her wherever she was. He felt bad because he knew she could tell he was watching her and he was pretty sure she was trying not to show her Little side to him. Not when he was about to become her attorney. Not that it mattered. Just because someone was a Little, they weren't any less of a woman or man. It was just another side to who they were. Like he was both a lawyer and a Daddy. He wished she'd understood that. But that's why he'd kept his distance for the rest of the night. He had wanted her to enjoy her time with her friends submerged in a fun headspace.

To his surprise, there hadn't been any wild shenanigans at the party. The Littles seemed to be on their best behavior, which was a miracle when it came to all of them together.

Since he hadn't been able to sleep much the night before, he'd come into the office around five in the morning just so he wouldn't have to sit around his empty house until a reasonable hour. It was nearly eight when Ava walked in, and he'd already had four cups of coffee.

"Morning, boss!" she sang out as she set everything down at her desk just outside his office door.

"Good morning, Ava. All recovered from your sugar high?"

She giggled and sat in one of the chairs in front of his desk. "Yep. Colt made me nap twice yesterday and I'm grounded from sweets for a week."

The pouty look on her face made him chuckle. "Grounded, huh?"

Her head bobbed up and down. "Yeah. Well, we're all grounded from sweets. Daddy found our secret candy stash in one of the sleeping bags. He's such a meanie-head."

Chase leaned his head down, pinching the bridge of his nose as he tried to hold back his laughter. He should have known it was too good to be true that they hadn't gotten in trouble all night.

"Did you have a good birthday? Despite being grounded?"

Ava's eyes lit up as she nodded. "The best. I'm so glad you came. Did you like Bella? She's really nice, right? And pretty. Isn't she pretty?"

Yeah, he was sure there was still sugar coursing through his assistant's veins. And yeah, Bella was nice. Although pretty was an understatement. She wasn't pretty. She was the most beautiful woman he'd ever laid eyes on. Piercing blue irises and long blond hair with lips that he wanted to run the pad of his thumb over. There was such a sweet innocence about her that made every protective instinct in him come to life. And her curves had made his mouth water. Soft was the word that came to mind when he looked at her body. Big breasts, thick legs, and, if he were to guess, under that baby-doll dress, she probably had a round bottom and soft tummy too. Not that he was about to tell his assistant all of that.

"She was fine. So tell me about her case," he said as nonchalantly as he could.

Ava stared at him for a long moment before she rolled her eyes and sighed. "I never met her ex-husband. They were already in the process of the divorce when she and I met at The Playground. From what she's told me about him, he's a real twat-waffle."

This time he couldn't ignore it. "What exactly is a twat-waffle, Ava?"

The corners of her lips pulled back as she shrugged. "I don't know. It's a funny word but it's not a curse word so Daddy can't wash my mouth out with soap when I say it."

He pinched the bridge of his nose again and took a deep, cleansing breath before he motioned for her to go on. This woman was a freaking handful and he really needed to send Colt a bottle of expensive scotch to congratulate him for dealing with her naughty ass day in and day out. He could only imagine how naughty she'd be if she didn't have a Daddy giving her the rules and boundaries she so obviously needed.

“Anyway, he’s pretty mean to her. He calls her names and he’s a real jerk. When we first met, she was so quiet and afraid to even play with me because she thought I wouldn’t like her. She’s getting better but she still has a lot of insecurities that I’m pretty sure he caused.”

His hand tightened into a fist as he listened. He hated the fucker already. Anyone who could put down a woman, treat her like shit, say horrible things to her, and God knows what else, deserved the karma that he would make sure came to the guy.

Before Ava could tell him anything else, the front door of the office opened, and he knew without being able to see her that Bella had just walked in. Ava rose from her seat and walked out to reception. She squealed and giggled as she hugged her friend.

“Chase is right through here. Do you want coffee or tea?” Ava offered.

Bella shook her head and said something softly that only Ava could hear. Ava smiled and nodded and motioned for Bella to go in. She was looking down at the floor when she crossed the threshold of his office, and he so badly wanted to go to her and cup her chin so she was forced to look up and see the bright future she had in front of her away from the asshole who made her feel so insecure. But instead, he stood from his chair and held his hand toward the open chair in front of his desk. “Have a seat, Bella.”

She looked adorable. Even though she’d dressed a bit more sophisticated than she had for the party, there was still the Little side of her that was peeking out. From her pastel pink nail polish to the tiny plush toy hanging from her purse. He loved seeing both sides of her.

“I’ll just be right outside if you need me. Don’t worry, Bella. Chase is on the case!” Ava said as she started to close his office door, giving him a dramatic wink before she let the door latch.

Good lord. He was in so much trouble.

Chapter 6

Bella

If she had thought Chase McGuire looked hot in jeans and a T-shirt, she hadn't prepared herself for him in his custom-fitted suit. The man filled it out like a glove and she was staring at him like a silly love-stricken girl. But dang. Did he swoon every morning when he looked at himself in the mirror? Because she knew if she looked like that as a man, she'd definitely swoon over herself.

When she realized he'd asked her something, she shook her head and blinked. "I'm sorry. What was that?"

He smiled at her knowingly. Surely he was used to women ogling him like he was their most favorite dessert.

"I asked if I could see the information you brought."

Oh, right. She wasn't there to gawk at him all morning. The man probably had a million better things to do with his time.

"I brought everything I have. I kept records for our entire marriage and copies of everything since I first filed for divorce."

Approval was written all over his face as she handed him the thick folder of paperwork.

“Smart girl,” he said softly.

She could feel a blush rise over her cheeks. Jared had told her she was stupid and dumb. He’d never called her smart. Now this man, who was virtually a stranger, was complimenting her over some silly pieces of paper, and it was doing strange things to her. She had a feeling she might need to start bringing a change of panties with her whenever she met with him.

Chase opened the folder and spent several minutes flipping through papers. As he read, his expression morphed into a frown and then a pure scowl that was quite frightening. It was also really hot.

“He’s a bastard,” he murmured.

She gasped, and he glanced up, his expression softening a bit. “Sorry. But he is. Your trust fund is yours. He’s not going to get a fucking dime from it. I assure you that. The other attorney you were dealing with is a snake and I can’t wait to see him in court.”

“You think I have a chance?”

He nodded and gave her a reassuring smile. “Oh, yeah. We’re going to sink both of them. I need some time to go over all your paperwork and get a new proposal drawn up. I should be done by tomorrow. When is your next court date?”

“On Friday, but I can request an extension if you need more time to prepare,” she offered.

Chase shook his head. “Nope. I’ll be ready on Friday. You’ll be divorced by the end of the day with your entire trust fund intact.”

Even she knew that was unlikely, but she appreciated his confidence because it helped make her feel more confident too. “Thank you. I know you took me on without notice. Just bill me whatever for your time. Ava raved about you, and she said I could trust you.”

He rose from his chair and walked around to the front of his desk, leaning against it, and she had to crane her neck to look up at him. She couldn't help but notice how perfectly level her face was with his crotch. It took a ridiculous amount of strength not to reach out to see what he was working with. The thought alone made her eyes widen and she was pretty sure she was blushing from head to toe.

Suddenly, he lowered himself to a squat and they were almost eye level with one another. “I'm not charging you anything. I hate men like Jared, and I despise crooked lawyers who take advantage of their clients.”

It was hard not to fidget in her chair with those intense eyes of his staring at her like she was the most interesting thing in the world.

“Thank you. I have the money to pay you, though. I don't want you to sacrifice your income for me.”

He smiled, causing the corners of his eyes to crinkle slightly. It felt like a cage full of butterflies was released in her tummy in response.

“I'm not sacrificing anything, honey. I'm doing this because I want to. I have plenty of money. Being able to bury them in court will be reward enough for me.”

For the first time in months, Bella felt a genuine smile spread over her face. Even if Chase weren't the hottest guy she'd ever laid eyes on, she was pretty sure he'd still be the

most attractive to her because he seemed as though he was a genuinely good man. “Thank you, Chase.”

“You’re welcome, little one. I can have Ava swing by your house tomorrow to have you sign all the paperwork. I’ll file it immediately, and your ex and his lawyer will be sent all the updated documents. Then, Saturday, we celebrate. Sound good?”

Well, the celebration part sounded good. Although her idea of celebrating with Chase didn’t include clothes. It *did* include lots of orgasms. She was pretty sure he wasn’t referring to that kind of celebration, though. A man like him was sure to have women crawling all over him. Just because he was a Daddy didn’t mean he would want someone like her. She wasn’t college educated and she didn’t have a fancy career. Two of the things Jared had made her feel completely inadequate over.

“Sounds great,” she whispered.

He nodded and stared at her for a moment before he rose to his full, towering height, causing her breath to hitch as her face was once again level with his crotch. She wondered what he was packing in there. Was it big? Long and veiny or thick and smooth? So many questions swirled, and when he cleared his throat, she startled and realized just how inappropriate she was being.

“Right, well, I should stop taking up all of your time.” She stood, but Chase hadn’t moved, and suddenly they were very close to each other and his cologne was surrounding her. How could a man smell so lickable?

“Here’s my card. It has my cell number on it. I want you to call me if you need anything, Bella. I mean anything at all, day or night, okay?”

As he passed the card to her, their fingers connected and that electricity she'd felt the first time they'd touched was more like a bolt of lightning through her body this time. It was obvious that Chase McGuire was a potent man, and even though she assumed she wasn't his type, she hoped one day she'd find a man that gave her the same feelings as he did from just his touch.

"Thank you," she murmured as she hesitantly pulled her hand away from his.

"You're welcome. I'll be in touch with you in a day or two and I'll have Ava get a hold of you tomorrow so she can bring by the paperwork."

"Okay. Bye."

He smiled down at her as she turned to leave. "Bye, little one."

Chapter 7

Chase

As soon as Bella left his office, he picked up his phone.

“Ava, clear my schedule for the day,” he called out as he scrolled through his contacts.

Colt answered almost immediately. “Hey. Is Ava okay?”

He smiled at the protectiveness of his friend. He also felt a pang of jealousy that Colt had someone to be so protective over. “She’s fine. Although twat-waffle seems to be a new favorite term of hers.”

There was a moment of silence before Colt sighed. “I’m really going to have to start spanking her ass more. I’ve told her to stop saying that.”

Somehow Chase was pretty sure even if Colt started spanking her more, she’d still be just as sassy.

“Anyway, I need a favor. I need to know anything and everything you can find out about Jared McCallister and I need the information as quickly as possible,” Chase added.

Almost instantly, he could hear Colt typing on the other end of the phone at the same time Ava popped her head into

his office.

“Your schedule is cleared,” she said.

He nodded and smiled. “Good. I’m on the phone with your Daddy. He’s unimpressed with twat-waffle.”

The look on her face made him chuckle and then she stuck her tongue out at him and huffed before going back to her desk. He’d really enjoyed that. Getting the brat back for all the sass she’d thrown his way since she’d started working for him.

“I’ll see what I can find and give you a call back,” Colt said.

“Thanks.”

After spending the entire day going through all the documents she’d brought in and reviewing the case files, he decided he hated the fucker she was married to. The guy had never deserved a woman as sweet and soft as her.

He was looking forward to Ava getting the papers signed and filing them so they got sent to that asshole. Jared McCallister was in for a big surprise. The information Colt had found on him had proved to be invaluable.

His phone buzzed on his bedside table the next morning and he saw Ava’s name on the screen.

“Hey, Ava.”

“Hey, boss,” she said, her voice raspy.

He furrowed his eyebrows. “What’s wrong?”

“I’m sick. I woke up with a head cold and Daddy’s making me stay home.”

Considering how overprotective his friend was, Chase was surprised he hadn’t already taken her to a doctor. “Okay. Get some rest. Can you text Bella and ask if I can stop by in an hour to have her sign the paperwork?”

Ava sniffled. It was quite disgusting but it made him smile anyway.

“Yep. I just texted her and I’ll text you when she responds.”

“Great. Thanks. Just rest and get better,” he said before ending the call.

Within a few minutes, he got a text from Ava saying that Bella was expecting him at her townhouse within the hour. House calls weren’t usually something he did but since Bella told him she worked at home, there was no reason for her to have to drive across town to his office when he would already be out. At least that’s what he told himself.

Nearly an hour later, he pulled up in front of a quaint townhome that was in a decent part of town. He was relieved about that. He liked knowing she was living somewhere safe. Not that it was really any of his business, but he kind of *wanted* to make it his business.

He only had to wait a few seconds after knocking on her door before she answered and a look of surprise crossed her puffy, red face. She’d been crying and he was ready to kill whoever caused that.

“What’s wrong, little one?”

“What are you doing here?” she asked at the same time.

Without thinking, he stepped forward, crowding her space, but he wanted to pick her up and hold her so he could make her feel better.

“Didn’t Ava text you and tell you I was coming?” he asked.

Bella sniffled and shook her head. “She said she’d be here in an hour.”

Freaking Ava. The brat. It didn’t matter. He’d deal with her later. His main concern was the sad Little girl standing in front of him.

“Can I come in?”

Her eyes widened slightly but she nodded and stepped back, allowing him inside. As soon as the door was closed, he turned and hovered over her until her back was pressed against the wall. He reached out with his free hand and cupped her chin, examining her face.

“Who made you cry?” he demanded.

Fresh tears filled her eyes, and he couldn’t stand it another second. He dropped the papers on the entryway table and scooped her up in his arms before he carried her deeper into the home.

“Chase?” she asked with alarm.

As soon as they were in the living room, he sat down on the couch and settled her on his lap. He was crossing a line and he knew it, but his Daddy instincts were taking over. Even if the sweet Little girl he was holding wasn’t interested in him in that way, he still wanted to comfort her.

“Why are you crying, baby?”

She tucked her chin to her chest and leaned against him so he couldn't see her face. Normally he would demand eye contact, but he would allow her to hide for the moment.

“He’s just so mean. He won’t stop harassing me and I try to stay strong, but it wears on me,” she said softly.

Chase tightened his arms around her and leaned back on the couch, pulling her with him so he could rock her. He was pretty sure her Little age was quite young and he wondered if she had something like a pacifier or blanket that would help soothe her.

“Did he call you this morning?”

She nodded and hiccupped. “Yeah. He was screaming at me about signing off on the divorce papers.”

It was difficult not to let out a string of curse words and threats, but he held it in. He didn't want to upset Bella more than she already was. Instead, he stroked his hand over her back and cuddled her.

“It’s going to be okay, baby.”

Several minutes passed before she sat up and looked at him with a quizzical expression. “Why are you holding me?”

He offered her a smile and reached up to stroke his thumb over her wet cheeks. “Because I can’t help myself. You’re sweet and adorable, not to mention smart and brave, and I’m drawn to you. I want to Daddy you and take care of you. It’s okay if you don’t feel the same way. I’ll still bury your asshole ex in court.”

Chapter 8

Bella

He wanted her? What? Seriously?

Was she dreaming? Or had she fallen and hit her head? But this felt very real. The way she felt about *him* felt very real. Even though she didn't really know Chase, she had a feeling about him that she'd never had with Jared.

Absently, she reached out and tucked her fingers into the collar of his button-down shirt, twisting nervously. When she realized what she was doing and that she was causing wrinkles, she snatched her hand back. "I'm sorry."

Chase smiled and pulled her hand back to the collar of his shirt. "Don't be sorry, baby. If twisting your fingers in my shirt is soothing for you, I want you to do it."

Huh. That was different. Jared had freaked out on her when she'd done that one time when she'd been afraid of a thunderstorm.

"I don't want to wrinkle it," she said hesitantly.

His warm hand cupped her chin, and when she raised her gaze to meet his, she felt warmth spread through her.

“I don’t give a fuck if you wrinkle my shirt. If it comforts you, I want you to do it. Understand?”

Well, hell.

She nodded and slid her fingers back around the fabric, twisting it gently as she tried to figure out what she wanted to say. “I... um, are you sure you like me?”

Those steel-gray eyes darkened as he stared at her and tilted his head slightly. “I don’t like that you’re doubting it. Yes. I am absolutely positive. I haven’t stopped thinking about you since Saturday.”

Wow.

She was pretty sure her cheeks were bright pink. They certainly felt like they were on fire. “Oh.”

He chuckled. “Is that a good oh, or a bad oh?”

“A good one.”

“Yeah?” he asked hopefully.

“Yes. I mean, I’ve been thinking of you too. I think Ava was trying to play matchmaker.”

A devastatingly sexy smile crossed his face. “I think so too. Not that I’m complaining.”

“Me either.”

“Are you working today?” he asked.

She shook her head. “Not really.”

“You edit books, right?”

“Yeah. I’m freelance, though, so I run my own business.”

The look on his face was more impressed than anything, something else completely different from how Jared reacted to

her job. Her ex had always made fun of it, saying how he thought it was ridiculous that she read books for a living.

“That’s impressive. I knew you were smart.”

“Thank you,” she barely squeaked out.

“I have a couple of things to do at the office this morning, but would you like to do something this afternoon? We could go to the aquarium?”

Excitement bubbled in her tummy. “There’s a baby sea otter there!”

Chase chuckled. “I’ll take that as a yes. You like otters?”

She nodded. “They’re my favorite. They’re so cute and I just wanna squish their cute little faces.”

Her Little was so close to the surface, which was both unexpected and welcome. She just hoped he didn’t mind. The look on his face made it seem like he didn’t mind one bit.

“Well, I don’t know that they’ll let us squish their faces, but we can definitely go see them. How about I pick you up at noon and we’ll get lunch before we go?”

She was practically wiggling with excitement as she bobbed her head. “Okay!”

“Do you need help picking out an outfit?”

That question made her feel so small, and she wondered if he had any idea what he was doing to her. As much as she would love a Daddy to choose her clothes, she wasn’t quite ready for him to see all of her Little stuff in her room. It would give away just how Little she was and she wanted to get a gauge on what kind of Little he wanted her to be first.

“I can do it.”

He smiled and nodded. “Okay. Choose something comfortable. You can be Little or big when we go but I’d love to see you Little. It’s up to you, though, babygirl.”

As soon as Chase left, she went into her room and spent the next hour digging through her clothes, trying to find the perfect outfit. Never in her life had she been so excited about a date. Wait, was it a date? Or was he just taking her out because he felt bad that Jared had upset her? He *had* told her he’d been thinking about her, though, so surely it was a date.

After narrowing her outfit choices down to three different dresses, she took a shower, shaved from head to toe, then used her favorite exfoliating peach body wash. By the time she got out of the shower, she was smooth all over and smelled like peaches and vanilla. With a towel wrapped around her, Bella stood in front of the steamed-up mirror and took her time applying light makeup and styling her hair.

Chase had told her he would love for her to go to the aquarium in her Little Space, which excited her and made her a bit nervous. Jared had never wanted her to be Little in public. Even the times they’d gone out of town on vacation where no one would know them, he’d told her no. She’d never used her pacifier or sippy cup in public, but there’d been a part of her that had always wanted to go out and do Little activities while being in that head space.

Questions swirled in her mind as she got ready. Was it too soon to date? Would Chase still like her when he realized just how Little she was? Was he looking for a Little girl of his own or did he just want something casual? Of course, her overthinking caused her anxiety to spike and suddenly she

wasn't so sure going out with him was a good idea. She moved over to the toilet and sat down on top of the closed lid, her shoulders slumped as she nibbled on her lower lip until she tasted blood.

Even though she'd left Jared a year ago, their marriage had been over for two years or more. They hadn't even had sex for a year and a half before she'd left. Whenever she'd tried to initiate it, he'd always acted like he was too tired. When he'd started coming home smelling like perfume that was definitely not hers, she'd stopped trying. Why she'd stayed for as long as she had, she had no idea. Probably because she hadn't wanted to be alone. Even though she'd felt completely alone during her marriage, she still had someone in the house with her... someone to talk to.

The past year had taught her a lot of things. One of those things was that being alone wasn't as lonely as she'd thought it would be. She'd been able to be more authentically herself without him there, and that had made her happier than she'd felt in years. Would Chase want her to be authentically herself, though?

A knock at her front door made her eyes widen and she realized she'd been sitting on the toilet overthinking things for much longer than she should have. In a panic, she rushed out of the bathroom toward the front door and through the peephole, saw Chase standing on the other side.

She cracked the door open and looked out at him. He had a stuffed otter in his hand, and she practically swooned when he smiled at her, but as soon as he saw her, his eyebrows furrowed.

“You okay, Bella?”

She hesitated slightly before opening the door wider while she held onto her towel with the other hand. “Sorry. I got distracted. I just need to put on some clothes.”

He tilted his head, and it seemed as though he wanted to say something, but he held out the stuffed toy for her instead. “I thought you might like to bring a friend to the aquarium with you.”

The otter was incredibly soft, and she couldn’t help the smile that spread across her face as she held it to her chest. “Thank you. You can come in and wait while I get dressed if you’d like.”

Fifteen minutes later, they were walking out to his car. She had chosen a blue cotton dress that landed mid-thigh, with long sleeves, and she paired it with a pair of ballet flats. The otter, which she decided to name Ozzy, was clutched in one arm while her miniature backpack purse was slung over the other shoulder.

Chase opened the door to his SUV, and when she climbed inside, she was surprised as he reached for the seatbelt and buckled her in before closing her into the car. His scent surrounded her, and she almost wished she’d worn a pull-up instead of panties so she wouldn’t have to walk around wearing soaked underwear all day.

As they drove through the streets of Seattle, she worried her bottom lip some more.

“Want to tell me what those distressing thoughts you’re having are, little one?”

She glanced over at him and wondered how he knew. Was she that obvious? Gosh, he probably thought she was a fool.

“Ummm...”

He glanced at her with a stern expression before looking back at the road. “I should tell you now that lying to this Daddy isn’t something that will ever be allowed, so truth, please.”

The steel in his voice told her he was absolutely serious.

“I just don’t want to do anything to embarrass or disgust you,” she blurted out.

Within seconds, Chase had the SUV pulled over at the side of the road and he was turned toward her. “Where would you even get the idea that you could possibly embarrass me or disgust me?”

She was more than thankful for having Ozzy the Otter in her hands right then because the way Chase was looking at her was making her feel squirmy.

“Jared never wanted me to be Little in public. I don’t know how you want me to act and I don’t want to do something stupid and scare you away and I don’t even know if this is a date or not and what if I say something dumb or—”

The warmth of his hand covered one of hers, giving it a slight squeeze as he cut her off, “Okay, calm down, little one. Take a breath. Look at me, please.”

After hesitating for a few seconds, she raised her gaze to his and found nothing but warmth and reassurance looking back at her instead of judgment or annoyance.

“First of all, this is very much a date. If you want it to be. I want to date you. I’m a man who knows what I like and what I want, and I like you and I want you. We can move as quickly or slowly as you want. I’m forty years old and I’ve been waiting to find my perfect Little. As ridiculous as it sounds saying this so soon, I think you might be her.”

He paused just briefly, warming her from the inside out with a soft smile. His words sounded so genuine.

“Secondly, there is nothing you can do to embarrass me. You can be as Little as you want to be with me. You want to wear diapers, I will put you in diapers and check you in a private area while we’re out and about. You want to have a tantrum and throw yourself on the floor in the middle of a store, go ahead. You’ll have a red bottom once we get home, but you can still go ahead and do it if you want to. You want to suck on a pacifier or have me spoon feed you baby food, I would love that. I get off on control and being a Daddy so the more you rely on me and let me take care of you, the happier I am. But I’m also okay with it if you want independence at times. There is no right or wrong way to be Little with me.”

“And you’re not going to scare me away. I’ve been a Daddy a long time and I know Littles have tendencies to push buttons and be naughty to test boundaries and see how dedicated their caretakers are. I won’t be scared away that easily, little girl. Unless you tell me you don’t want me or are not interested in me that way, I’m not going anywhere. I’ll still kick your ex’s ass in court and I’ll still be your friend. But my hope is that you would like to explore a relationship with me.”

Wow. Who was this man and what planet had he come from?

“I can see the wheels turning in your head, Bella. How about this? Would you like to spend the afternoon at the aquarium in Little Space?”

Yes. That was the first answer that popped into her head. She wanted it so badly. More than she could ever remember wanting to do anything with Jared. Chase made her feel excited about her future. He made her feel excited about

everything. After taking a deep breath, she slowly nodded.
“Yes.”

Chapter 9

Chase

That simple one-word answer meant so much to him. Even though she barely knew him, she trusted him enough to take a chance and he was going to do everything in his power not to fuck it up.

“Good. I’d like that too. So here’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to go eat lunch at the Otter Café and then we’ll go see the animals afterward. While we’re at lunch, we’ll go over your rules for the day and any limits you may have that I should immediately know about. After the aquarium, we’ll go from there.”

A soft smile spread across her lips, and he couldn’t resist leaning over the middle console to press a gentle kiss to her mouth. She smelled sweet, like peach pie and bubble gum. He didn’t linger as long as he would have liked, but they were pulled over on the side of the road and this trip wasn’t about doing any of the depraved things he’d thought about since they’d first met. This was about getting to know each other, so he laced his fingers with hers and used his free hand to steer the SUV toward the aquarium.

He held her hand through the parking lot. Every time she noticed another concrete sea animal statue, there was a skip in her step, and he found it adorable.

When they got up to the ticket counter, she pulled off her small backpack and grabbed her wallet. He let out a low growl that made her look up at him with wide eyes as he handed the cashier his credit card.

“Little girls don’t ever pay,” he whispered in her ear.

Her mouth dropped open into an *O* and he was pleased when she quickly zipped up her backpack and took the hand he was holding out for her.

It had been years since he’d been to the aquarium. Hell, he couldn’t even remember the last time he’d had a reason to go, but with as excited as Bella was about it, he would start going every week if it made her this happy.

“Can we see the otters first?”

He grinned and tugged her in the opposite direction. “After we get some food in your tummy.”

She sighed dramatically, and he shot her a look with a raised brow that seemed to do the trick because she quickly righted her expression and smiled up at him.

“Good girl. I think you’ll like the Otter Café. One of the walls is all glass and looks into the otter pool so you might get to see them while we eat.”

“Ohhh! Okay!”

The café was busy, but he was able to grab a table close to the glass wall. Bella was practically grinning from ear to ear as she looked around the restaurant. The entire theme was otters and sea life.

“Any foods you don’t like or are allergic to?”

“Ummm... I really hate mushrooms and green beans. Yuck. Oh, and cauliflower. Ew.”

He chuckled when she scrunched up her nose as she spoke. She was definitely in a Little headspace, and he loved seeing her like that.

“Can I order for you?”

Bella nodded as she looked at the otter pool with wonder in her eyes. “Kay.”

As soon as the server came to their table, he ordered food and drinks for both of them, then turned his attention to the sweet woman sitting across from him.

“I’d like to set some rules for today while we’re here. Just a few things to keep you safe so I don’t have to worry.”

She eyed him and nibbled on her bottom lip. Without thinking, he reached out and tugged it free. Her pupils dilated at his touch and his cock thickened against the zipper of his jeans.

“First rule: I want you to hold my hand at all times unless I give you permission to step away. There are a ton of people here and I don’t want you to get lost. Okay?”

“Okay.”

He nodded, “Good. Second, if I do give you permission to step away, you must stay in sight of me at all times. If you wander off, you’re going to be in trouble.”

“Tr-trouble?”

The look in her eyes told him she was both intrigued and unsure about the possibility of being in trouble.

“Yes. If you break the rules today, you will be in trouble. Since we don’t have a dynamic yet, I won’t spank you or anything major but I will make you sit down for a timeout or write lines when we get back to your place. Or I won’t allow you to get special treats. Fair?”

“Well, I don’t know about fair, but I agree.”

He grinned at her. “Good girl.”

The server dropped off their meals and, without thinking, he reached over to her plate and touched one of her chicken strips to check the temperature. They were way too hot, so he started tearing the chicken apart so it would cool faster. She watched him with interest, a smile on her lips. It made him wonder if her ex had ever taken care of her in such a simple way.

“It’s hot. Blow on it before you take a bite,” he warned.

A blush spread over her face, and she ducked her head. “Thank you,” she said softly.

“You’re welcome, little one.”

They ate in companionable silence, and he was pleased to see her healthy appetite. He’d always hated it when women were too nervous to eat in front of him, but Bella didn’t suffer from that problem.

“Good girl eating all your lunch. I’m proud of you.”

That blush rose on her cheeks again. “I eat too much.”

What the fuck?

He reached over and grabbed hold of one of her hands. “No. You don’t. You could never eat too much, and if your ex ever told you that, he was wrong. I love that you eat. I want a healthy Little girl. Understand?”

Her lips pulled back into a smile as she nodded. “Yes.”

“Good. Now, let’s go see some otters.”

When she slid her hand into his without prompting, he gave her fingers a squeeze and murmured, “Good girl.”

The otters weren’t far from the café, and as soon as they got there, Bella was practically hopping up and down with excitement. When a space opened up right at the enclosure window, she tugged free of his hand and hurried over to it. Silently, he followed her. As she stood with her back to him, looking for the small animals, he leaned down so his mouth was close to her ear. “Did you get permission to let go of my hand?”

She shuddered as she turned and looked up at him, goosebumps rising on her skin. On the inside, he was pleased with her response. His cock liked it too, but on the outside, he raised a stern eyebrow at her.

“Sorry,” she whispered.

He kissed the top of her head. “That’s your one and only warning today, baby otter.”

With a slow nod, she reached out and took the hand he held out for her. He gave her a smile of approval and wrapped his other arm around, pulling her back against his chest.

“There!” She pointed toward the enclosure where several small otters played with a ball.

“Yeah, baby. Good job finding them,” he cooed.

When she relaxed against him, he pressed another kiss to the top of her head. They continued to watch the animals for nearly an hour until she started squirming against him, making his cock harden against her ass.

“Do you need to go potty, Bella?”

A light whimper escaped her lips. “I don’t wanna leave the otters.”

He chuckled and started tugging her away from the enclosure. “We can come back and see them in a bit. You don’t want to have an accident, do you?”

Her cheeks turned bright pink and she shook her head. “No.”

By the time they made it to the bathroom, she was doing the potty dance and he made a mental note to take potty breaks more frequently.

As soon as she returned, she tugged him toward another exhibit. He didn’t mind it one bit. He loved that she was so deeply submersed in Little Space.

They walked around and looked at every animal in the aquarium. By the time they made it back to the otter enclosure one last time, he could tell she was getting tired and he wondered if she’d let him put her down for a nap when he took her back to her place.

She tugged free of his hand and darted toward the large glass windows. As soon as he caught up to her, he wrapped a hand around her wrist. “You didn’t have permission to pull away.”

Her wide eyes looked up at him and he almost faltered. Almost. But he’d been a Daddy a long time and he firmly believed one of the worst things a caregiver could do was to not follow up on a broken rule.

“Go sit on that bench over there facing the wall,” he said pointing toward a concrete bench off to the side of the enclosure.

“I didn’t mean to.”

He nodded. “I’m sure you didn’t, but we talked about the rules and you broke one so now you’re going to sit in timeout for ten minutes. Start moving, Little girl, before I add on more time.”

She glanced at the empty bench and dropped her shoulders as she started walking toward it. When she sat in the direction he’d instructed, he set his phone timer and stood near her with his arms crossed over his chest. To anyone else, it looked as though she were sitting down for a break from walking.

At the seven-minute mark, she looked up at him. “Is it over yet?”

“No talking, or I’ll add more time. Three minutes left.”

He almost smiled when she let out a long and dramatic sigh. Little did she know that having to wait ten minutes without touching her was a punishment for him too. It was difficult not to reach out and give her a reassuring pat. She needed this, though. He had a feeling her piss-poor excuse of a husband had never properly taken care of her. It was obvious that being Little was one of her needs, just as being a Daddy was one of his.

When his timer sounded, she glanced up at him but didn’t stand until he nodded. “Come here.”

She rose and was in his arms almost instantly. He held her close and kissed the top of her head. “Good girl. Thank you for accepting your punishment. You did very well. No more pulling away. I don’t want you to get lost. You’re too Little to wander around here by yourself.”

A shiver shook her body and she nodded. “I’m sorry I was naughty.”

He kissed the top of her head again. “You’re forgiven. Now, let’s finish up with the otters and then we’ll get an ice cream cone before we go.”

The way her face lit up made his whole damn day and he knew he was going to make her his one day.

Chapter 10

Bella

Chase came over every evening that week after he got off work. He had brought takeout a couple of nights and cooked in her kitchen the others. It was something so simple, but it made her feel precious in a way she'd never felt before.

He'd also checked in with her throughout the day, texting to ask if she'd had lunch or sometimes to ask random questions like what her favorite color was or favorite dessert or what kind of stuff she liked to do in Little Space. It was easier to communicate through text, especially when they talked about age play stuff, and she shared more with him that way.

On Thursday night, he'd texted to let her know he was going to be working late but that he would stop by and tuck her in for bed. She'd insisted he didn't have to do that, but he told her he wanted to, so she didn't argue. Quite frankly, she liked seeing him. She liked *him*. He was a breath of fresh air and the way he took care of her was so sweet.

The only issue was that he hadn't made a move on her. She was starting to wonder if he wasn't interested in her like that.

Maybe she was too Little for him and not sexy enough? Or maybe she just wasn't what he wanted. That thought sucked, but she would understand. She was damaged and needy and he was a prominent attorney. Even though she had money, thanks to her trust fund, she wasn't educated like he was or nearly as sophisticated.

She tried not to worry about it too much, but the thoughts kept creeping up and she wasn't sure what to do about them. Should she talk to him? Whenever she had talked to Jared about her feelings, he'd always turned them around on her and made himself the victim. Eventually she'd stopped sharing. Would that be the same with Chase? He was nothing like Jared, but she also hadn't seen him in anything other than casual situations. People changed when they got mad or felt blamed or cornered.

A knock at the door had her pulling out of her thoughts. It was just after seven, so Chase wasn't very much later than he usually was. Maybe he'd finished up early. Without checking the peephole, she opened the door. It wasn't Chase standing on her doorstep. It was Jared, and he looked pissed.

"You fucking whore," he slurred.

Shit. She tried to slam the door, but his hand stopped it and he shoved it open, causing the edge to hit her cheek. Stars and darkness surrounded her. She tried to blink the pain away while Jared stomped into her home.

"You think you can take away what's rightfully mine? I put up with you for years! Years! You bitch!" he shouted.

She started to panic as she held her hand to her throbbing cheek. Jared wasn't a nice drunk. He never had been. She just hadn't realized it until it was too late. Why had she been so stupid?

“You need to go.” Her voice trembled and she hated how weak she sounded.

“I’m not fucking leaving until you agree to give me what I want,” he said, his eyes narrowed. He stalked toward her.

There was no way in hell she would give up the trust fund her parents had left for her. They’d never liked Jared and had urged her to sign a prenup, but she’d been too blindly in love and had ignored them. Now they were gone, and she wasn’t going to kick dirt on their graves by giving their hard-earned money to Jared.

His nostrils flared as he balled his hands into fists. With every step he took, she retreated until she came in contact with the hallway wall. She glanced to her right to see if she could make a run out of there but he had kicked the door shut when he’d walked in and she wasn’t sure she’d be able to get it open before he caught her.

“Jared, get out,” she tried again.

The anger in his eyes was terrifying. She could smell alcohol wafting through the air. How much had the man had to drink?

“I’m not going anywhere, Bellllla.”

She hated the way he dragged her name out like that. He’d always done it when he was wasted.

If she wanted to escape Jared unharmed, she was going to have to make a run for it and hope he was too drunk to catch her. She glanced at the door again. Her phone was in the living room, but she could run to the neighbor and ask them to call 911.

After three deep breaths, she darted for the door and swung it open. Fiery pain burst over her scalp. He had a hold of her

hair. As she let out a scream, she saw a flash of movement. The next thing she knew, she was free. The room spun as she sank to the floor. When she realized the screams in the room weren't coming from her, she focused her eyes. Chase was standing over Jared, beating the shit out of him.

“Chase!” she screamed.

His hand was fisted in Jared's shirt as he held him down, but he paused mid-punch and looked over at her.

“Go call 911, babygirl. Now.”

When Chase slammed his fist into Jared's face again, she crawled into the living room. She was terrified. The emergency operator took her information and told her police officers were on their way. As soon as she hung up, she got back down on her hands and knees and crawled under the small dining room table.

It felt like forever before she heard sirens approach. Chase scooped her up from under the table. He wrapped her in his arms and held her to his chest, murmuring soft words into her hair.

“Daddy's here. I got you, baby. Shh.”

She cried so much, she wasn't sure how she still had an ounce of fluid in her body by the time she stopped.

“Excuse me, ma'am?”

A police officer stood near them with a pad of paper in hand. Chase let her sit up but kept hold of her hips so she couldn't get off his lap.

“We need a statement. He's already been cuffed and is in the back of a squad car so once you tell us what happened, we'll take him to jail. It looks like you have quite the bruise

forming on your cheek.” The officer looked angry as he examined her face and took a couple of photos, but not nearly as angry as Chase.

Twenty minutes later, Chase closed the front door behind the police officers. Bella leaned back against the couch, her eyes drooping from exhaustion. It wasn't until she'd left Jared that she realized just how tired he'd made her feel all the time.

“Here, baby. I want you to put this on your cheek.”

She opened her eyes to find the most handsome man she'd ever seen standing in front of her with a bag of frozen peas in his hand. Even though his knuckles were swollen and red, he didn't seem the least bit concerned with them. No, his focus was on her.

“I'm sorry,” she whispered.

He sank down to the couch and gently pressed the peas to her face as he glared at her. “Don't apologize for that asshole. You did nothing wrong. I'm proud of you for trying to get out of there. That took courage.”

His body heat relaxed her, and she leaned into his side. “I just want this divorce to be over. I want him out of my life.”

“Oh, it will be over tomorrow. I'm going to fucking bury him. And his lawyer,” Chase said as he rose.

He lifted her with him. She sighed and snuggled against his chest. “Where are you taking me?”

“I'm getting you ready for bed.”

Her lip popped out with a pout. “But I don't want to go to sleep.”

Okay, maybe she wouldn't mind it, but she also wanted to see him. She'd missed him all day.

Instead of setting her on her bed, he carried her into the bathroom and set her down on the counter. “I never said you had to go to sleep. But right now, I so badly need to take care of you. If you don’t want me to, I need you to tell me right now.”

She stared into his gray eyes and practically swooned. If her cheek weren’t throbbing, she would think she was in a dream or an alternate universe.

“I want you to take care of me,” she finally whispered.

After a few seconds, he nodded. “If you need me to stop at any time, you say red and I stop. Understood?”

“Yes.”

He turned away and started the bathtub, spending the next few minutes adjusting the temperature, plugging the drain, and dumping a lot of bubble bath into the water. She admired his ass every time he leaned down.

When he turned back to her and started lifting his shirt, she let out a gasp.

“I’m going to give you a bath. Afterward, I’m tucking you into bed while I make dinner and then you and I are snuggling up for a movie of your choice. If it’s okay with you, I’d like to stay the night so I can keep an eye on you.”

Wow. Just, wow. If her heart could have pounded out of her chest, she was pretty sure it would have.

“I only want to keep an eye on you, babygirl, I’m not expecting sex,” he added.

Heat spread over her cheeks. “What if I want you to expect sex?”

She couldn't look him in the eye, but when he captured her chin in his hand, she was forced to meet his gaze.

“There is nothing more I'd like to do than spread you out on your bed, play with all your pretty little holes, and make you cry out my name all night long. And baby, I hope that happens soon. But tonight, I just want to take care of you. I won't have sex with you while you're injured.”

Okay, her cheeks were definitely tomato red by now. Her pussy clenched, making her squirm. “Oh.”

A slow, sexy smile spread on his face. “Yeah. ‘Oh.’ I want to be your Daddy, Bella. But I don't want to do anything until your divorce is official. Then I hope you'll be mine and let me show you how you truly deserve to be treated by a Daddy who adores you.”

“Oh.” That was the only word she was capable of at that moment. He really wanted her. He wanted to do dirty, filthy, naughty things with her. God, she wanted that too. She wanted him to be her Daddy more than anything. They might have only known each other for a week but it felt as though their hearts had known each other for much longer.

“So for tonight, I'm going to bathe you, cuddle you, and sleep next to you. Then tomorrow I'm going to wipe the floor with that bastard. After that, you and I will talk about the next step for us. Okay?”

“Okay.”

Chapter 11

Chase

As soon as she said the word, he lifted her shirt up and over her head, then leaned forward and removed her bra, catching a glimpse of her rosy pink nipples. His mouth watered. He wanted to touch and play with those peaks but that would wait. He'd waited this long to find his Little girl, he could wait a bit longer to have her.

She shivered, so he moved quickly to set her on her feet, lower her pants and strip off her panties, revealing her bare pussy to him. It was taking serious restraint not to touch and explore every curve of her lush figure. When he lifted her in the air and moved her to the tub, she giggled.

“What’s so funny, little one?”

“You looked like you were in pain when you were undressing me.”

He quirked an eyebrow at her. “I was in pain. Not touching you is physically painful for me.”

“Oh. I’m sorry?”

The expression on her face didn't look very sorry. No, she seemed like she was pleased with his admission.

“Uh huh,” he said with a wink.

She smiled so widely. The hint of mischief in her eyes lit up his whole world. He liked seeing her lighthearted. Especially after the evening she'd had.

They were quiet as he started running a soapy washcloth over her skin. When he reached her breasts, she sucked in a breath, shivering as he ran it over her sensitive nipples. He didn't hover, though, and he should get a damn trophy for that, in his opinion. Keeping his hands to himself was a serious test of restraint.

He reached between her legs to clean her pussy and bottom. She squirmed, letting out a soft moan as he brushed his fingers against her clit. His cock was painfully hard and if she made any more noises like that, he was going to embarrass himself in his underwear.

“Okay, baby. Stand up so I can wrap a towel around you.”

He took her hand so she wouldn't slip, then wrapped her up and lifted her from the tub. After he carried her into her room, he set her on the bed and started opening drawers to find some pajamas for her to wear. Most of her dresser was full of clothes he suspected she had specifically for her Little side, which was just perfect because that's what he wanted her to feel tonight.

He settled on a nightgown that had a soft ruffle sewn to the hem. It also had a big cupcake on it. He found a pair of cotton panties, then spent the next few minutes getting her dressed while she let him move her about like a doll.

“Crawl into bed, baby. Do you have a pacifier or something you like to use for comfort?”

Her cheeks turned pink, and she hesitated briefly before she reached over to her nightstand and pulled a pacifier from the top drawer. He smiled and nodded when she looked up at him.

“Good girl. Put that in. I’m going to order some dinner and then we’re going to sit in bed and eat.”

Almost as soon as she slid the pacifier between her lips, she visibly relaxed against the pillows on the bed. She looked like an angel, and he couldn’t wait for her divorce to be finalized so they could start a life together.

He turned on the TV and handed her the remote before stepping out so he could order their dinner. He also had another call to make.

Once their food order was in, he scrolled through his contacts, pressed call, and waited for an answer.

“Hey, brother.”

“Hey, Wolf. I need to ask you guys for a favor.”

“Are you ready?”

Bella looked up at him, and he clenched his jaw for the twentieth time that morning. Her cheek was purple and swollen from where her ex had hit her with the door and she had scratches on her arm from him trying to grab hold of her when he was pulling her back inside by her hair.

Because she'd been assaulted, she wasn't required to appear in court, but she'd insisted on going. She didn't want to give Jared the satisfaction of keeping her away. The only reason Chase hadn't pressed harder for her to stay home was because he knew she would be protected.

When they walked into the courtroom, Jared was already there. He'd been released from county jail that morning with an upcoming court date to settle the domestic violence charge.

Bella stopped mid-step as they approached their table, and Chase watched as she took in the nine terrifying-looking men sitting in the first and second row.

She looked up at Chase. "What is all this?"

He grinned and nudged her forward. "This is my family's way of showing their love and support. It's also their way of intimidating the hell out of people."

Thirty-five minutes later, Jared looked as though he'd sucked on a lime as the judge read off his final rulings. Bella would keep her entire trust fund, plus get half the proceeds from the sale of their house. She was also awarded spousal support of twenty-five dollars each month. Chase had asked for that amount to cover the cost of Bella's anxiety medication that she'd never had to take until the marriage. Chase grinned. It was an extra added fuck you to the man that he'd have to cough up each month. Lastly, the judge had granted the restraining order that Chase had requested that morning as a last minute amendment to the divorce papers.

Once the judge signed off on the ruling, Bella let out a deep breath before she turned to Chase with a huge grin on her face.

"I can't believe it," she whispered.

He leaned over so his mouth was near her ear. “It’s not over yet.”

Jared started stomping toward the exit but was stopped when Wolf blocked his path. The rest of the men stood at Wolf’s back. It was hard not to laugh when Jared’s eyes practically bulged from the sockets.

“This is your one and only warning. If you ever come near Bella again, I will make sure you never walk again. I will cut off your dick and feed it to you and I will ruin your entire fucking world. She’s part of our family and we will do anything to protect what’s ours. You come within two hundred yards of her, and the cops will be the least of your worries,” Wolf said, starting toward Jared who practically jumped out of his shoes.

“You’re a fucking coward of a man,” Hawk growled.

“Is there a problem?” the judge called out.

Chase smiled at the judge. “Actually, since you asked, I filed a motion this morning to have Dennis Mason’s law license suspended so there could be an investigation into his conduct. You’ll see the reasons why this is being requested listed in the motion.”

Wolf and Hawk parted, leaving just enough room for Jared to squeeze through and practically run out of the courtroom. Mason turned sheet white and babbled incoherently to the judge, but Chase tuned him out and smiled down at Bella.

“You’re free, babygirl.”

“I can’t believe it. You did this for me. Thank you.”

A few minutes later, Chase, Bella, and his chosen family walked out of the courtroom smiling.

“How about a BBQ at my house tonight to celebrate?” Chase asked.

“We’ll bring the girls and some sides,” Knox answered.

Bella squealed and beamed up at all of them. “Thank you. For everything. It means so much to me.”

Colt winked at her. “You’re one of us now. But that means you and Chase need to start coming over for Sunday dinner every week. No more excuses.”

“That sounds so fun!” Bella said, clapping her hands together.

He’d had a feeling one of the men would sucker him into Sunday dinners, and they’d found the right person to make him crumble. Meddling assholes. But if it would make Bella happy, he would be at dinner every week.

As soon as they made it back to his car and he helped her inside, she grabbed hold of his tie. “Can I kiss you now?”

Slowly, he cupped her face in his hands and shook his head. “No. You may not. Because I’m going to kiss you.”

Chapter 12

Bella

The moment his lips touched hers, she melted into him. This wasn't like the light kiss he'd given her when they'd gone to the aquarium. No, this kiss was all-consuming and hard. He led and she followed. He kissed her like she was the most delicious thing he'd ever tasted, and she loved it.

Her nipples puckered against her bra and her panties were soaked. She was pretty sure she'd never been this turned on in her entire life. Not even when she'd watched *Magic Mike*. Channing Tatum didn't hold a candle to Chase McGuire.

When he pulled back and stared into her eyes, they were both panting.

“Can we? Do we have time...to...um...”

Chase grinned. “You want Daddy to take you home and fuck you? Show you all the ways I adore your beautiful body and make you cry out my name?”

A moan slipped out as she nodded. “Yes. Please.”

He nodded and closed her into the car before he practically sprinted around and got behind the wheel. As he drove, he

reached over and took her hand, squeezing it in his.

She wasn't sure what to say. In a way, she was nervous. What if he didn't like having sex with her? Would she be any good at it? The only person she'd ever had sex with was Jared and that hadn't been a good experience. The man had always made her feel inadequate. What if Chase found her lacking? He's seen her naked already so at least he knew what she looked like under her clothes.

When he pulled into the driveway of a beautiful house, she furrowed her eyebrows.

"My house," he said.

Before she could think too much about it, he opened her door and helped her out of the car. As soon as they were in the house, he swooped her into his arms and carried her up the stairs.

"What's your safeword, little one?"

"Red."

"Good girl. You want to stop at any time, you say the word. Otherwise, I expect you to obey me. Understand?"

A rush of excitement ran through her body. Somehow she knew she wouldn't need to use her safeword. Chase seemed to be so in tune with her that he wouldn't push too far. Since the day they'd met, he'd always made sure she knew she was safe with him.

"Yes."

He grinned. "Good. 'Yes, Sir,' or 'yes, Daddy' while we're in the bedroom."

Her cheeks heated and a smile pulled at her lips. "Yes, Daddy," she whispered.

Calling him Daddy felt good. She'd called him Daddy at least a hundred times in her head since they'd met, but saying it out loud was even better. The expression on his face told her he liked it too.

He set her on his enormous bed and leaned down, trapping her in place with his hands on either side of her hips, as he kissed her. Their tongues swept each other's mouths, tasting and exploring. When he wrapped one hand around her throat, giving it a gentle squeeze, she moaned.

"You like that, baby?"

She nodded and raised her hands to his chest, pushing his suit jacket open. When she started unbuttoning his shirt, he chuckled.

"Such a needy Little girl. What do you need, baby?"

Her cheeks flushed. "I need you. I want to see you."

Chase pressed another kiss to her lips. "Good girl."

He rewarded her by stripping out of his jacket and shirt and, holy crap, the man was ripped. Lines of hard muscle, tattoos, and a light sprinkle of chest hair. He was cover-model hot and she was pretty sure she was drooling.

Without thinking, she reached up, ran her fingers down his chest and stomach, and gasped when she reached the waistband of his slacks. He was rock hard, and the outline was enormous.

He didn't let her focus on that for long before he started removing her clothes. As soon as the air hit her nipples, they budded into painful points, practically begging for attention. She didn't have to wait long before he lowered his mouth to her breasts and started kissing, licking, and sucking.

“Daddy,” she cried out.

“I know, baby. Don’t worry, Daddy’s going to make you feel so good.”

What he didn’t realize was that he’d been making her feel so good all week and she was ready to explode under his touch.

She was so distracted by his touch that she hadn’t realized he’d removed her pants and panties until she was on her back, legs spread, as he kissed down her stomach.

“You’re so beautiful, Bella. Lush, and soft, and precious. Just relax, baby. Let me take care of you.”

Those six little words were like magic, and she found herself relaxing against the bed. Until he closed his mouth over her clit, and she cried out. She lifted her head. He was staring up at her as he feasted on her pussy like it was his favorite meal. It was clear he was enjoying it just as much as she was.

“Oh, God!”

He chuckled, the sound vibrating off her clit. “God isn’t here, baby. It’s just you and me. Daddy and Bella.”

She liked the sound of that. Daddy and Bella. The thought quickly evaporated as he inserted two fingers into her pussy and stroked that delicate spot that had her practically levitating off the bed while he continued to suck on her slit.

Her entire body tensed. Stars swirled around her as her orgasm approached. Then, two strokes of his fingers and she was screaming as her pussy pulsed around him.

“Good girl. Give it all to me. Such a good girl. Fuck, baby. You’re so beautiful when you come like that.”

When her orgasm subsided and she collapsed onto the bed, Chase slowly withdrew his fingers. The sound of a condom wrapper being torn open made her open her eyes. She watched as he rolled it down his massive erection and suddenly her body was on fire and ready for round two.

He knelt between her legs, looking at her like a tiger on the prowl. His cock nudged her entrance, and she was both thrilled and nervous about how big it was. It would be a tight fit, but she wanted to feel him stretch her.

Her thoughts vanished as he lowered his face to hers and took her lips with his, kissing her deeply. He was a passionate man, and she loved how he seemed to know her body so well already. Each touch and stroke hit just the right spot.

“Are you ready, baby?”

Was that a serious question? She was about to go feral if he didn't put his cock inside her soon. Her pussy ached for him.

“Yes! Please. I need you.”

Without a word, he pushed into her, filling her to the brim. She sucked in a breath and willed her body to relax so she could accept the rest of him because she was pretty sure he wasn't even halfway in.

“That's my girl. Breathe. Good girl. Such a good girl,” he crooned.

He cupped her face in his hands and stared down at her with a look of concern.

“Keep going.”

Inch by inch, he pushed into her until she felt his groin pressing against her clit, adding to the torturous pleasure.

He moved slowly at first, small thrusts until both of them were frantic for more. She scratched at his chest, locking her ankles together over his ass, trying to pull him in even deeper.

Their cries of pleasure filled the room. Sweat covered their bodies and the entire time, their eyes stayed locked on each other. It was the single most intimate and hottest experience of her life.

“Oh! I need to come!”

A wicked smile crossed his lips. “Come for me, baby. Come for Daddy. Milk my cock.”

His simple instruction had her exploding around him as she screamed his name. While her climax continued to roll through her, Chase’s movements turned fast and jerky and she knew he was on the verge of his own explosion.

“Fuck! Bella!” he shouted as he fucked her with brutal force.

A few seconds later, he collapsed on top of her, holding himself up just enough so he didn’t crush her.

“I never knew it could be like that,” she panted.

He chuckled and pressed a kiss to her collarbone. “Only when it’s right, babygirl.”

“Does that mean we’re right together?”

“I feel like we are. I want you to be mine and I want to be yours.”

It was scary getting into a new relationship after all the damage Jared had done to her, but Chase was nothing like her ex. He would build her up, not tear her down. He would take his role of Daddy as serious as he took his job, if not more so.

She wanted to take the leap with him because deep down inside, she knew it would be so worth it.

“I want to be yours too,” she finally said.

He met her gaze and stared at her for a long moment. “Yeah? You want me to be your Daddy?”

She nodded. “Yes. I want to be your Little girl. You make me feel safe and adored. I’ve never felt so seen by someone. I’m falling for you and it’s scary but I want this with you.”

“I’m falling for you, too. I have been since the first time I laid eyes on you.”

Her heart and tummy fluttered.

“Will you be mine, Bella? I promise to take care of you and never abuse the trust you give me. I’ll prove to you every day that I’m worthy of you and I’ll show you the love you’ve deserved for so long.”

If she hadn’t been swooning already, she would have after that speech. A tear slipped from her eye as she bobbed her head.

“Yes! I’ll be yours.”

He gave her a breathtaking grin and she swore his eyes looked misty as he closed the space between them and took her lips with his. Life wasn’t perfect but this was pretty darn close, and she felt like she was the luckiest Little girl in the world.

The End

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About Kate Oliver

Kate Oliver is an International Bestselling Author known for her steamy Daddy Dom books. Since she picked up her first chapter book, Kate has aspired to be an author. Currently, fetish romance is her favorite for both reading and writing, and she always strives to write stories that realistically reflect the lifestyle. Her favorite part of writing her own books is dreaming up the hot, steamy, yet loving and strict Daddies that Littles dream about.

Visit Kate's website: www.kateoliverbooks.com.

Zoey's Second
Anniversary Celebration
by Pepper North

A MF story by Pepper North

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Chapter 1

Zoey sat at the coloring table in Dr. Richards' waiting room and tried to concentrate on the kitten picture in front of her, but her mind was so distracted. "Crap!" popped from her mouth when she colored outside the line.

An audible gasp came from the Little girl next to her the same time Penelope's two Daddies said, "Zoey!"

"I don't think your Daddy would approve of you swearing," Dylan corrected her.

"She just said crap. It wasn't like a *really* bad word." Penelope quickly rushed to her friend's defense.

"Don't get yourself in trouble, Little girl," Jack warned, giving her a very pointed look.

"It's okay, Penelope. I shouldn't have said it. I'm just worried." Zoey slumped in her chair for a few seconds, feeling their concerned stares on her.

"Can I help?" Penelope immediately volunteered. "What's wrong?"

"It's our anniversary next week. I want to get Daddy a really special present, but I just can't think of the perfect gift," Zoey confided.

“That’s tough,” Penelope sympathized.

“What would you like from your Little girl?” Zoey asked Dylan and Jack.

They both paused for a few seconds. Jack answered first. “Time. I’d like the chance for Dylan and I to spend time with Penelope without any interruptions. That would be a special treat.”

Dylan agreed. “That would be the best present of all.”

“My Daddy is so busy. I don’t know how I’d clear up his schedule to allow us to be away,” Zoey bemoaned.

“A weekend away would be just the thing, Zoey,” Jack suggested. “I bet Paul would quietly reschedule Dr. Richards’ appointments during one weekend.”

Thinking hard, Zoey almost chewed on the crayon before catching herself with it an inch away from her lips. She frowned at the waxy stick and set it down with a click before confessing, “That sounds like a present to me.”

“That’s the beauty of your gift. It’s your anniversary, too. You both get to celebrate,” Penelope assured her.

“I really like that idea,” Zoey whispered.

“What idea, Little girl?” Dr. Richards’ deep voice asked from behind her.

“Hi, Daddy!” Zoey greeted him. “Um... We were just talking about what colors this kitten should be! What do you think of calico?”

“Does she look like a girl? Most calicos are females I think I remember reading somewhere,” Dr. Richards shared. “I think a calico kitten would look beautiful on the art wall.”

“I’ll do that then,” Zoey said, pleading with Jack, Dylan, and Penelope not to say a word to her Daddy.

“With that settled, I’m ready to see Penelope. Jack, Dylan, bring your Little into exam room two,” he instructed.

When he turned around to lead the way, Jack made a motion across his lips like he was zipping his mouth closed. Zoey bounced in her chair happily. They wouldn’t tell!

The minute the door closed, she jumped to her feet and darted toward Paul’s office. Paul had worked for Dr. Richards for years. He’d been there when Zoey had first come to apply for a job as Dr. Richards’ companion. Her life had changed immediately.

“Paul?” she said quietly, not wishing to disturb him while he studied the papers in front of him.

“Hey, Zoey. What’s up?” he asked, taking his glasses off and setting them to the side.

“I have a favor to ask. Umm...”

“Let me have it. What happened? Did you put another hole in the wall playing roller derby queen again?” he asked with a penetrating look that screamed Daddy.

Zoey swallowed hard automatically even though she wasn’t guilty. Shaking her head vigorously, she answered, “Oh, no! That’s against Daddy’s rules.”

“It definitely is. That didn’t keep it from happening three times,” Paul reminded her with a knowing look.

“But not now,” she rushed to assure him.

“Good. Now, what favor do you wish to ask?”

“Daddy and my anniversary is coming up. I’d like to go somewhere to celebrate. Could you help me by rescheduling his appointments for that weekend?” she asked, wringing her hands in front of her.

“Done.”

“Really? I don’t have to talk you into it?” Zoey asked, trying to keep her chin from hitting the floor in surprise.

“I think it’s a wonderful idea and I will take care of this for you. Do you need any help with deciding where to go?” he asked.

“Thank you. I haven’t decided where he’d like to go. Do you have any ideas?” Zoey studied his face to judge his reaction.

“I do. What do you think of this place?” Paul asked, typing on his computer next to him.

When pictures of a rental house popped up on the screen, Zoey leaned forward. It was a gorgeous house. Not too big, not too small. Located with a view of the mountains and surrounded by trees, it seemed to be secluded. She could just be herself there like she was at home—only, it would just be Daddy and Zoey time.

“There’s even a heated pool,” Paul pointed out.

“You just happened to have this place picked out?” she asked, thinking that sounded strange.

“I looked earlier for a place to take Angelina on vacation. I liked this place, but she really wanted to go to a theme park, so I made other plans. I held on to this listing just in case the perfect opportunity would present itself.”

“It’s perfect for us,” Zoey said, crossing her fingers behind her back that she’d get to go.

“I’ll take care of getting reservations for you.”

“Really? I can pay. Daddy makes sure I have money of my own,” Zoey rushed to assure him.

“I’ll take the money from your Daddy’s household budget. It’s for a house, after all,” Paul assured her.

Rushing forward, Zoey threw her arms around Paul’s neck and gave him a bear hug before stepping back to say, “Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!”

“I’m glad to help. That’s why I’m here. Never hesitate to come talk to me, Zoey,” Paul assured her and picked up his glasses to settle them on his nose once again.

Peering at her over the lenses, he added, “Even if you roller derby queen a hole in the wall.”

“I’ll never do that,” she assured him.

“Again.”

“Again,” she admitted with a sigh. Derby queens had a bad reputation, but it was so much fun to zoom around the house at supersonic speed. Grinning, she went to make plans about what to take on their trip.

Chapter 2

“Zoey wants to take me somewhere for our anniversary,” Dr. Richards repeated with a smile.

“It was all I could do not to smile at her. She doesn’t have any idea, Matt,” Paul assured him. “She came to me yesterday. I showed her the listing you booked. Zoey loved the house you picked out.”

“I knew she’d love it. It’s perfect for the two of us to spend some quiet time together. Thank you, Paul.”

“Fair warning, she’s piling a bunch of necessities in her closet in the nursery to take with her.”

“All she’ll need is shorts, T-shirts, and a bathing suit,” Matt said with a bewildered expression.

“And her sparkly shoes, a couple of swim rings, suntan lotion because she doesn’t want to get burned, swimsuits for the four stuffies she’s taking...”

“So I need to take the SUV,” Matt suggested.

“I did get her to only take four stuffies. She had twelve ready to go originally,” Paul relayed.

“It’s a good thing there’s a king-size bed,” Dr. Richards pointed out.

“Where is there a king-size bed?” Zoey asked as she walked into the room, catching the end of the conversation.

“In his room. Paul just told me Angelina brought twelve stuffies to bed last night.”

“Twelve stuffies. Who would even think they needed twelve stuffies to go to sleep?” Zoey asked, parroting some of what Paul had said when she asked for more suitcases to pack those she’d picked out. “I’ll have to talk to that silly Little girl.”

“That’s okay, sweetheart. I think Paul has it covered,” Dr. Richards assured her. “You ready for your checkup?”

“I have a checkup today?” Zoey said, backing toward the door.

“Stop right there, Little girl,” Dr. Richards ordered sternly.

“Didn’t I have a checkup last week? Maybe not even last week. Maybe just a couple days ago.”

“Zoey, don’t lie to your Daddy.”

Dr. Richards held his hand out for Zoey’s. Slowly, she walked forward to lean against his side, sliding her fingers between his. “That’s my good girl.”

With a meaningful look at Paul that Zoey totally missed as she hid her face against his arm, Dr. Richards steered his Little out of the waiting room and into exam room number one. He took a seat and lifted Zoey onto his lap.

“Tell me what’s going on, Zoey. You don’t usually try to get out of your Daddy taking care of you.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and buried her face in the crook of his neck. “I don’t know. It’s almost our anniversary. I always start to remember how we met.”

“You had driven here for a job interview but your car broke down. Your feet were in terrible shape,” he reminded her.

“You took the pain away and bandaged my feet. I felt so much better.”

“That’s what doctors are supposed to do. Help people heal,” Dr. Richards reminded her.

“And Little girls are supposed to always tell the truth,” she said, her words muffled against his white coat.

“Do you have something you want to tell me?”

“It was going to be a surprise, but I feel like I’m hiding things from you... I know you’ll find out and I don’t want you to be mad.”

“You think I’ll find out here in the exam room?” he asked, rubbing her back.

“You know everything here,” Zoey said instantly as she nodded her head. “Like how I’m really feeling, if I’m telling the truth, what I need.”

“It is important for me to know all those things. What do you think I’m going to discover about you this time?” he asked.

“That my tummy hurts. Not because I need a special treatment,” she assured him quickly.

“I’ll wait to decide that for myself. Why do you think your tummy hurts?” Dr. Richards tried to coax the news she obviously needed to share with him to be able to relax and feel like she wasn’t doing something wrong.

“I wanted to celebrate our anniversary. To do something special, just the two of us.”

“I like the sound of that, Little girl.”

“So, I talked to Paul to see if he’d clear your schedule for the weekend. He said he’d be glad to rebook your appointments. He even had this beautiful house he’d found.”

Excited, Zoey leaned back to meet his gaze. “It’s awesome. There’s even a pool. And it’s away from everyone so we could be alone. I just wanted to have you all to myself. I should have asked first.”

“I think that sounds awesome as well. When do we leave?”

“Really? You mean it. You’d like to go stay there?” Zoey bounced in excitement on his lap.

“I’d like to go with you to celebrate the third best day of my life.”

“Third best?” she repeated, her face falling and tears gathering in her eyes.

“First best was the day we met. Second best was the day you told me you loved me. Third best was the day we declared to our friends that we were committed to each other forever and ever,” he listed for her before pressing a soft kiss to her lips.

Instantly, she dashed her tears away and smiled at him. “Really? I’m in all the best days of your life?”

“You are. You’re my Little girl and I love you very much,” Dr. Richards reminded her.

“I love you even more than that first day I told you,” she rushed to share.

“So, celebrating our anniversary is something we need to do. Thanks to you, we have an awesome place to go. I say that should earn you an extra treat.”

“Paul says I can’t take two suitcases of stuffies. I could use my treat for that,” Zoey said quickly.

“I would hate for you to lose a stuffie while we’re away. Two suitcases of stuffies running around could get crazy. What if one hid under the bed and we didn’t notice he was gone until we got back home. How about if you choose two?”

“I already told four they got to go. I can’t disappoint them now. Maybe you could tell them?” Zoey suggested, batting her eyelashes to charm her Daddy.

“Then those four need to go. The other stuffies will have a party in the nursery while we’re gone. They’ll have such stories to tell,” Dr. Richards suggested.

“They would have fun at a party. Maybe I should only take one?” she said, obviously not wanting to do that but trying to make him happy.

“I think four is the perfect number. When we’re busy, they will have each other to play with,” Dr. Richards said, waggling his eyebrows suggestively.

“Busy?” Zoey repeated before turning an enchanting shade of red as her Daddy’s meaning registered on her.

“Very busy.”

“Daddy,” she said, giggling and hiding her face against his shirt.

“Now that we have that settled, let’s get your exam started so we can make sure you’re perfectly healthy for our trip.”

Zoey slowly slid off his lap and stood quietly as Dr. Richards stripped her T-shirt over her head. Instantly, her nipples contracted when exposed to the air. He rubbed his

thumbs over the taut peaks and complimented, “My Little girl is so sensitive.”

When she wiggled in response to his caresses, he slid his hands down her ribcage to hook inside the elastic waistband of her comfy shorts she liked to wear around the house. Pushing them over her hips and letting the material puddle around her ankles, Dr. Richards unfastened the tape at the sides of her diaper and removed it to toss into the trash bin. He scooped her up on his lap and skillfully removed her shoes, socks, and shorts.

Hugging her to his body, Dr. Richards kissed the top of her head and hugged his precious Little close before setting Zoey on her feet. “What a good girl you are. Go stand on the scale for me,” he instructed as he stood as well.

Zoey skipped over to the scale and stood facing the center of the room. All the Littles knew their weight only mattered to make sure they were healthy. Dr. Richards deliberately had chosen a scale that displayed the weight to him at the counter where he updated charts. He made a mental note to himself to add an extra bottle to her daily routine when he saw she’d lost a couple of pounds.

“Okay, Zoey. Let’s see if you’ve grown since your last exam. Stand up straight,” he instructed as he lifted the lever behind her that would measure her height. He stroked two fingers down her spine and smiled as she pushed her shoulders back, presenting her small breasts fully. His Little’s form was exquisite.

“The perfect height. Good girl.”

He held out a hand to help Zoey step down from the scale and gestured to the waiting exam table. “Lie down on your tummy.”

“I feel fine,” she rushed to assure him.

“I’ll be the judge of that. On your tummy,” he repeated with a stern expression.

Immediately, she obeyed and walked to the table, climbing up on the booster step to drape herself over the end. He watched her squeeze her eyes tightly closed as she pressed her knees together. Her upper thighs already glistened with a hint of slick arousal juices.

Working deliberately, Dr. Richards snapped on a pair of exam gloves and noisily squirted a generous amount of lubricant onto a gauze pad. He saw her start to look over her shoulder before freezing. Dr. Richards uncovered his tray of goodies for her exam and removed a bottle of oil from the warmer. He removed the flat screw top and replaced it with a nozzle. With that on his tray, he rolled it to the exam table and smoothed a hand over her small bottom.

“Relax, Zoey. Daddy’s going to take good care of you.” He watched her nod and try to release the tension from her muscles. Scooping up a generous amount of the dispensed lubricant, he separated her buttocks and pressed his finger against her tight bud.

“Breath out, Little girl.”

As she exhaled audibly, he pressed his finger against that tight ring of muscles and glided it shallowly in and out until she melted onto the table. “There’s my good girl.”

So sweet, she nodded again, trying hard to be very good.

He pressed his finger deep into her tight channel. Rotating his digit inside her bottom, he coated the interior surfaces completely. As he removed his finger, he noted a slight stain, revealing exactly what he expected. Dr. Richards changed

gloves before picking up the thick thermometer and pressing it firmly inside. Cupping his hand over her bottom, he checked his watch.

Knowing that it was hard for his Little girl to stay still for ten whole minutes, Dr. Richards distracted her. “By the look of the place, you won’t have to wear your bathing suit in the pool. You can just be a fish swimming around in the warm water.”

“Not wear my suit?” she echoed.

“You can work on getting a tan all over,” he suggested. “We’ll have to cover you with lots of sunscreen.”

“I would not like to have a burnt butt,” Zoey agreed.

She seemed to think about it for a bit before asking, “Does that mean you don’t have to wear a suit, either?”

“That could definitely be correct.” Dr. Richards would search carefully for any hidden cameras before ever allowing either one of them to be exposed. He made a mental note to ask Paul how it would be best to check.

“Is it time, Daddy?” she asked.

“Two more minutes. Tell me what you did today.”

“I slept in late because you left me tucked in bed while you came down to see people in your office. Later, I had fun playing in my nursery with my stuffies.”

“That’s good. Charlotte was in today for her checkup,” he shared.

“I missed seeing Charlotte? Now, I’m sad,” Zoey reported.

“You can be happy again. It’s time for me to check your temperature.” He slowly removed the thermometer and rotated

it to read. “Low. Let me give you some warmup juice.”

Setting the thick rod aside, he picked up the warm bottle and pressed the nozzle as deep as possible into Zoey’s bottom before slowly squeezing the container, forcing the fluid into her. Dr. Richards smiled, watching her wiggle as she felt the warmth fill her. She always liked this part.

“That feels good, doesn’t it, Little girl?”

“Yes, Daddy. It makes me all snuggly inside,” she admitted.

“I’m glad.”

When the bottle was empty, he teased her small opening so she could clench her muscles to pull the lubricant deep inside her. It would do two things. Raise her body temperature and seep deep into her intestines to allow her enema to work optimally. Quickly, he inserted a shallow plug that would keep the lubricant where it needed to be.

Rounding the table, Dr. Richards discarded his gloves. He pressed a light kiss to her lips before brushing her hair away from her face. He loved this Little girl so much. It was hard to believe they were coming up on their second anniversary.

“Let’s get you turned over.” Dr. Richards lifted Zoey to lay on her back on the exam table and quickly pulled a wedge pillow out of the storage area under the table to slide under her hips. Gravity would assist the inserted liquid in flowing deeply as she lay on the slope, but she needed to be positioned carefully so he would have access to everything.

“Are you going to wash out my bottom?” Zoey asked. Her protruding lip quivered.

“Your bottom tells me you need it. How does your tummy feel?” he asked, watching her face carefully.

“It feels fine.”

“Don’t lie to your Daddy.”

“Okay,” she said with a sigh and flopped one arm over her eyes dramatically.

“Okay, what?”

“It kinda hurts.”

“How long has your tummy hurt?”

“It started yesterday,” she admitted.

“And you didn’t tell me?”

“No. I knew what would happen,” she said, peeking up at him.

“I’m going to assume your stomach actually started bothering you a few days ago and you were hoping it would get better on its own,” he suggested, rubbing his hands over her abdomen to feel for problems. “Maybe more than a few days ago?”

“Maybe a week,” she suggested.

“You have been very naughty, Zoey. Now it will take a deeper cleaning to make you feel better. Perhaps more than one.”

“No, Daddy. One will do it,” she promised, removing her arm to give him sad, puppy-dog eyes.

“We’ll see.”

She snapped her arm back in place as he lifted one of her legs to set her heel in the stirrup. Soon she was displayed completely for his treatment.

Pulling his thoughts together, he stroked over her shoulder and laid his hands on her left breast. Palpating her small mound, he checked for anything disturbing. Her wiggles intensified as he examined her. Finishing, he rolled her nipple between his fingers and gently tugged it. He smiled as her hips rose from the pillow.

Before moving to the other side, he took a moment to attach a security belt across her tummy to hold her safely on the table. Her eyelids lowered to partially hood her eyes, betraying her level of arousal. For as much as Zoey complained about her frequent appointments in his office, her body loved his attentions. Being bound definitely raised her arousal level.

“Do you need to have Daddy secure your hands for you to feel safe?” he asked quietly.

“Please,” she answered, lifting her hands to rest on the table over her head.

Dr. Richards quickly tethered her hands with the restraints at the top of the table. Her whispered “Thank you” went straight to his heart. He examined her right breast. It pleased him to see that Zoey now could squirm all she wished without risk of falling.

“Read me the letters on the ceiling, Little girl,” he asked. Each week, he changed them to make sure the Littles didn’t memorize the vision test. As she read, he shifted between her legs, taking the tray of supplies with him, and took a seat on the rolling stool.

When she finished reciting the letters, he was pleased to see she had successfully identified them. “Good girl.” He stroked his hands down her inner thighs, coaxing her to spread her thighs widely.

Taking a second, he appreciated the beautiful scenery in front of him. She was wet already, revealing her excitement. Dr. Richards prided himself on taking care of all the Littles with the highest level of professionalism. With his Little, he allowed himself to appreciate her as a Daddy for a brief moment before switching back to doctor mode and pulling on gloves.

“I’m going to examine your labia now, Zoey. Just relax.”

He carefully felt her inner and outer lips. Lubricant was totally unnecessary with all the slick juices already wetting her. Turning on the spotlight lamp, he focused the beam directly between her legs. He knew she could feel the slight heat. Dr. Richards traced her vaginal entrance and stroked over her clit, loving the quick intake of breath he heard Zoey take. Pushing the hood back fully to expose the bundle of nerves, he tapped on it lightly to judge her responsiveness.

“Daddy!” she whispered.

“I know, Little girl. It’s hard to stay still. Don’t worry if you get excited. I’ll need to see you orgasm as well.”

Pressing two fingers into her channel, he explored her vaginal walls carefully. Her body responded with a flood of slickness. When he was finished, Dr. Richards removed his fingers and opened a drawer to pull out a small speculum from the warmer. He rubbed the implement around her opening to stimulate her further and warn her what was coming next before pressing it deeply inside and opening up the device.

Zoey moaned as the speculum stretched her tight channel. He focused the light to examine her cervix. Taking his time, Dr. Richards painted a vitamin-infused liquid mixture on her interior surfaces with a long swab and dabbed carefully at the entrance of her womb. It would take a few seconds to register,

but soon, Zoey would feel the warming sensation it created. Making sure she had all the nutrients she needed was important. He gently removed the speculum.

“Ooo!” she gasped and he knew it had begun working.

Before capping the mixture, Dr. Richards dipped a fresh applicator into the liquid and swirled it around her clitoris. Finished with his tray, he stood and carried it to the counter, allowing the newest site to feel the sensations fully.

“Daddy! I feel funny. I’m all hot.”

“Let’s get you some liquids to cool you off,” he suggested and opened the storage closet to wheel out a support holding a bulging enema bag.

Distracted by the erotic warmth, Zoey couldn’t pay much attention to his actions. Dr. Richards removed the plug in her bottom and inserted the thick nozzle that was wider in the middle to hold it firmly in place. With a click, he started the flow of the mixture. It was cool, not cold.

The impact of the heat-generating mixture already inside her and the cool water currently flowing into her made Zoey gasp. “Daddy! It’s too much!”

“I can take care of that, Little girl. I’ll just rub this in,” he explained as he massaged the liquid on her clit. Within seconds, she exploded into a massive orgasm.

As she recovered, Dr. Richards unfastened her hands and the belt across her abdomen. That would become uncomfortable as her tummy filled. When she could think to move, he directed, “Let’s shift you onto your knees.”

Obediently, Zoey allowed him to help her into position. With her bottom lifted into the air and kneeling on the special platforms Dr. Richards extended for her on the sides of the

table, Zoey rested her chest and head on the padded top as he secured her calves in place.

“How does that feel, Zoey?”

“Good, Daddy. I feel good.”

Dr. Richards put away all his supplies as he kept an eye on Zoey and the deflating bag. It has been placed carefully where she couldn't see how much solution remained. Standing beside her slight body, Dr. Richards rubbed her back and reached under her to stroke a pattern on her abdomen, easing the liquid deeper.

“You're doing so well, Zoey. Let your Daddy tell you about all the fun we're going to have.”

“I can't wait, Daddy. And now, I'm going to feel good.”

“That's perfect, Zoey, because you're going to enjoy yourself so much without tummy problems.”

“Thank you, Daddy, for helping me.”

“You're very welcome, Little girl,” he said, allowing his hand to stroke between her legs as a reward for her politeness.

Chapter 3

Zoey sat as close to her Daddy as the seatbelt would allow her. Dividing her attention between peering out the windshield and keeping track of their path on the GPS, she tried not to bounce with excitement when they turned into a long driveway.

“We’re almost there, Daddy! Can we swim first?”

“After we carry in our luggage, we’ll look around then you can swim if you would like,” Dr. Richards assured her as he stopped in front of the door.

It took all Zoey’s patience to wait as her Daddy put the car in park and got out of the car. When he stopped to peel a leaf off the windshield, she thought she might die from suspense. Finally, he opened her door and released her seatbelt, letting her slide out of the car.

Zoey turned in a circle trying to look everywhere at the same time. “Whoa!” she said, leaning against her Daddy for support when he wrapped an arm around her.

“That makes you dizzy every time,” he reminded her.

“I know. But it’s fun until things go spinning.”

“Come on, twirly. Let’s go check out the house.”

Dr. Richards opened the lock with the code in the confirmation email. He opened the door and scooped Zoey up into his arms to carry her over the threshold. Clinging to his shoulders, she smiled up at him. It was almost like their wedding day.

“Happy anniversary, Zoey. I’m so glad you’re in my life,” her Daddy shared as he set her feet down on the flooring. Pulling Zoey into his arms, he hugged her tight before kissing her.

“I love you, Daddy,” she told him with a big smile that couldn’t contain all the wonderful things she felt about him.

“I love you, too.”

“Can we swim now?”

“Soon, Zoey. Let’s check out the house.”

Dr. Richards took something that looked like a thick pen out of his pocket and turned it on. Immediately, it started beeping and he turned to scan the hallway. Pointing at a small device, he warned, “There’s a camera, just as they stated in the listing. There should be another one at the back entrance and a couple outside.”

“That thing can detect cameras?” she asked, looking at it.

“Supposedly. Paul gave it to me to make sure there were none other than what they reported. Bad people sometimes use cameras for more than security.”

“Let’s look in every room.” Spooked, Zoey slid her hand into his.

“Let’s go.”

When they got to the kitchen, Zoey stopped in her tracks. A huge bouquet of flowers sat on the island. “Wow! They left

flowers for us?”

“There’s a card. Let’s see what it says,” Dr. Richards suggested as they got closer.

As he plucked the card out of the gorgeous display, Zoey leaned forward to hover her nose over one blossom. Inhaling deeply, she sighed in delight. “They smell so good.”

“Happy Anniversary, Zoey. I love you,” Dr. Richards read.

“They love me?” Zoey said in confusion. “Do I know the people who own this house?”

“No, but you know the man who sent the flowers.” Dr. Richards held out the card.

“You sent them!” she said with a big smile. “Thank you, Daddy. I love you, too.”

“Come on, Little girl. Let’s keep exploring.”

By the last room, Zoey had recovered from the weird feeling of being watched. Now, she felt like a super sleuth, using high-tech gear to spot cameras and bugs. It was fun being a detective.

“It’s all okay, Zoey. Just remember that you’re on camera when you’re in the front hallway and at the back door and pool area. No skinny dipping for you this trip.”

“I’d feel funny not wearing clothes anyway,” she rushed to assure him.

“I know, sweetheart. Shall we bring our suits in and go for a swim now?”

“Yes, please!”

In just a few minutes, they had their suitcases open and propped up on the luggage racks in the master bedroom. Dr.

Richards helped Zoey strip off her travel clothes and put on her pink and blue bikini. It perfectly matched his tropical swim trunks.

Out by the pool, they found thick towels and lounge chairs. Zoey chose one in the sun so she could work on her tan. A bright pink object caught her eye. “Look, Daddy,” she said, pointing. “They have inflatable things over there. I think that’s a flamingo.”

“Sunscreen first and then we’ll go explore. Would you like to float around on a flamingo’s back?” he asked, grinning at her.

“Of course. Maybe there’s something fun for you, too.”

Zoey tried to stand still as her Daddy spread sunscreen on her. He was thorough and covered every inch of her skin, dipping under the edges to make sure he didn’t miss any bits. Running under her top, he brushed over the sensitive swell of her breasts and she felt her nipples tighten immediately. Talking sternly to herself, Zoey tried not to respond. His fingers spreading the protective cream under her bikini bottoms destroyed that resolution. She could feel the thin material getting soaked.

She knew Dr. Richards knew what was happening inside her. He always knew everything.

“Swim now. Playtime later. Okay?” he asked.

“Okay, Daddy. Can I help you with your suntan lotion?” she offered.

“Get my back for me please, Zoey.”

Eager to help, Zoey squeezed the bottle with enthusiasm and stared in horror at the vat of lotion sitting in the palm of her hand and starting to drip over. “Sorry,” she whispered.

“You just got enough for my whole body. How thoughtful.”

Dr. Richards scooped up a bunch and put dabs on his chest, legs, and arms before rubbing some on his face and turning around to present his back. She dabbed a bit on his legs and ended up with just enough to cover his muscular form.

Zoey loved spreading it all over his legs. When she got too close to his inner thighs, Dr. Richards warned, “Be a good girl, Zoey.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said, quickly sliding her hand down his leg. She’d known she didn’t have permission to touch him intimately, but had thought, maybe, he might let her. She smiled at the ground, knowing he had responded to her touch.

“Minx. You don’t want a spanking on our anniversary,” he warned her without a bit of sternness in his tone. He booped her nose, making her smile.

“Can we get in now?” she asked.

“Let me get in and then you can jump in if you want.”

Zoey nodded, dancing with excitement as her Daddy turned and dove into the water, barely making a splash. He was good at everything. When he turned around and held out his hands, she took two large steps to the side and enthusiastically cannonballed in, making a huge wave of water.

When she surfaced, her Daddy was laughing as he swiped his hair back. “Did I get you wet?”

“Of course, you did! We’re lucky there’s water left in the pool.”

Looking around in concern, Zoey noted the water still touched the top of the tile decorations. “Daddy! I didn’t splash all the water out of the pool. Look! The concrete is still dry over there.”

“It is. I’m teasing, Zoey. Come here.”

She swam to him and wrapped her arms and legs around his body. Dr. Richards hugged her close and they enjoyed the beautiful scenery on the outside of the net cage that kept all the mosquitos and other pests away. Loving the feel of the water lapping against her and the sun shining down on her, Zoey laid back in the water. Dr. Richards supported her with a hand under her shoulders and thighs as she floated.

“We could go get the floaties and you could sunbathe, too,” Zoey suggested when she peeked up at him.

“I’m happy with you in my arms right now. Let’s do that in a little bit.”

When the sun glared into her eyes too much, Zoey turned over and practiced putting her face into the water. She hadn’t grown up swimming so it was still slightly scary not to be able to breathe. Her Daddy had worked with her to conquer most of her fear. She still loved having him there to make sure she was okay.

“Can I swim to the side and get the flamingo?” she asked after several minutes of practice.

“I think that’s a perfect idea.”

Dr. Richards gave her a bit of a push to start her out and Zoey swam to the edge of the pool. Pulling herself out of the water, she ran toward the floaties.

“Walk, Little girl!”

Slowing down, she peeked over her shoulder, giving her Daddy an ‘I’m sorry’ look. “Do you want me to bring the white one for you? I don’t know what it is.”

As she reached the large floats, she grabbed the flamingo and carried it awkwardly to the edge of the water before laying it carefully on the edge of the pool so it would be handy but not float away. Returning for the white one, she pulled it away from the wall and gasped. “It’s a swan, Daddy. Swans are for princesses, not Daddies.”

“I guess I’ll have to adopt the flamingo then,” he answered easily.

When she had the swan at the side of the pool, she placed it in the water and crawled onto the flat base on its back. Zoey wobbled for a few seconds before she tumbled into the water. Coming up, she swept her hair out of her eyes and giggled. “I forgot to ask for permission.”

“That’s totally rude. How about if you ask this time and I help lift you onto the floatie?” he asked.

“Good idea!” she turned back to the inflated swan and asked, “Hi, beautiful swan. I would love to be a princess and ride on your back. Would you honk if that’s not okay?”

They both listened intently to see if the swan would refuse. The tweets and songs of the birds in the surrounding area filled the air. No honk sounded.

“I think you have her permission, Little girl. That was very smart to ask.” He carefully corralled the buoyant bird between himself and the wall before lifting Zoey on top. Holding the sides, he stabilized the swan until she got situated.

“I love it up here. Thank you, beautiful swan!” Zoey politely told the swan with a pet to her arching neck.

“Should I ask the flamingo for permission?” Dr. Richards asked as he approached the other pool float.

“Of course, Daddy.” Zoey carefully propped her head up to watch his polite request to board before he launched himself up on the flamingo’s back. “Oopsy!”

“I’m sure I’ve got it figured out,” he assured her after wiping the water from his face.

She tried not to giggle when it took four times for him to master the knack of riding on the brilliant pink float. Her laughter exploded out of her when he laughed at himself. With a wink, he reached to each side and paddled the flamingo close to her swan. Once next to her, he reached his hand for hers and allowed them to float freely around the pool together.

“This is the best,” she said, yawning a few minutes later.

“Do you need a nap, Little girl?”

“I don’t want to go inside, Daddy. Could I just float here?”

“Of course, sweetheart. I’ll make sure you’re safe.”

Confident in his care, Zoey closed her eyes. She loved the feeling of the water underneath her and the warm sun over her. This was a magical place.

Chapter 4

Squeaky clean after her shower with her Daddy, Zoey's tummy growled as he toweled her dry.

“Wow! That sounds ferocious. It's a good thing I didn't let you talk me into any hanky-panky in the shower,” Dr. Richards said with a grin.

“I would have survived,” she blurted.

With a laugh, he hugged her close. “I promise to make the wait worth it when we get back.”

“Are we going somewhere?” she asked, huddled in her towel as he dried his chiseled body dry.

“We have an anniversary dinner to enjoy.”

“Somewhere fancy?” she asked, crossing her fingers that he would say no. Zoey loved all the phenomenal places her Daddy took her, but it always made her a bit nervous having to watch him to make sure she didn't choose the wrong fork or eat off the wrong bread plate.

“Not at all. A doctor at the hospital suggested this place. It's his family's favorite place to eat in the area. Supposedly, they have the best hushpuppies ever.”

“I'm not eating puppies,” she said, glaring at him.

“It’s a type of fried batter, Zoey. No puppies were harmed in the making of the treat.”

“Oh. I haven’t had that before. Is it good?”

“I have a feeling you’ll eat your weight in hushpuppies.”

“Yum. Then it has to be good.” Her stomach demanded food with an urgent rumble.

“Let’s get clothes on and head to the restaurant. First some lotion on your skin. I don’t want you to get all dried out from the sun and pool time,” Dr. Richards said, stripping her towel from her body.

“I think you got some tan lines.” He traced over the faint difference where her bikini top had covered her breast.

The feel of his finger touching her skin sent a thrill through her body. Zoey clenched her thighs together as the wetness of her arousal gathered between her legs. She’d loved his hands spreading slick soap over her skin as he cleaned the pool water and suntan lotion from her skin. Now, he stirred up those feelings she’d attempted to push away when he’d announced no play before dinner.

Before she could comment on his discovery, Dr. Richards guided her out of the bathroom and into the master bedroom where he had opened their suitcases. He quickly selected an outfit for her and knelt in front of her to help her into her panties.

“These panties are going to be wet immediately,” he said as he settled them in place, feeling her heat. “I’m going to have to take care of you when we get home. But first, let’s fill your tummy.”

“I’d like that, Daddy. I mean, both things.”

He pulled her close to kiss her thoroughly. “I think both things are a good idea.”

In a few minutes, they were both dressed and headed out the door. Zoey licked her strawberry lip gloss her Daddy had spread over her lips. She danced happily next to the car as he opened the door. Zoey couldn't wait to see where they were going.

“Here it is,” Dr. Richards announced, pulling into the busy parking lot of a large restaurant next to the water.

Leaning forward to peer out the windshield, Zoey watched all the people streaming in and out of the brightly colored building. “This looks like fun. Everyone is smiling. That's a good sign. Right, Daddy?”

“It's a very good sign, Little girl. Look. Here's a parking spot for us.”

As they walked into the restaurant, Zoey noticed a small shop with restaurant T-shirts, hats, and an assortment of fun items. She stared hard at a stuffed crab as her Daddy gave them his name at the front desk. He was so cute.

“I love our mascot. He's adorable,” a sweet voice echoed her thoughts.

“He is. I love him, too,” Zoey confessed as she turned back to look at the friendly face that matched the voice perfectly.

“I'm Buffy. I'll take you to your table. I get to wait on you today,” the young brunette told them and waved a hand to have them follow her.

“What did you see, Zoey?” Dr. Richards asked as they walked.

“Oh, nothing, Daddy. It was just something cute,” she assured him quickly. Zoey didn’t like to ask her Daddy for anything. He’d already done so much for her—and she had a million stuffies.

“Zoey.”

His tone demanded she tell him. “They had a cute crab stuffie in the gift shop. I bet kids love him.”

“Everyone loves Crabbie,” Buffy assured her as she indicated a table.

Dr. Richards pulled out a chair and helped Zoey sit down before sitting next to her. Buffy set down menus in front of them and asked for their drink orders.

“Zoey will take a virgin strawberry daquiri and I’d like a glass of lemonade. Water for us as well and an order of hushpuppies,” Dr. Richards requested, watching Zoey’s reaction to make sure she was okay with his choices. She nodded eagerly.

“Great choices. I’ll be back in a flash. The specials are on the menu and truthfully, everything is good,” Buffy assured them as she left.

“We’ll stop by the gift shop to see what they have. You might want a souvenir,” Dr. Richards suggested.

“You don’t have to buy me anything. We’re on this great trip.”

“I don’t have to do anything, but I like making you happy. We’ll look on the way out.”

“I’d like that, Daddy,” she confessed.

“Good. Now, let’s choose something for dinner.” He opened a menu and set it in front of her before looking at the

other one.

“Hushpuppies!” Buffy announced, setting a brimming plate between the two of them before delivering their water glasses. “I’ll be back with your drinks, but you looked hungry.”

“I am. Thank you.”

Leaning forward to peer at the plate in the center of the table, Zoey was puzzled. “Why do they call them hushpuppies? They don’t look like dogs at all.”

“You know, I don’t know where the name comes from but they are amazing. Especially ours.” Buffy waited for Zoey to pluck one from the pile and take a bite.

“Oh, my,” Zoey said as the flavor burst over her tongue. “That’s incredible.”

“I know.” With a wave, Buffy darted off.

“These are delicious, Daddy.”

“Let me try one,” Dr. Richards suggested and took a big bite. “These are the best I’ve ever eaten. Look at the menu, Little girl. Let’s add something to your tummy other than hushpuppies.”

Munching happily, Zoey tried to choose something. Everything sounded yummy. By the time Buffy was back with their drinks, Zoey had whittled it down to two. Deciding to ask the expert, she consulted with Buffy.

“What’s better? The boiled shrimp or the stuffed shrimp?”

“It’s pretty hard to mess up boiled shrimp. You can get them everywhere. The stuffed shrimp are my absolute favorite off the menu.”

“I’ll take those,” Zoey decided immediately.

“Make that two,” Dr. Richards decided.

“You won’t be sorry,” Buffy assured him before going to put in their order.

Zoey picked up her tall, curved glass filled with the icy strawberry mixture and sucked on the colorful straw. “Yum. This is delicious. Want to try it?”

Her Daddy took a tentative drink and hummed his approval. “That is good.”

“You can have more if you wish,” she assured him.

“Thank you, sweetheart. Have you had a great day?”

“The best. I like it here. You know, not forever. I like home bestest, but maybe we could come here again?”

“I think that would be a very good idea.”

After a very yummy dinner, Dr. Richards left Buffy a generous tip before escorting Zoey to the gift shop. There he bought them matching bright pink T-shirts with the dancing crab on it. They tucked those in the paper bag that he took charge of because his Little girl’s arms were full. Zoey carried the stuffie she’d fallen in love with to the car and hugged it all the way home.

Chapter 5

Crabbie sat on the lounge chair atop a pad of thick towels, another propped over him so he could stay dry but not get sunburned, while Zoey and Dr. Richards swam the next morning. It had taken major engineering skills to craft the perfect haven for the stuffie, but Zoey and her Daddy had worked together on the important project.

She loved having time with her Daddy. It didn't matter what they did. Cuddling on the couch to watch a movie, eating a special dinner, traveling... Zoey loved everything. Best of all, she could tell he treasured their time together just as much as she did.

Unable to stay away from him, she slid off the beautiful swan float and swam over to the flamingo. Clinging to one florescent pink wing, she whispered, "Daddy?"

"Did you fall off?" Dr. Richards raised his head to look at her.

"No... Um..."

"Do you need to go inside to potty?"

"No... I'd like to go inside."

“Too much sun?” he asked, sliding off the float to run his hands over her skin he’d carefully protected with sunscreen.

“No. Um... Daddy, could you make love to me?”

“Definitely.”

Dr. Richards wrapped an arm around her waist to lift her off her feet and took big bouncy steps through the water toward the steps. She couldn’t help giggling at his enthusiasm. As soon as they reached the pool deck, he wrapped her in a blanket and threw her over his shoulder to carry Zoey into the house.

He quickly untied her bikini top and pushed her bottoms to the flooring before removing his trunks. Rubbing her body free of the water and the suntan lotion, Dr. Richards whisked himself dry as well. He tossed the towel away and turned his full attention on her. “You need Daddy’s attention, Little girl?” he asked in a voice husky with passion.

“Please, Daddy. I’ve been good.”

“You’ve been very good, Zoey,” he answered, scooping her into his arms and tossing her onto the unmade bed. “I think I need a snack to bolster my energy.”

“A snack?” she repeated, bewildered that he was going to stop and eat now.

“My favorite kind,” he answered as his eyes twinkled in amusement as he circled her ankles with his hands. Towing her to the edge of the bed, Dr. Richards lowered himself to his knees between her outstretched thighs.

“Oh!” Zoey felt her cheeks heat and knew she was blushing as he lowered his mouth to press a kiss against her bare mound. Her eyes closed as he traced his tongue down the

seam of her pussy as she tried not to wiggle. She certainly didn't want to move away from the caress.

As if reading her mind, Dr. Richards gripped her upper thighs, pushing them wider before pinning her in place as he explored her pink folds. His murmurs of delight were so hot. Zoey loved that he treasured every bit of her. She gasped, her thoughts scattering as he thrashed the point of his tongue across that small bundle of nerves he'd discovered. Her body responded with a gush of slick juices.

Zoey wanted him so bad. She wrapped her hands around his powerful shoulders and gripped his skin to tether herself in the sea of sensations he lavished on her.

She felt his hand lift from her thigh to caress her intimately. He drew a circle around her opening before pressing two fingers into her wetness. Zoey arched her back to get closer. Needing to get closer.

In a flash, an orgasm crashed over her. He knew her body so well. She responded to his skilled caresses just as she had from the beginning. His lovemaking made her feel so much.

"Daddy, let me," she pleaded, wanting to give him pleasure as well.

"Daddy's in charge, Little girl," he said sternly.

That tone turned her on as much as sweet endearments. She nodded eagerly. To her delight, he kissed the inside of her thigh before lifting her leg over his shoulder. When he repeated the actions on the other side, she held onto him, knowing what would come next.

"Wheee!" she squealed as he straightened, pulling her hips off the bed. She felt his thick cock settle against her. He rubbed his shaft through her wetness and over her sensitive

tissues before backing up slightly to align the broad head with the mouth of her opening.

Pushing her head into the mattress, Zoey arched her body as he filled her completely—stretching her with the most delicious burn. She tightened her grip on his shoulders without realizing it. A moan fell from her lips as he leaned over her to capture her nipple in his mouth. The pop as he released the taut tip he'd sucked sent a shiver down her body and straight to the sensations gathering between her thighs.

All she could do was caress his hard chest, hold on, and let him tantalize her. Each stroke of his hands and hot kiss pressed to her body captivated her. She responded over and over with orgasms that grew in strength until she begged, “Daddy, now. Come with me now.”

“Daddy’s in charge,” he reminded her, but sped up his thrusts until she had no idea where she ended and he began.

“Ahhh!” she screamed into the room and heard his deep groan of completion as he continued to move to extend their pleasure.

When their bodies finally stilled, Dr. Richards lifted her to lie on the pillows. She held her arms out to him as he crawled up beside her. Wrapped in her Daddy’s warm embrace, she tumbled back into sleep as she listened to his calming heartbeat.

Chapter 6

“It’s a good thing we protected Crabby, Daddy,” Zoey said when they woke up and decided to go for another swim.

“You mean before you propositioned me?” he teased as he reapplied sunscreen to her soft skin.

“Daddy!” she protested and felt herself blush before whispering, “It was a good idea.”

“It was an incredible idea. There’s nothing I like more than making love to you, Zoey,” he assured her before pressing a hard kiss to her lips.

“I guess you do have to take care of your patients sometime,” she teased.

“I do—not only those in the hospital but the other Littles who come to my home office. Does it bother you that I treat the others in our community?”

“No, Daddy. I want everyone to be healthy and happy. As long as you love me, I’m happy. Beyond ecstatic, actually. You chose me out of everyone.”

“I did choose the sweet Little who walked in to apply for a job you didn’t really understand on the recommendation of a quirky couple who you waited on at the diner.”

“They loved each other and I liked them a lot. Jon and Cecily were living the life they wanted to live despite what anyone thought. That’s incredibly brave. I wanted that.”

“I’m glad. You were definitely the companion I never thought I would be lucky enough to meet,” Dr. Richards assured her as he helped her into the pool.

He scooped her up in his arms and held her close as he supported her in the warm water. They enjoyed the beautiful pool and their togetherness for several minutes as small waves lapped around them.

Dr. Richards leaned in and kissed her softly. “Happy anniversary, Zoey.”

“Happy anniversary, Daddy. I’m glad we have another day together—just us.”

“Me, too,” he assured her fondly. “What would you like to do for dinner tonight?”

“Mmm... Pizza?”

“I think I remember seeing a list of delivery suggestions on that information sheet in the kitchen. Let’s go look.”

Once they were both wrapped in a thick beach towel, Dr. Richards led her to where he’d found the information the hosts left for rentals. The seafood restaurant was number one on the list but Angelino’s held the second position. There was a number to call for takeout or to make reservations.

“Looks like they don’t deliver here. Let’s get cleaned up and go out for dinner, Zoey.”

“I could stay here while you go pick it up,” Zoey suggested, trying to make things easy on him.

“Not going to happen, Little girl. This house is too isolated. I would break every speed limit to get back home quickly. Besides, I packed your favorite big girl dress just in case we wanted to celebrate our anniversary somewhere fancy.”

“You did? How fun! Let’s go!” Zoey celebrated with an impromptu beach towel swirling dance.

“Let’s go get ready, twinkle toes,” he suggested, chuckling.

Lifting her forearm, Zoey sniffed her skin and wrinkled her nose. “I have to shower, Daddy. I smell like coconut.”

“You don’t think that coconut goes with Italian food?” he joked.

“No. Red wine goes with spaghetti,” she shared.

“Red wine, hmmm? Isn’t that your favorite?”

“Maybe I could have a small glass?” Zoey asked, holding her index finger and thumb just slightly apart to indicate a smidgen of wine.

“I think on our anniversary a glass of wine is warranted.”

“Come on, Daddy. Let’s hurry.”

Excited, she twirled the towel around again to celebrate and heard a tinkling sound.

“Don’t move, Zoey!” Dr. Richards commanded.

Instantly, she froze. “What did I do?”

“One swirl too many. I’m afraid you knocked over your flowers.”

“Oh, no! Did I kill them?” she asked, turning around to look. Her toe brushed something sharp. “Ouch!”

“Don’t move, Little girl. There’s glass on the floor. Stand perfectly still, like a statue. Did you hurt yourself?”

Zoey looked down at her toe, curling it upward. “No, I’m okay. But my flowers. I killed them,” she lamented, seeing the puddle of water spread out from the impact site.

“They’ll be fine. Stay where you are. I’m going to get some shoes and be back to get this all picked up.”

Zoey stood quietly looking at her flowers for a few seconds. She could save a couple if she reached a bit. Leaning toward the pile of blossoms, she stretched out her arm. Her fingertips brushed the leaf of one rose and she bent a bit more to snag it up.

She could hear her Daddy coming back. Quickly, she hid the flower behind her back. He’d know she hadn’t followed his instructions.

Dr. Richards appeared wearing his sneakers. He opened the pantry door and grabbed a dustpan and broom. Sweeping a path to Zoey, he whisked the glass shards away from her. As he circled her, she tried to sneak the rose around her body so he wouldn’t see it.

“Is there something you wish to tell me, Little girl?”

“Okay. So, I tried to rescue the flowers and this one jumped into my hand.”

“Statues don’t rescue flowers,” he commented as he continued to work.

“Mmm,” she hummed. “Maybe I’m a unique statue with special powers.”

“You’re going to be a statue with a red bottom if you don’t stop moving.”

In a few minutes, Dr. Richards had cleaned up the water and glass. “Let’s save the flowers now,” he suggested. Picking up the pile, he discovered a few glass shards.

“These are too dangerous to keep around if the glass is in the stems,” he explained as he scooped them into the trash.

“But my flowers!”

“I’m sorry, Zoey. Give me a minute and I’ll look at the one you have to make sure it’s safe.”

After a final sweep of where the flowers had been, Dr. Richards gave her the all clear. “You can move now, Zoey. Let me look at that blossom.” He checked it over carefully for the small pieces of glass that had pierced the stems and leaves of the others. “Miraculously, this one is okay.”

“Can we put it in water before it dies?”

“Of course.”

He found a glass and filled it with water. Zoey placed it safely inside.

“I bet I could save some of the others,” she suggested.

“No way, Little girl. There are slivers of glass everywhere in those blooms.”

“This one looks okay,” she said, reaching into the trashcan.

“Zoey!” Dr. Richards scooped her up and slung her over his shoulder. “I think I told you no.” As if to ensure she listened, he popped a smart spank to her vulnerable bottom.

“Ouch! I’m sorry! I just wanted to save a few more! Couldn’t I...”

Smack!

“No more, Zoey. I will get you flowers another time.”

“But I wanted those flowers.” She squirmed fiercely to get down. That earned her two more swats—one on each cheek.

“Zoey, stop wiggling.”

“You’re just a big meanie,” she accused. When that didn’t earn her another swat, Zoey knew she’d gone too far.

When he reached the bedroom, Dr. Richards set her down and sat on a wooden chair at the side of the room. Zoey stood between his legs. “What did you call me?”

“A meanie?” she guessed. A sick feeling gathered in her tummy. “I’m sorry, that wasn’t nice.”

“It is not acceptable to call people names, Zoey.”

“I was worried about the flowers and didn’t think,” she rushed to explain. “Are you going to spank me?”

“Do you think you deserve a spanking?” he probed.

She shuffled her feet on the carpet and felt a twinge of discomfort. “My big toe hurts,” she blurted quickly to distract him.

“Did you hurt yourself?” he asked as he lifted her onto his lap. He looked over her feet and found only a small scratch. “We can clean that in the shower and you’ll be fine.”

“Thanks, Daddy.”

“Do you think you deserve a spanking, Zoey?” he repeated.

“I don’t want a spanking.” She answered a different question on purpose.

Dr. Richards looked at her and waited.

“Yes,” Zoey admitted after several long seconds. When he said nothing, she slowly wiggled around into position.

“Lift your hips, Zoey.” When she pushed her bottom up, Dr. Richards tugged her bikini bottoms down and over her feet.

“I’m sorry, Daddy.”

“I’m very glad to hear that Zoey,” he commented as he peppered her bottom with swats.

When her bottom felt hot, he stopped abruptly. “I think that will do. While you drink your wine tonight like a big girl, you’ll sit on a warm bottom. I hope that will help you remember that I always want the best for you. Flowers are not more important than you getting hurt.”

She wiggled when he squeezed one buttock and nodded. “I should have paid attention to what you said.”

“Exactly.”

Dr. Richards lifted her off his lap and stood her in front of him. “Let’s get ready for dinner.”

He stripped off her bikini top and tossed it to land near her previously discarded bottoms. She danced back to give him room as he stood up to take off his trunks. Ushering her into the large shower, he let the water warm up before guiding her under the spray.

Zoey stood quietly for a couple of minutes as he soaped her skin to remove the suntan lotion. When he reached her stingy bottom, she remembered their plans before she’d caused such problems. “I feel really bad that I messed up our plans.”

“You didn’t get spanked for causing an accident, Zoey. There’s a reason it’s called an accident. You didn’t mean to do it. Maybe it’s my fault for not telling you to not play with your towel.”

“You couldn’t know that I’d fling it all that way,” she said, quickly erasing his responsibility.

“Did you?”

“No.”

“Then the only thing you did was not follow your Daddy’s instructions. The spanking took care of that,” he answered as he turned off the water. “Let’s get dressed and go have a wonderful meal.”

Dr. Richards dried her gently and took her hand as they walked into the bedroom. He pulled the beautiful dress out of his suitcase where he had hidden it and laid it on the bed where she could see it. After helping her into underwear first, he picked up the dress and lowered it over her head.

As she smoothed it into place, Zoey blurted, “Do I still get to have wine?”

“Is it our anniversary?” he asked.

“Yes,” she answered, nodding eagerly.

“Do you know I love you more every day?” he asked before dropping a kiss on the top of her head.

“Yes, Daddy. I know because I love you so much it almost makes me cry and every day it grows inside me,” she admitted with tears in her eyes before rushing forward to wrap her arms around him.

“Tonight is a celebration of all the wonderfulness in our lives. I’d say that rates a glass of wine.”

She hugged him a bit closer and pressed a kiss to his bare shoulder.

“The restaurant won’t let me in just wrapped in a towel,” he reminded her.

“Oh!” She stepped back and giggled, thinking of all the peoples expressions if he walked inside like that.

Chapter 7

Waking up the next day in her Daddy's arms, Zoey pressed an angel-soft kiss to Dr. Richards' chest. Sunlight filled the room, letting her know without even checking the time they'd slept late. She was proud of him. He never did that. He worked so hard. Zoey loved he could recharge his batteries now with her.

She studied his handsome face, relaxed in slumber. Zoey would never forget the first time she saw him. Hurt, wet, and on the edge of hopelessness, she'd tucked herself in the only shelter she could find. When he found her, the kind concern that showed on his face had made her heart skip a beat even as she worried she was in trouble for trespassing.

His eyes fluttered open to meet hers and he smiled at her. "Good morning, Little girl. I love waking up with you in my arms."

"Me, too, Daddy. Did you sleep well?"

"Perfectly. A Little girl wore me out before she let me go to sleep."

"It was the wine," she confessed.

"I may have to start adding it to your bottles then, Little girl," he teased with a grin.

“Yuck. Milk and wine. That won’t be good.” Zoey made an awful face that made him laugh out loud.

“That doesn’t sound good. How about if I just take you out for dinner, wine, and dancing again?”

“I’d like that. It’s fun to dance with you. I was a bit scared with everyone watching, but my dress was swooshy and you know what you’re doing.”

“Your dress is beautiful. You are a delight to dance with. I enjoyed it as well.”

“I’m much better on the dance floor than I am in the kitchen,” she reminded him.

“You are,” he agreed with eyes that seemed to twinkle.

“What are we going to do today?” Zoey asked.

“I thought I’d make killer pancakes for breakfast. Then, you have a big decision. Pool or shopping?”

“What kind of shopping?” she asked suspiciously.

“Clothes, shoes, etc. There’s an outlet mall near us that we could go check out.”

“I don’t need anything, Daddy,” she rushed to assure him. Zoey already had everything a Little girl could need.

“There’s one store in particular I’d like to visit. Would you go with me for a quick visit and then we can come back to play in the pool?”

“Of course. I’m glad to go with you, Daddy.”

Zoey knew it had to be something important for him. He never shopped. At the hospital, he wore scrubs, of course, in the operating room, and dress shirts with ties and slacks while

at the office or treating Littles at home. She hoped it wouldn't be a horribly boring store like an office supply place.

“You might just enjoy it, too, Little girl.”

Realizing her expression must be giving away her thoughts, Zoey imagined happy things—like a stuffie store or a petting zoo. “I'm sure I will.”

“Come on, Zoey girl. Let's get cleaned up for breakfast.”

He rolled to the edge of the bed and turned around to scoop her out of bed. Kissing her deeply, he held her close to his hard body. Zoey wrapped her arms around his neck and devoted herself to his kiss. Experiencing this closeness with him felt as thrilling as it had when he'd kissed her for the first time.

She tried to plant the idea in his head that they should go back to bed and delay breakfast for an hour or so, but her stomach growled loudly. Dr. Richards pulled back slightly with a chuckle of amusement.

“I think your body is demanding pancakes.”

“Damn stomach,” she mumbled, then gasped when he spanked her bottom with one large hand.

“No cussing, Zoey.”

“Darned mouth,” she said deliberately.

“Much better. Come on, Little girl. Shower time.”

A half hour later, she wore a pair of shorts and a cute top. Climbing up to sit on the stool at the island, Zoey watched Dr. Richards assemble the ingredients to make his to-die-for pancakes. They were one of her favorite things he cooked. Ever since she'd gotten to try butter and syrup on a pancake, Zoey had vowed to treasure each time she got to eat them.

“Do you like cooking?” she asked.

“I do. But I like spending time with you and taking care of everyone else more. Besides, Jillian is a wonderful cook.”

“I do like what Jillian prepares. She’s an expert in the kitchen. We have cooking time each week. I’m learning how to make a few things.”

“What’s your favorite thing to make? Maybe I should have let you make the pancakes.”

“No way. I had Jillian take those off the list of items I want to learn how to cook. Yours are too good. I think we’re making cupcakes next. It’s two lessons—the cake and the frosting.”

“I can’t wait to try one of those. Do you know what flavor you’re going to concoct?”

“We thought we might try Mocha Latte.”

“Mocha, huh?” he asked as he set the completed batter aside to place the griddle on the stove to warm up. “I don’t suppose that has coffee in it?”

“I think so,” she answered carefully.

“That’s a good excuse to brew coffee,” Dr. Richards pointed out.

Without thinking, Zoey answered, “Yes. We’ll have to make a pot.”

“And sample it to make sure it tastes good?” he asked as he poured pancake batter on the griddle.

She could see he was making her a bunny with long ears and a poof tail. Zoey leaned forward onto the counter as she watched his artistry. Distracted, she didn’t think about what she was admitting, “Probably.”

“Hmmm,” he said as if considering her answer.

Immediately, warning sirens blared in her mind. She’d just exposed their plot to get to drink iced coffee with all the yummy stuff inside—sugar, cream, etc. “But only if it looks like something’s wrong with the coffee.”

“Of course,” he said, giving her a knowing look as he flipped the golden pancakes. “I bet Paul would taste test it for two Littles who aren’t supposed to have caffeine.”

Zoey stared back at him, trying to come up with a reason that wouldn’t work. Finally, she answered, “That would be perfect as long as he’s home. Paul does have errands he runs on Monday.”

“You just have to make sure you make the cupcakes with coffee in them on a day other than Monday, right?” Dr. Richards asked. “That would keep two Littles from getting into trouble. I know Jillian would appreciate you from getting her bottom punished as well.”

“What a great solution, Daddy!” she declared with a smile plastered on her face. How was she ever going to explain how this masterful plan fell apart?

“Would you like me to butter your bunny?” he asked, totally distracting her from her thoughts. That sounded so funny, she had to laugh.

“Butter my bunny?” she repeated, giggling. “I can do it!” Setting her knife down on the butter stick, she prepared to whack off a big chunk. Dr. Richards set his hand over hers and moved it closer to the end so she’d have a normal size pat of butter instead of a third of the stick.

As she slid the butter over the golden-brown surface, he poured a puddle of syrup on the side of her pancakes. Zoey

smiled her thanks. She liked to dip her pancakes, not get them all soggy. After setting her knife with the butter she didn't melt onto her pancake on the rim of her plate, Zoey cut one ear off her bunny with her fork, dipped it in the sweet liquid, and put it in her mouth. Chewing, she hummed with excitement.

“So good,” she mumbled.

“Chew, then talk, Zoey,” he said, watching her carefully.

Zoey swallowed dramatically before saluting him with her fork. “The best batch yet, Daddy.”

“Thank you, Zoey.”

A couple hours later, Dr. Richards parked his car in front of the large shopping center. He turned to his Little girl who slouched in the seat. He knew she didn't really want to go shopping but was here because he wanted to be here. “Well, Zoey. Are you ready to see my favorite store?”

“Okay, Daddy,” she answered, visibly trying to rally her enthusiasm.

Hiding his smile, Dr. Richards exited the car and circled the hood to help her out. Taking Zoey's hand, he led her past several stores selling clothes and kitchen wares. He stopped outside a store where the windows were decorated with streaks of bright colors.

“Bubbles?” Zoey read the name of the store. Her expression brightened immediately.

“I think this could become your favorite store,” he said with a smile as he opened the door into Little paradise. His fingers tightened around hers as she shifted to dart away.

“Stay with me, Little girl. We’ll go down all the aisles so we won’t miss anything,” he promised. “Let’s get a cart.”

“We can buy stuff?” Zoey asked, exhaling the breath she’d held since he opened the door. She looked around in amazement.

Dr. Richards wisely pulled out a cart and transferred her hand to the wire frame. “Hold onto the cart or me at all times.”

When she nodded, he asked, “Where should we start? On the right side or the left?”

“Over there, please.”

After guiding the cart to the side, Dr. Richards coaxed his Little past the displays. “I promise. We’ll stop and see everything. Look down this row. There are some bath toys. What do you need?”

“Need?” she repeated. Slowly, she shook her head. “I don’t need anything, Daddy.”

“Today, we’re going to live by the number three. You get to pick out three things in each aisle,” Dr. Richards announced. He scolded himself inside for his poor wording of the question. Zoey had lived for so long on the barest of necessities. She would automatically discard all these things as unnecessary for survival, even if she wanted something horribly.

“Three things?” Zoey immediately darted forward to pluck a package from the display that held three adorable figurines. Returning, she held up the treasure she had found as she threaded her fingers between his. “Like these mermaids. There are three in this packet. This could be my three?”

“Actually, that’s just one package so it counts for one thing. You get two more from this aisle. Here’s a floating

island. Do you think your mermaids would like that?" He deliberately chose other words than need.

"They'd love that. Could they have that seahorse? It's probably too expensive," she said quickly.

"They can have the seahorse. We're not worried about money today, Zoey. Today is three day, not money day. Let's go to the next aisle and see what they have there."

"This is plenty, Daddy," Zoey said quickly.

"Three day," Dr. Richards reminded her.

The next aisle held pampering items. Zoey thought very hard about what she should get there. "Daddy, could you try this on?" she asked, holding out a scrubby bath mitt.

Taking it, Dr. Richards pulled it onto his hand and showed Zoey how it fit. "Looks perfect to me. I bet this would feel heavenly."

When Zoey held out her arm, he stroked it gently over her skin. She shivered at the light touch. Dr. Richards smiled at her reaction. His Little girl was so responsive. He suspected it would soften in the water and feel even better.

"I like that, Daddy."

"I do, too. Okay, two more things. What do you think? Want a lavender eye pillow? You can rest in the bathtub."

"That sounds nice. Could we get the neck pillow, too?"

"You definitely need that," Dr. Richards assured her.

Each aisle contained new treasures. Slowly the bottom of the cart filled. Dr. Richards noticed Zoey spending more time looking at the things she'd selected than the new items waiting for her to discover them on the shelves. He knew she was

thinking about the big bathtub that waited for them at home. The rental house didn't have a bathtub, but she could play with some of her toys in the pool.

“Thinking about your tub at home?” he asked.

“I'm going to have so much fun, Daddy.”

“You are. There's one more row. Prepare yourself.”

“Why?” she asked as they turned the corner.

Zoey stared at all the beautiful bottles arranged in front of her. “These are all bubble bath?” she asked in astonishment.

“Some are bath salts, but yes, most are bubble bath. Here's the tough part. Which three are you going to choose?”

“Help me find bubble gum. That's my favorite.”

It took a bit but soon Zoey found a big, pink bottle of that particular scent of bubbles. He watched her look around and knew she was checking for a smaller bottle. Letting Zoey come to her own decision, he waited for a few seconds before selecting it from the shelf and adding it to the cart.

“It looks like bubble gum is the most popular one,” he commented.

“That should count as three. It's huge,” Zoey said quickly.

“One,” Dr. Richards corrected. “You have two left to pick. Let's try a scent you haven't tried before. Here's a lavender.”

“That will put me to sleep,” Zoey said, shaking her head. “Besides, we already have some of that.”

“You decide.”

“How about vanilla and...” She selected the second one and Dr. Richards took that from her to place it in the cart.

“One more.”

Zoey stared at the shelves and he could tell she was looking for something special.

“Snickerdoodle!” She pointed at a label decorated with cookies and bounced on her toes.

“That does sound yummy.” Dr. Richards celebrated a bit more sedately with her as he picked up the bottle. Flicking it open, he tentatively inhaled the fragrance. “Oh, yes!”

“Let me smell,” Zoey asked.

In her enthusiasm to sniff the bottle, she bumped her nose lightly. “It’s on me!”

Zoey sniffed and smiled. “I love it. It makes me hungry for cookies.”

She scrubbed at her nose with her hand to wipe off the soapy mixture. Dr. Richards watched her sniff again and smile at the lingering scent.

“I think that’s a keeper,” he announced and set it into the cart.

Zoey immediately joined him, wrapping her fingers around the metal side. She bounced happily as she looked over all the goodies in the cart. “We’re all done now, Daddy.”

“I’m afraid we’ve run out of aisles.”

“Thank goodness. I think our cart would buckle under the weight of anything else,” she commented.

He knew she was struggling with receiving presents. Even after a few years of being with him, Zoey never asked for anything. He suspected she didn’t want to impose on him.

That hurt his heart. Dr. Richards brushed his hand over her soft hair in a gentle caress.

“Zoey, it makes me happy to buy you things you’ll enjoy.”

“But you give me so much. I don’t need anything else,” she whispered with tears gathering in her eyes.

“Zoey.” Dr. Richards hugged her close, feeling the tension in her body. He held her against him until he felt her relax. “That’s it. These are just things, Zoey. They make us happy and that’s incredible, but do you know what’s most important?”

“What Daddy?”

“That you and I are together.”

She tightened her arms around him and nodded. “I’m glad I found you.”

“Me, too. I love you very much, Zoey.”

“I love you.”

“Shall we buy all our goodies and get out of here so I can kiss you like I want to?” he asked with a wink.

“Please.”

She smiled at him and retook her position next to the cart.

With all their selections finished, Dr. Richard pushed the cart toward the cash registers. He paused next to an assortment of bath towels. “I wonder…”

Taking one from its hanger, he held it out. “Come here, Zoey. Let’s see if this fits.”

Zoey walked forward and turned around so he could wrap the towel around her. It even overlapped in the front. “I think it’s okay, but I don’t need this.”

“Maybe I need it.” Dr. Richards pulled the hood up to cover her hair and announced, “We’re taking it.”

Zoey reached up to feel the hood. “Does it have a horn?”

“It does. Go look in the mirror over there.” Dr. Richards pointed to one on the wall a few feet away.

“Oh! It’s a unicorn!” Zoey rushed to the mirror and looked at the fun bath wrap from all sides. “I love this.”

“Come look at the others to see if you like any of them better,” he suggested.

She dragged her feet over to the rack and looked over the other creations—teddy bear, frog, lion. “I like this one, Daddy.”

“I do, too. Perfect. Let’s put it in the cart.”

“Can I wear it?” she asked, visibly reluctant to take it off.

“If you’d like. I’m sure the cashier has scissors to cut off the tags.”

“Let’s go see!”

As they approached the cash registers near the entrance of the store, a young woman smiled and waved, “I can help you here. I love the unicorn. It’s my favorite of all the towel wraps. Do you want to wear it out?”

“Please,” Zoey asked with hands clasped in front of her.

“Could you take it off for just five seconds and I’ll snip off the tag and ring it up?” the employee asked.

She even counted with Zoey. “One, one thousand, two, one thousand, three, one thousand, four, one thousand, five! There you go.”

With Dr. Richards' help, Zoey wrapped the unicorn back around her and flipped the hood back into place. Her hands stroked over the soft material as she waited for all their selections to be rung up.

In just a few minutes, Dr. Richards carried four sacks to the door as Zoey skipped beside him. They walked through the door back to the array of shops that surrounded them. "I didn't have any other places in mind to visit. Would you like to see the list of all the shops?"

"I want to go back to the house, Daddy, so I can play with my mermaids and all my stuff."

"There's no bathtub," he reminded her.

"It's okay. We'll be back home soon. For now, we'll play in the pool."

"That sounds like fun. Shall we stop for ice cream on the way?"

"Yes, please!"

Chapter 8

“We could just stay one more day,” Zoey pleaded as they set off for home the next afternoon. She huddled inside the unicorn towel he’d had to coax her out of wearing into the pool and bed.

“There’s another group coming to enjoy this house next, Zoey. We’ll have Paul remember this location and we will come back again,” Dr. Richards promised. He didn’t want to leave, either. He’d enjoyed having Zoey to himself as much as his Little girl had wanted all his attention.

“Can we go back to Crabbie’s restaurant?” she asked, squeezing the stuffie who was tucked safely in her arms within the folds of the soft material around her.

“Of course. You could take him to visit his friends.”

“That would be nice to do. Maybe Buffy will be there next year, too,” Zoey suggested.

“I’ll make reservations for her section if you’ll help me remember her name.” Dr. Richards knew Zoey liked being able to help him.

“I won’t forget, Daddy.”

“That’s my Little girl. Who are you going to hug first when we get home?” Dr. Richards asked to help her focus on all the people she loved that would be waiting for her at their home.

“Jillian. Then, Paul. Then, whoever else is there. I did miss everyone. We are very lucky to have such special people in our lives,” she said wisely.

“We are. I was talking about stuffies, but people are even more important.”

Her giggles at misunderstanding filled the car, making him smile. “All my stuffies will be so happy to see me. I might need a few more in bed tonight.”

“How about if they all curl up on the couch with us before bed so they can have Zoey-time?” Dr. Richards answered that unstated question to change the stuffie limit for their king-size bed as an image of a foot deep of stuffies covering the bed appeared in his mind.

“That would probably work. I could just snuggle with a few more than normal,” she tried again.

“Zoey. They will understand that smuggling more stuffies into bed would earn your bottom a spanking.”

“Oh! They don’t want that to happen,” she said quickly.

“Of course, they don’t.”

“I’ll miss the swan floatie. Maybe we could get one for my pool,” she suggested, peeking at him from the corner of her eye.

“It’s probably too big for your kiddie pool. Do you think we should put a pool in at home?”

“We’d lose the lawn for all the games and gatherings we have with the other Littles,” Zoey pointed out quickly.

“That’s what I thought. I think we enjoy our house just as it is. We’ll save pool time for vacations and anniversaries.”

She immediately nodded and patted his arm in agreement. Zoey intertwined her fingers with his when Dr. Richards extended his hand. “Let’s go home, Daddy. If we go right there, we’ll have time for a nap before bedtime.”

“A nap before bedtime?” he repeated, looking over at her in confusion.

She waggled her eyebrows comically to let him know exactly what she meant by nap.

He sped up just a bit—not too much that they would be unsafe. Just a bit, so they could have a longer nap.

Dr. Richards shook his head as the gates to their estate came into view. Bows of every color decorated the iron gates. He glanced over at Zoey who leaned forward, entranced by the pretty display. If he wasn’t wrong, her idea of a nap would be put off for a while.

“Who did that, Daddy?”

“I think we’ll find out in just a few minutes, Zoey.”

As they rounded the curve in the long driveway, a bunch of cars lined the pavement. A large banner announcing, *Happy Anniversary*, hung between the tall columns on the front of their house. Dr. Richards honked as he pulled up and the front doors opened with a spill of waving Littles and their Mommies and Daddies.

“It’s a party?” Zoey asked, waving back frantically.

“I think that’s exactly what this is. A surprise party.”

“You didn’t know?” Zoey looked at him in shock.

“I didn’t know.”

“Surprise!” she yelled before giggling. “Come on, Daddy. Let’s go celebrate with our friends.”

Paul opened her door and peeked in. “Sorry, boss. This happened spontaneously.”

“I love it!” Zoey bounced in her chair with excitement as she tried to get her seatbelt unfastened.

Dr. Richards released it for her and watched her jump out of the car to go throw her arms around as many Littles as she could while holding her unicorn towel in place. He got out at a more sedate speed. “It’s fine, Paul. I’m glad to see all our friends here.”

Calling his hellos, Dr. Richards walked toward the waiting crowd of Daddies and Mommies there to wish him the best. Someone handed him a cup of celebratory punch. He watched the Littles hug and admire Zoey’s new unicorn wrap as well as her tan. One arm flailed around as she shared about the big floaties and showed off Crabbie to the oohs and ahhs of the gathering.

“They’ve got games organized. I hope you didn’t want to relax after your long drive,” Jon mentioned apologetically.

“Not exactly what I had planned but this is very nice of everyone. Zoey missed her friends,” Dr. Richards assured him.

“Daddy! Come on! We’re going to play volleyball. Paul put up the net. Could you hold my unicorn and Crabbie for

me?” Zoey asked, holding them out to him. “I trust you to keep everything safe.”

When he agreed, Zoey cheered and led the pack, running through the house.

“No running, Littles,” he called after them and laughed when one of Penelope’s Daddies, Dylan, commented, “Good luck slowing them down.”

“They’ve been drinking sugared punch for a while, have they, Dylan?” Dr. Richards said, catching sight of the almost empty punch bowl.

“They’re on their second tray of cookies,” Jillian said quietly at his elbow.

“Volleyball followed by a game of tag and jogging around the house a few times might burn off some of that energy,” Dr. Richards suggested.

“Those activities might be on the master schedule,” Benton Gordon agreed, waving a hand at a large piece of white paper that appeared to have been torn from one of Dr. Richards’ exam tables. It was filled with a wide variety of activities listed in a multitude of crayon colors.

“It’s good to be home,” Dr. Richards announced as they joined the Littles on the back lawn. Zoey was right. There wasn’t any space for a pool out here. The growing group of Littles needed all this space. And Zoey loved the baby pool he put out for her every summer.

He watched her rally her team of Littles, getting everyone fired up with compliments, cheers, and hugs. Of course, she ducked under the net to celebrate with the other team when they won a point. His Little was definitely a special young woman.

How could you not love her?

The End

There's more!

Pepper North hopes you've enjoyed a sneak peek into Zoey and Dr. Richards' lives. Visit 4peppernorth.club to download Zoey's story for FREE, join Pepper's newsletter and stay up with the latest news from all the Littles!

About Pepper North

Ever just gone for it? That's what *USA Today* Bestselling Author Pepper North did in 2017 when she posted a book for sale on Amazon without telling anyone. Thanks to her amazing fans, the support of the writing community, Mr. North, and a killer schedule, she has now written more than 80 books!

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