

# Drench My

# Halls



LIV SERDA

# DRENCH MY HALLS

A SMALL TOWN ROMANCE STANDALONE



LIV SERDA

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## NOTE TO READERS:

This book is intended for adult readers, 18 + and contains profanities, detailed sexual acts and possible triggers including explicit sexual scenes, heartbreak, abusive ex, spousal death, attempted sexual assault, mentions of domestic abuse, trauma and divorce.

**If these don't trigger you,  
continue reading Good Girl.**

*To the girls who have been cracked, remember there is  
always someone out there ready to weld us back to who we  
are.*

*No one can take who you are away from you.*

JULIA





## MY MISTAKE BY NICO COLLINS

I got out of my old life as fast as I possibly could. I packed up everything I owned in this two thousand square foot house, well that would fit in my SUV and trailer, and pressed on the gas. I look into the rear view mirror, watching as the glass house that trapped me, disappears from my view. I head out of this god forsaken city in search of a new start. Los Angeles, once my home, now felt like hell. I gave my all to make this place ours. I loved my life, my friends, my home, my clothes. I loved us, until he ruined everything for me.

“How will I be able to contact you?” My editor, Violet, whines over the phone. I grip onto the steering wheel as I roll my eyes.

“That’s the point Vi, you won’t be able to. No one will until I am ready. I need this, I need the space to clear my head. Focus on the one thing I need to do, write.”

She whines some more until she finally agrees, “Fine. But if I don’t hear from you in a week, I will send the troops to look for you.” She means the nagging, in your face, paparazzi. It’s no secret why I am leaving LA. I have been publicly humiliated. My husband of three years cheated on me with his co-star. Worst part about it, I found out on a live TV interview. I froze, I couldn’t even fathom the reality of the situation, as I was finding out alongside the rest of the world. I was mortified, I ugly cried for months during our divorce settlement.

He wanted the house, whereas I wanted out. I screamed and yelled, telling him to shove every single thing up his asshole. I didn't care about the material things. I cared about my dignity, morals, career, and my heart. I gave him everything, except my money. I made more than he did, I grew my career by myself before I met Daniel Foster. I had movie deals, book deals, merch. I wasn't about to let him swoop me from under my feet and think he was going to take my money as well. He didn't even blink an eye, he was so full of love for his new whore to even realize the best thing to happen to him was leaving.

Sure, that may sound cocky, but I supported him like no one else had. I gave him my connections in the industry, hell he even starred in one of my movies, playing Uhtred, a Viking warrior who falls in love with the enemy's daughter. It was a hit on the big screen, and had the highest sales in the opening week. I was there for him when his mother died last year, helped his sister when she had a baby, I made sure he had a home cooked meal and clean clothes on his back, every fucking day.

After a two month wait, our divorce was finalized and do you know the thanks I got from him was, *I appreciate you so much and I wish you nothing but the best, truly.*

Are you fucking shitting me?

I held my breath until he stopped talking. I signed those papers and left, didn't look back. My grandmother, Ali, had passed away last month, and do you think he even called to say his condolences, even though I wouldn't have answered, it would have been the right thing to do, But no.

I had a meeting with my grandmother's attorney the week she passed away. She provided me with her will. I was named as the sole proprietor, leaving me with her mountain side cabin in Everwood Peaks. It's a small town that has all four seasons, but their winters are the worst. I have never been there but from the research I have done they don't have much. It was the perfect timing for a new start. I was free of him, divorce was signed, I could leave everything behind and just escape into the nature of the mountains.

After a long three-day drive, I finally approach the mountains that contain my new home. I had to change my phone number on day two, as I kept getting calls from reporters wanting an exclusive. I only gave my number to Violet and my parents, so no one has bothered me since.

I look out at the scenery in front of me. The beautiful fall colors, greens, reds, oranges, browns, all taking over the huge trees lining the narrow road. The occasional sighting of a deer galloping through the woods as I drive past. The road snakes up the mountain so I take it slow around each bend. About thirty miles back, I did notice a shopping area, so I am assuming that's where I will have to get my essentials, unless there is a local shop in town.

I see the sign, "Welcome to Everwood Peaks". I sigh as I take in the town. It's definitely not LA, but it's the small town charm that I like the most. The drive into the town would be classified as the downtown area. Businesses and shops on both sides of the street, families walking or biking down the sidewalk, bundled up as the temperature drops daily. I drive past the downtown area and turn left, passing the town square, noticing a large fountain with the founder's sculpture in the middle. That spot looks like a great reading area.

I follow my directions as I continue climbing the mountain until I reach my final destination. I blink my eyes rapidly as I check my directions again. I have to be at the wrong address.

*2243 Autumn Lane.*

"No fucking way."

My mouth opens wide as I take in the fact that my grandmothers "Cabin" is an updated, modern, downright beautiful, large home. It sits right off the mountain, overlooking the whole town. I quickly exit my SUV, fumbling with the keys that the attorney gave me and open the door. Immediately I can smell my grandmother, her smell is etched into this home, and it makes me smile.

Her decor is not what you would think your grandmother's house to be. She always had exquisite taste. She was rich but she never flaunted her wealth. She gave back to her

community, she helped those in need, she was a pillar in our family. And her home, well my home now, is just breathtaking. The foyer is bright white, with a bench to take off your shoes, coat hooks, and an umbrella holder. I walk into the living room, the neutral tones, large couch and fireplace just scream cozy, relaxing nights. But the view through the floor to ceiling windows seal the deal. You can see far out past the town, the mountains covering the horizon. It will be spectacular to see at sunset. Making a mental note that in six hours, I have a date with the balcony.

I tour the rest of the home, loving my new master bedroom and bathroom. This home has four bedrooms and four bathrooms, don't know what I will do with all this space, but I will definitely be using one of them as my office and one as my merch shop. I head outside reaching into my SUV for my sweater, it's definitely colder than LA in September. I ruffle through the trunk, pulling out my essentials suitcase and roll it up the graveled driveway.

"I am going to assume everything was to your liking?" A voice pops up from a car I didn't hear pull up, scaring me half to death as I gasp and clutch my chest.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I'm Madison, I was your grandmother's assistant."

I shake hands with the woman, who looks about my age. She has brown curly hair, pink cheeks, great fashion sense, and a cute little button nose. Smiling, I return introductions.

"Yes, I love it, it's beautiful. My grandmother had wonderful taste. Julia. Julia Harrington." I shake her hand as she smiles, taking my appearance in.

"Wow, you remind me so much of Ali. She talked a lot about you, said we would be best friends if we ever met."

She laughs as she helps me up the driveway. I appreciate the help, I don't know anyone here, so I won't say no to a friendly hand. I grab another suitcase that has my hygiene products.

“So how long did you work for my grandmother?” She inhales before responding.

“Five years. It would have been six in October.”

I can see the pain in her eyes, she must have thought dearly of my grandmother.

“Ali was a beautiful soul. She did so much for this community. She is dearly missed. Which is why when we found out her granddaughter was moving in, we all pitched in to make sure the house was stocked and cleaned for you.”

I look around the kitchen, finally noticing the grocery bags in the trash can. I open the double door fridge to find it completely stocked with fresh fruits, veggies, meats, yogurts, you name it.

“I have to go but I left my number on the fridge if you need anything. Also, me and some friends will be at The Tavern tonight at around 8 pm if you want to join us for some delicious food and drinks.” She smiles as she shrugs.

“I would love to. I have been stuck in a car for days, and I would like to see more of this town.”

She jumps up and down, cheerful spirit she is. “Perfect, okay I’ll see you there. Oh, and it’s just down the hill, you could easily walk there.”

I wave goodbye to her, closing the door, I walk over to the kitchen. It’s a really nice, big kitchen. I love the white cabinets, white backsplash, the trim work on the cabinets, the hardwood floors, farmhouse sink and the large white marble island in the middle. I just can’t believe it is all mine. I was my grandmothers only grandchild. My parents didn’t get along with her much, so of course I loved the heck out of her. Which makes sense why I would inherit her assets.

I head over to the couch, plopping down and am engulfed in soft plush cushions. I find the remote to the TV that is attached to the wall above the white-washed brick fireplace. I will definitely use this fireplace at nighttime. I flip through the channels before settling on re-runs of Grey’s Anatomy. God, I love this show. I could recite almost every scene. Mer and

Christina are just an epic duo. Before I even get ten minutes into the episode where Izzy cuts Denny's LVAD wire, I am passed out, only to wake up three hours later to the sound of my alarm.

I quickly get off the couch, hitting stop on my phone and head to the master bedroom. My rolling suitcase glides behind me as I round the corner. I walk down 4 hardwood steps and walk into the bedroom. The whole room is surrounded by glass windows, from floor to ceiling, the bed sits directly in front of the windows, providing the best view of the stars. There are no lights visible, so I am assuming it is just open forest, private.

There is another white-washed fireplace, but it seems to share a wall with the bathroom. I enter the white marbled bathroom, immediately noticing the large white soaking tub in front of another large window, only it's the entire wall. The fireplace is directly in front of the tub.

*Oh. grandma how romantic.*

Perched on top of a wooden stool are fresh chopped wood, green plants in the corner, towels rolled up neatly and presentable, and a towel warmer. I look around and set my suitcase on the floor. Unzipping the suitcase, I grab my essentials and head to the shower. My eyes tracing over every inch of this walk-in shower, the pebbled black flooring, the rain shower head on the ceiling, the double shower heads. It was almost as if my grandmother made this house for lovebirds. Only my grandfather passed away ten years ago, before she had this home built.

*Oh god, was my grandma seeing someone?*

I try to erase the thoughts of my grandma being romantically involved with anyone as I tilt my head under the scorching hot stream. I love showers, the sounds of the water hitting the floor, the steam clearing my sinuses, the ability to sing with the acoustics bouncing off the walls. All of it just brings me joy. I think about a lot when I am in the shower. My characters speak to me, when I am calm, when things are

quiet, when views are beautiful. Right now, this was the best decision I could have made for my writing career.

I dry off my body and grab a pair of jeans, an oversized sweater, tan beanie and my brown uggs. Lately, neutrals have been my thing, I blame tiktok. It is dark outside which means the beautiful 65-degree weather from earlier has dissipated. Looking at the weather on the bathroom mirror, yes, it's a smart mirror, it shows the time being 7:45pm and a brisk 52 degrees.

I check myself in the mirror, fixing my long blonde hair. My hair is straight, but I had curled it into loose curls the other day, so I still have some curl left. I touch up my lips with nude lipstick, smacking my lips together and rubbing the lipstick evenly. I secure my beanie and grab my purse and phone before I head outside.

As soon as I walk up to my car, I know I don't want to get in it. It's beautiful out, the sound of the wind whistling through the trees, the brisk air hitting my cheeks, I put my phone in my pocket and walk down the hill. Madison said it was a short walk down the hill, so I'll enjoy this fresh air before I become the new girl in town the minute I step foot in the bar.

Hopefully this Tavern has some good food because I am starving. As I walk, I take notice of the other driveways, large homes perched up on the hillside. The homes are aligned with white picket fences, some have pumpkins decorating the porches, lights on, families seated around the dinner tables, happy and laughing. It makes me smile as I turn back to look in front of me. I round the corner, the view of downtown right in front of me. The white Christmas lights line the power beams, twinkle lights hanging from the power lines, the local shops still busy with customers going in and out.

I walk another block and finally spot The Tavern. The sign is red, there was no missing it, plus the bull horns sticking out of the sign bring a hunter's touch. The place looks packed from the outside, which I guess is a good thing, means the food is good right? Or maybe this is the only spot in town? When I open the door, the smell of food infiltrates my nostrils and my stomach rumbles. Either I am starving or that smells

divine. I search the packed bar, looking for the curly brown-haired girl who invited me.

“Julia, over here.” I spot her surrounded by a group of guys who turn to look at me, she waves me over and I inhale and exhale before I squeeze through the crowd and approach the bar top.

*Be friendly, Julia. Smile, its only drinks and food. No big deal.*

I remind myself as I smile and look at the group, holding out my hand, “Hi, I’m Julia.”



CALEB



YOU PUT A SPELL ON ME BY AUSTIN  
GIORGIO

“*T*ravis, I am still waiting on the eight wings, extra hot and two baskets of curly fries.”

I yell out into the loud kitchen. Travis nods as he continues cooking. The servers shuffle past, rushing to their tables, food trays teetering as they squeeze through the crowd. It's a busy weekend, the football games blasting on the tv's, the local band plays top hits, while patrons drink and eat. The bell rings and I hand off the plates to the server before I take my leave and man my station at the bar. I typically leave the food handling to Jasper, but we are short staffed today.

The bar is my domain. I bought this restaurant five years ago, I always wanted to be a bar owner, so a good friend of mine Ali, helped me start it. She wanted me to live my best life, as she calls it. She always used to say, *“life is too short, if someone would have helped me, I would have lived a happier life at an earlier age.”*

Ali Harrington died a couple months ago, it hurt like hell to lose such a close friend, even though she was very old, she was like a grandmother to the community, to me. She cared so much about Everwood, about me, about everyone.

“Aye Caleb, can I get two beers please?”

I nod as I hand off two beers on tap to a patron before wiping down the counters. The door chimes as more patron's waltz in and find a table or an open spot at the bar. I look up to greet them in when I see an outsider. I know everyone in

Everwood, it's a small community, so we notice immediately when tourists come in.

But this woman, she is different. Something is familiar about her. I watch as she makes her way through the crowd. Her long, sun-kissed blonde hair that frames her face, is cascading down her back, she has blue eyes, plump pink lips, and a cute little button nose.

This mystery woman has the attention of every man in the bar, including the married men whose wives slap their arms for their attention back. The women glare at her with instant jealousy, as her aura commands everyone's attention. I clear my throat and pull the shot glasses out of the rinse sink. She approaches Madison and the town's most eligible bachelors.

*Is Madison setting this mystery woman up?*

“Oh yay, you made it.”

Madison stands up and hugs her. She gestures to the men who each hold out their hands to greet her.

She smiles as she politely shakes their hands and then wipes her hand off against her tight blue jeans. She may not think they can see her, but I can. I can't help but chuckle as I shake my head. Those guys stand no chance with a woman like that, she screams privilege, she screams wealth. She is on a whole other planet compared to them.

Luke, Chad, Connor and Miles, may have the charm to win other girls from our town over, but not her. I could though. Not that I want to. I don't date. I fuck, but I don't need anyone holding me back or controlling what I do. I have been through a lot of shit in my thirty-one years of life. The last thing I need is a clingy woman who nags me for the rest of my youth.

Madison and this mystery woman approach the bar. I take in more of her beauty, her long lashes, her slim nose, pink cheeks, nude lips, her blonde hair shining with the light above her.

“Caleb, can we get two margaritas?” Madison asks as she places eight dollars on the bar top. I slide it back to her.

“Now you know you don’t get to pay on ladies night.” I wink at her, and she smiles, blushing like a red cherry. Madison is seeing Connor and we have known each other since we were kids.

Mystery woman eyes me, her eyes trailing over my face and body, her eyes squinted slightly. I turn my head to face mystery woman, her eyes immediately putting me into a trance. Her blue eyes are the rarest blues I have ever seen. Her eyebrows sculpted, not a hair out of place. My god, she is even sexier directly in front of me. I can smell her perfume sizzling off her body, the sweet notes of vanilla, smells so good you want to lick her skin. We stay eye locked for what seems like minutes.

Madison clears her throat, “Um, so those drinks Caleb?”

I snap out her spell, and begin making their drinks, dipping their frosted glasses in the salt and pouring the margaritas to the brim. I slide the drinks across the bar and smile.

“Caleb”, I mention like a fucking idiot. I instantly regret opening my mouth as she obviously heard Madison say my name.

“Yeah, so I have heard.”

She smiles and sips her drink, her lips rest against the glass as she swallows. She caresses the drink in her hand as her tongue darts out and licks the salt on her lips. It’s almost in slow motion as my eyes follow her tongue until it disappears back into her mouth. The action makes my cock twitch.

She follows Madison back to the group. My hands rub through my hair as I exhale. Frustrated with myself that I didn’t play it cool. What’s wrong with me? Usually I have more game, but I froze in front of her.

I continue on through the night, serving drinks, helping bring out orders until there were only a handful of patrons in the bar. It’s about 1 am and Madison, Mystery woman and Connor are still seated. Connor is a cool dude. His father owns a local farmer’s market and Connor helps him run it. I try to not look at her, but I can’t help it when I can hear her laugh,

see her tuck her hair behind her ear, sip her drink and then sit back against the stool.

“Dude, you have been staring at her all night. Who is she?” Travis questions as he walks through the kitchen doors.

He sets his apron down on the counter and leans forward, admiring the view. She places her hand on her chest when she laughs, and then nestles it under her nose as if she is going to sneeze.

“I have no fucking clue.”

He pats my back before lifting up and collecting his apron once more.

“Well, whoever she is, if she is staying here, she will have the whole town running around looking like lost puppies, including you.” He chuckles as he re-enters the kitchen.

“Caleb, right?”

I turn around to find her leaning against the bar, shaking her emptied glass. She smiles and tucks a strand of hair behind her ear. I get an sense she does this simple act when she is nervous.

“Mystery woman, another margarita?”

She tilts her head at the mention of her nickname but doesn't correct me, she just giggles. I blend up another strawberry margarita, brimming the glass with salt and slide it over to her.

“So, are you just passing through?” I question as I continue to put away the clean dishes. She turns to look behind her, noticing Madison is getting awfully close with Connor. She settles onto the barstool and taps her finger against the glass.

“Nope. You are looking at the newest resident of Everwood Peaks.” She lifts her glass in the air, cheering an invisible glass. I chuckle at her cuteness.

“Are you drunk mystery woman?”

Her nose scrunches up, almost as if she has a bad taste in her mouth.

“Not even close, Caleb. But I don’t like this sudden nickname you have chosen for me.” She smiles and my legs literally feel weak. I lean forward, my hands clasping together as I rest my forearms on the bar.

“Well, you see, I would call you by your name, but you failed to mention it.” There is a slight flirt in my tone.

She leans in closer. “You failed to ask for it.”

I scuff as she leans back in the stool, sipping the remnants of her drink and collects her purse.

“No, don’t leave.” Madison waves her arms in the air, attempting to grab on to mystery woman but fails to do so from across the bar. Obviously, Madison is drunk, she has always been a lightweight.

“Caleb, can you please walk her home?” Madison gives me puppy dog eyes. I look over to mystery woman, who is trying to signal Madison to stop.

“Sure, come on mystery woman let’s get you home.” I smile as I round the bar and gesture her to head out the door first.

“You don’t have to walk me home.” She pleads but I continue to walk side by side.

“Non-sense, there is no reason a woman such as yourself, to be walking this late at night, alone, no matter the town.” I keep my distance as we walk along the sidewalk.

“Is there a lot of crime here?” She looks around before swatting my arm.

“No, it’s just the right thing to do. Walk a pretty woman home, make sure she is safe, so we can all sleep easy tonight.”

I can sense some apprehension creeping across her face.

“So, I’m a pretty woman, needing a bar owner, to walk me home, so he can sleep well knowing I am safe, even though he doesn’t know anything about me or my name?”

I stop walking at the same time that she does. “Exactly. Chivalry is not dead.”

She laughs as she tucks her hands in her pockets and continues walking up Autumn Lane.

“So where do you live?” I ask as I am just following her, I have no clue where she is staying.

“Just up the hill. Oh my god, that house is beautiful.”

She points to the home sitting off the mountain, the wrap around porch has lights lining the patio, and the heated pool is steaming against the cold air.

“Yeah, it is really nice.” I comb my fingers through my hair as we continue walking up the hill. I focus on where we are walking.

“You live in Ali’s house?”

She fiddles with her keys as she walks up the driveway that I helped install.

“Yeah. My grandmother left the house to me. You knew her?”

I blink at her taking in her features once more, noticing that she resembles her grandmother, which is why she looked familiar.

“I did. She was a wonderful lady.”

She nods her head and turns to the door, unlocking it. She opens the door and steps inside. Before she closes the door, I can sense her apprehension once more. What are you so nervous about mystery woman?

“Julia. My name is Julia, not mystery woman.” She smiles.

“Nice to meet you, Julia. Have a good night.” I step back and turn to walk down the driveway.

“I know you will since you ensured I arrived home safe.” She calls out.

I chuckle as I lift my hand up signaling goodbye. I can’t help but smile as I say her name in my head once more, Julia.

I walk down the hill and back into the bar to close up. As I clean up the tables and dismiss the staff, all I can think about

is Julia. Her voice, her sass, her demeanor, her laugh, it was all soul capturing. I am intrigued to know more about her, at a distance of course.

“Hey handsome.” Sabrina walks into the bar like she always does on a Friday night. She always comes by after work, we walk over to my place, fuck, and then she leaves. It’s routine, it’s been like this for a year. Once a week, but lately she has been getting jealous, which isn’t a good look for her.

“Hey.” I smile as she wraps her arms around my neck, pulls me in and kisses me.

She always smells like candy. She is hot, I enjoy our hookups, but I have made it clear since the beginning I am not looking for anything serious.

“You ready to head out?” She opens the door, not taking no for an answer. I look over the bar, turning off the lights and lock up.

“Yeah, let’s go.”

Good, something to distract me from thinking about my new neighbor. I swing my arm over her shoulder and guide us back up the hill, turning right before Julia’s house. I peek over Sabrina’s shoulder to notice the living room lights are on, smoke is rising from the chimney. I wonder what she does on the weekends, besides meet up with Madison at a bar. What does she do for a living?

“Hello, earth to Caleb.”

Sabrina snaps her fingers, getting my attention as I look at her standing in the living room in nothing but a skimpy bikini.

“I want to take a dip.” She nods her head towards the pool.

I smile as I hustle to my room and switch out of my work clothes.

When I open the sliding doors, Sabrina is already dipping her toes in the water. Her ass looks delicious from this angle, how she is not cold I have no idea. She holds two wine glasses, and a bottle of wine is sitting on the table next to her.

“God, your pool feels so warm. Open the wine, please.”



Before I do, I take the glasses out of her hands and set them down. I place my palms on her cheeks and look into her eyes.

“Sabrina, you know nothing has changed for me, right?”

She sighs and removes my hands.

“Don’t ruin our night, Caleb. Yes, this is just casual sex. I know.”

She rolls her eyes and crosses her arms. Both of those actions signaling to me she doesn’t see it the way I do.

“I’m serious Sabrina, shit like the other day can’t happen. You can’t get mad when I am talking to other women. We are not exclusive.”

I place my finger under her chin and lift, letting her eyes meet mine. I kiss her lips. She is reluctant at first but then her lips part for me.

“I know, I’m sorry. It won’t happen again.”

I grab her hand and lead her into the pool. The warm water hits my skin. I am tall so when parts of my body get wet and then hit by the air, it’s freezing. So, I try to stay as low as possible. I pull Sabrina to me; her legs instantly wrap around my waist. My hands hold on to her ass as she kisses my neck. I can’t help but look up the mountain, seeing a shadow cross the porch.

Is my mystery woman watching?

I smile at the thought.

*Secretly hoping she is.*

JULIA



## LOVE IS A BITCH BY TWO FEET

*A*fter my long hot shower, I head to the kitchen and make some hot cocoa. My grandma used to make me hot cocoa during the colder months, so I had to christen this home with a tradition of hers. I grab the marshmallows from the pantry and sprinkle six into the mug. I grab my laptop and press the button that opens the patio doors all the way.

It's amazing to watch, the big glass doors slide across, disappearing into the wall. The whole space opens up and the night's breeze enters the living room. I set my mug on the coffee table and grab a blanket from the couch. I settle in the comfy couch as I look up at the stars twinkling above me. The sky is crystal clear, not a cloud in sight.

I open my word document to continue writing the romance novel I have been working on for the past four months. It's kind of funny, me writing romance, when I just got divorced. Obviously, I was wrong about romance. But my characters speak to me, I live vicariously through them. Once I start typing it's almost as if I lose track of time, I write and write until I fall asleep.

I am woken up suddenly by a woman's squeal. I sit up quickly as I look around me. I stand up and walk along the edge of the balcony. I walk towards the right side of the house, where I know there are homes below me. The house I saw earlier, with the steaming pool, seems to be in use. I assume that's where the squeal came from as I notice a male and female in the pool.

He pulls her close, kissing her neck, as she giggles. I step back slightly to ensure I cannot be seen. I want to turn around and run back inside but I pause when I notice him. The pool light hit the side of his face as he turns slightly, and I can't help but feel slightly disappointed that he is not single.

Caleb unhooks her bathing suit, letting her tits spill out of their confinements. His mouth immediately closes over her nipples causing her to tilt her head back, her hair dipping into the water, and a moan slips out. I can't help the warm pool collecting in my panties as I watch how he moves. He trails his hand from her tits to her pussy, the other hand must be holding her up. His arm flexes as he begins to thrust against her, more than liking fingering her as she grinds against him.

Gosh, I feel jealous. I haven't had sex in about six months. The need to pleasure myself is overwhelming. I step back again, the darkness shielding me from being seen. I sit down on the couch, spreading my legs slightly. The pajama shorts I have on provide easy access, so I slip my fingers under my panties, feeling my already wet clit. I moan at the slightest touch as I continue to look at the pool. I can't see his cock, but I know he has no shorts on as the top of his ass cheeks are peeking through the water.

He sets her down on the step and pounds into her. It looks rough, deep, and so fucking sexy. The water and lights ripple across his broad shoulders and muscles. His back muscles flex with each thrust forward. Her arms wrap around his waist, pulling him closer to her. I dip two fingers inside of me, moaning softly as I envision his cock fucking me too. I watch as he turns her over so that her ass is perched up in the air, he aligns himself and rams into her. Her moans ripple through the air as he continues to fuck her at a rigorous rate.

“Fuck.” He groans as a slap rings through the air, causing me to jump.

I fuck my pussy faster, going at the same rhythm of the water splashing around. I am close to my orgasm as my stomach tightens, my toes curl and my hips lift up. I moan out as I crash. I pant, lick my lips, and rub my clit until I have

passed the apex of my climax. I sit up, looking down at the pool.

I quickly lean back as those brown eyes are staring at me, his smile bright, as he had turned her around to face my direction. His hand is around her neck, holding her down. He pounds into her from behind, but his eyes aren't on her, they are on me. I don't know if he can see me, maybe he heard me. I don't know but I am frozen in place.

He thrusts a couple more times until he is grunting as he pulls his cock out of her, she turns around and instantly opens her mouth. It's like she knows the drill, she sticks her tongue out and he grunts as he releases into her mouth. I can't see his cock as she is blocking the view. If only she could move slightly, just let me see what he is working with.

His eyes are still locked on mine and a grin appears on his face. She gets up and strolls out of the pool, wrapping herself up in her towel and heads inside. He stays staring at me in the darkness and my body is on fire. He finally takes his eyes off of me, pulling up his shorts that were under water and heads inside.

Holy fuck that was hot.

As I am collecting my mug and laptop, I hear a door open and close. I look over the balcony to see the pool woman getting into her car and drives down the hill.

*Interesting, so is he a one-night stand kind of guy? Or is he in a relationship with her?*

His living room lights turn off, but then his bedroom lights turn on. I head inside, no longer interested in being a peeping tom. I head to my bedroom and turn on the fireplace. I cozy up in my comforter and tell Alexa, to play the sound of rain. I hit the button on the remote for the light and close my eyes.

Ding dong.

I huff out of bed, kicking my feet as I just got comfortable. I shuffle my feet through the halls, making it to the door by the third ring. I open the door quickly and am met face to face with a half-naked Caleb, holding a bottle of wine.

“I noticed you were up still, I figured you could use some wine.” He smiles as he takes in my outfit. I cross my arms and gesture for him to come in.

“I was just about to fall asleep, but I can’t resist some wine.”

He chuckles as he reaches in the cabinet for some glasses.

“How did you know where they were?” My eyebrow lifts.

“I used to come over and drink some wine with Ali, she hated to drink alone.” He shrugs as if it was no big deal, but what young male would enjoy hanging out with an old lady on his down time?

“So, you were about to go to sleep huh?” He makes his way to the couch, making himself comfortable.

I nod as I take a seat next to him. My eyes can’t help but wander as I take in his appearance. His brown hair is cut low but enough to run my fingers through. His handsome face is accented with a meticulously trimmed beard that accentuates his sharp jawline. When he speaks I notice a sparkle in his brown eyes. There’s a carmel ring around them. I’ve never seen eyes like that before, they are beautiful.

When he was in the pool, I noticed his broad shoulders and muscular arms. I watched as his washboard abs flexed. So now, him sitting here with no shirt on has me licking my lips involuntarily. He notices as a slight grin is displayed across his handsome face.

I clear my thought as I try to focus on anything but him.

“I was doing some work on the balcony, but it became too noisy, so I decided to go to bed.”

He takes a sip of his wine and I watch as his Adam’s apple bobs up and down as he swallows, before he sets the glass down. He shifts on the couch, so he is facing me as he speaks. His knee brushes mine and the slight contact sends electricity through me. I clear my throat and shift slightly to remove contact.

“What do you do for work?”

He avoids my noise complaint, doesn't even bat an eye over the fact I could hear, and see him and his companion. His eyes don't leave my face, respectable, I like that.

"I am an author." I spit out, trying to avoid further questions, I down my wine.

"An author, wow." He combs his hair as he stands up.

I am hoping he takes the hint when I yawn, stretching my arms out. He smiles and dips his chin.

"Well, I won't bore you with questions, tonight. If you need breakfast, The Tavern is the best in town." He winks as he takes his leave.

I quickly close the door, locking it, and press my back against the black wood. I overhear him talking to himself and I can't help but laugh.

"Jesus, 'an author, wow'. Really, I sounded so lame." He says as his footsteps fade away.

Actually Caleb, I didn't think you sounded lame, I just wasn't ready to tell you what I write about. Telling a man, you write smut for a living can open up all types of questions or have said man running away. I smile and turn the lights off, returning back to the warmth of my bed.

The morning sun shines through the glass windows as the sun reaches the peaks of the mountains. I stretch my arms as I walk over to the sliding door, opening it to let the fresh mountain air in. It seems colder today, so I grab my robe hanging on the bathroom wall. I shuffle my feet along the hardwood as I make my way to the kitchen.

There is truly nothing like your first cup of coffee in the morning. I am a monster before my coffee, don't talk to me, don't look at me. The coffee maker beeps when its finished dispensing 10oz of delicious Carmel coffee into a glass mug. I reach into the refrigerator, pour about three seconds of creamer then heading to the cabinet next for sugar and stir the delicious goodness.

Walking back to my room, I collect my phone and take a seat outside on the swinging chair. The chair hangs from the patio ceiling, it is padded with cream cushions and fits my entire body. I crisscross my legs and sip my coffee, feeling the warm liquid roll down my throat, I sigh. If you listen closely, you can hear the tree's swaying, the birds chirping as they collect worms from the dewy grass below, the early morning commuters warming their cars, the water trickling down the river and you can smell the wood being burned in the chimneys.

It's so peaceful. I scroll through TikTok as I drink my coffee. I enjoy seeing the funny videos, book related content, and other authors promos for their books. I sit up when I see a video from E entertainment, it shows Daniel walking the red carpet with his new beau, Aubrey, and how they are happily in love.

Good for him, truly. I wish I could just move on already, find someone who loves me more than I love them, that's what my grandmother used to say.

*"Find someone who loves you more than you love them, that way if they ever break your heart, they suffer the most."*

Sinister I know, but harder to achieve even more. When I love, I love hard, I give it my everything, I just wish it was reciprocated. I never imagined that at 30 years old I would be divorced. You go your whole youth thinking you will find your prince charming, get married, have kids and live happily ever after. But those fairytales never prepare you for the whores that will throw themselves at your husband, or the husband who can't control his fucking penis to save his life. I take a deep breath and shut off my screen. I stand up and walk over to the edge of the balcony, looking over at the river water crashing against the rocks.

I turn my head to the right when I hear a door close. Caleb strolls outside fully clothed this time, in a black hoodie and jeans, his rain boots on, and a beanie on his head. He walks over to his pile of wood, grabbing a couple of stumps before he begins chopping the stumps in half. Is it weird to find him oddly attractive swinging an axe? I shrug to myself and head



back inside. My stomach growls as I take a shower and add moisturizer to my face.

Ding dong.

The doorbell chimes as I secure my towel around my body and swiftly make my way to the front door.

“Good morning.”

Madison smiles as she hands me a brown paper bag, grease seeping through, as the sugar seeps into my nostrils.

“Gloria’s Bakery down on Main Street has the best donuts.”

She lets herself right in, plopping down on the couch. She looks up at me, her eyes trailing up and down my body.

“Jesus you are so hot. No wonder Caleb was all goo goo eyes for you last night.”

I huff as I set the donuts down on the counter and walk down the hallway.

“He was not.”

I disappear into my closet. I grab a pair of jeans, a red long sleeve and a plaid jacket. I put on my warm socks and black boots before I re-join Madison in the living room.

“Dude, he totally was. Too bad he isn’t available.”

I eye her curiously as I settle on the couch across from her.

“Yeah, I saw his girlfriend last night. She looked fun.” I smile as I remember the hot steamy pool sex. How I played with myself as his eyes bored into my soul. I press my thighs closed as the need for friction is creeping up.

“Eh, Sabrina. She isn’t his girlfriend. She just hooks up with him, pathetic on her end if you ask me.”

I didn’t ask though. I am no one to judge a situation.

“You said he isn’t available.” I retort.

“Yeah, as in, he doesn’t date. He keeps things casual.” She pulls out a planner from the satchel and pops off the cap on her pen.

“A fuck boy. I see.”

I look out the window briefly before I return my gaze to her. She is looking at me through squinted eyes.

“He has been through a lot. It’s not my story to tell, but he can’t handle any more heartbreak, which is why he doesn’t date.”

I am curious to know more about him but with her tone and facial expression, I can tell she is done.

“I can relate, I am not looking for anything. I just want to focus on myself and work. Speaking of, I invited you over to see if you would be interested in being my assistant.”

She snaps her eyes to me; her smile grows as she sits up straighter.

“Really? Oh my god, I would love to. An assistant to a famous Author? What has my life become?” She pretends to faint as she laughs.

“It’s no big deal, just keeping track of my schedule, deadlines, social media accounts, travel arrangements, etc.”

She nods her head vigorously. “Yes, yes, yesssss.”

She jumps up and hugs me tightly. If my grandmother hired her, she must be good at what she does. My grandmother was a tough cookie when it came to business.

“I had my attorney draw up a contract and an NDA for you to review and sign. It also lists your salary on there. I don’t have health insurance, but you do get to travel with me, if you are able to.”

I smile as I hand her the documents. She snatches them up, placing the envelope in her satchel.

“Thank you, Julia. I won’t let you down. Can I start Monday?”

I nod. “Ofcourse.”

I walk her out as I lock up. She gets in her red jeep and drives off. My stomach growls once more as I forgot to eat a donut Madison brought over. I peer down the hill. I need some

food, so I decide to walk to the Tavern. I fix my hair before I open the doors to the bar. The servers hold trays full of delicious looking pancakes, eggs, bacon and I lick my lips as I remove my gloves, placing them in my pocket.

“Table for one?”

The hostess greets me with a smile as she waves me over to a booth.

“Yes, thank you.”

CALEB



## PART OF ME BY CIAN DUCROT

Last night was intense. Sabrina is a wild woman. She will pretty much do anything I ask of her. I was enjoying my routine fuck session when I saw a shadow on Julia's balcony. I couldn't see who it was, but seeing as she is new here, it had to have been her. I put on a little show, as I felt eyes on me. It could have just been me wanting her eyes on me though.

I turned Sabrina around and held her head down so she couldn't see where my attention was directed. My whole body felt like it was on fire at the mere thought of Julia watching me fuck. Others may find it creepy, but not me. I am not shy, *look all you want baby.*

I couldn't look away from the spot where I saw the shadow. I could hear faint moans and it excited me more.

*Was she playing with her pussy while watching me?*

I would love to see what she looks like when she cums. I bet she sings a beautiful song. I went over to her home after Sabrina left, I had to see her face. If I was correct and she did in fact see me and she did orgasm, it would have been all over her face. When she opened the door, her cheeks were still a shade of pink, she moved away from my touch, she complained about a noise she heard, and then she ended the conversation as she pressed her legs together when I stretched.

Everything about her, screamed '*I just fucked myself while I was watching you fuck another woman*'. It was the sexiest sight ever. I haven't felt this pull with a woman in a long time. It scares me how easily my mind thinks about her, wants to

know more, eager to insert myself into her life. These feelings are dangerous and ones I can't let get too far. I have been down this road before. I can't go back.

“Hey boss, we have a guest at booth three who requested the owner to pick her meal.”

Sydney hands me her ticket and I peer out the kitchen window. Julia sits at booth three. She looks like a regular here with her plaid jacket, red sleeves, beanie, and boots. She doesn't try to stand out or anything, being from LA you would think she would be stuck up and prissy, but she looks stunning just the way she is. I don't even think she wears much makeup, she just radiates her natural beauty. I find that the most attractive, not caring to put on a fake appearance for anyone is so hot.

“Alright Travis, get me two eggs over hard, bacon, two stacks of the banana pancakes, and semi burnt toast extra butter.”

He nods as he grabs the items.

Sydney grabs a coffee, creamer, and sugar packets and exits the kitchen. I get the tray ready, adding the syrup dispenser, napkins, orange juice, and wait for the order.

“She will moan no doubt.” Travis teases as he hands me the pancakes.

I shake my head, pretending to not know what he is talking about. I would love to hear her moan again. She moans so sweet, soft, and breathtaking. My cock twitches at the thought. I gather her food and lift the tray up onto my shoulder.

“Oh, I can bring it out boss.” Sydney holds out her arms for me to give her the tray.

I shake my head, “No that's okay, I got this one. Booth eight needs refills.” She shrugs and walks over to the drink station.

“I heard you wanted the bosses special?” I set her orange juice down. She looks up at me with her big beautiful blue eyes and batting eyelashes.

“Well, I heard this was the best breakfast spot in town, so I had to come judge for myself.”

I chuckle as I set the rest of her food down in front of her.

“Wow, this looks and smells amazing.”

She grabs her fork and digs right into the pancakes, opening her mouth and sliding the fork over her pink tongue. I have to hold back a groan when she wraps her lips over the fork and moans as the sweetness hits her taste buds. I take a seat across from her as I observe her devouring the plate. She moans, groans, licks her lips, rolls her eyes, and smiles as she consumes every bite.

When she finishes, she sits back against the cushioned booth and sighs, her hand resting on her belly.

“What’s the verdict? Did we live up to your high LA standards?” I smile but it immediately drops as soon as her eyes meet mine. She almost looks disappointed. Oh god, she didn’t like the food?

“It was really good, thank you.”

She slides across the seat and drops thirty dollars down on the table before she high tales it out of the bar. All her excitement left along with her as the air suddenly feels stuffy without her.

“Julia, wait. What did I say?”

I hustle down the sidewalk and stop right in front of her. She crosses her arms. I can feel her hesitation and sudden reserve.

“I do not have high standards. I live a simple, normal life. I may be from LA but not all of us are stuck up bitches. You should know this, seeing as you were close to my grandmother. I am a spitting image of her.”

She moves around me and continues to walk up the hill. I can’t let this go, I have to correct my statement, having another woman not understand me, doesn’t sit well with me.

“No, listen. I meant the high standards in the LA food industry. Not you personally. LA has great food, it would be

an honor for someone to recognize our talents here in Everwood.”

She rolls her eyes again and huffs as she throws her hands in the air.

“I knew it, you looked into me. Saw that I am a known author, who has “connections”, so you just want to use me, like everyone else for your own financial gain. Well guess what Caleb, I won’t help anyone ever again, but myself. Have a great day.”

Her air quotes are angry, there is a hidden meaning behind them.

I am taken aback at the fact that my words are being twisted into some narrative she has in her head. I am not the type of man who would use anyone, well other than for sex. I have been used many times, it fucking sucks. She closes her front door so hard I’m afraid the glass will break. I blow out hot air before I turn around and get back to the bar.

This is the reason why I am single. Women just don’t understand how men think. They take our words, twist them around to their liking and then get mad at us when we don’t know why they are mad. I have had many relationships, only one that truly mattered, but still I was hurt so many times. The thought of ever opening up to another woman kills me.

I can’t betray Lucy like that.



“**L**ucy, baby, I’m home.”  
*I walk into the foyer, setting my suitcase down and take a seat on the bench, removing my snow boots so I don’t track water through the house. My wife would kill me if I ruin her squeaky clean floors.*

“Lucy.”

*I call out to her as I move towards the kitchen, holding the flowers I picked up for her. I have been away for work the past*



*two weeks, so I am excited to be home.*

*The house smells amazing. Our home is quiet, we don't have kids, so quiet is to be expected. We are trying to have children, but so far nothing has stuck. Which is why I have been working so much. We need to save money for the IVF treatments once Lucy gets her test results back.*

*I know Lucy feels horrible, but I do my best to reassure her it will happen, not to stress about it. She hates when I say that though. The kitchen is empty, so I move on to the living room, peering out the front window to ensure I did in fact see her car in the driveway. She has to be here, or outside.*

*"Lucy, are you upstairs? Come on, I want my kiss. I missed you so much."*

*I climb the stairs, laughing as if she is playing hide and seek, I search the hall closets expecting her to jump out. The bedroom doors are closed, so I open the first one, peering into it before I re-close it slowly.*

*"Playing hide and seek, are we? What's my prize when I find you?" I chuckle as I quickly open the next door, only to come up empty as well.*

*The last door remains closed, our bedroom. I open the door slowly, the bed has fresh sheets, the bed is made, and the throw pillows are aligned. The hamper is empty, and the candle is lit.*

*"Lucy?" I call out, I can hear the water running.*

*Excitement brews within me at the thought of sex with my wife. How romantic, a bubble bath to welcome me home. I open the bathroom door, the lights are off but a candle flickers in the corner of my eye. I step into the bathroom and my heart stops. The white tile floor is covered in blood. The tub is overflowing with red water. I quickly run to turn the water off, looking inside the tub but she isn't there. My heart is racing, the mirror is cracked and there are large foot prints in the blood, but they don't belong to me. "Lucy", I call out once more but no answer. I reach into my pocket and pull out my phone, dialing 911.*

*“911 what’s your emergency?”*

*“My wife, she is missing. There is blood everywhere.”*

*“Sir, Calm down, your wife is missing?”*

*“Yes. I just got home and there is blood everywhere. I don’t know if she was attacked or taken.”*

*“I have units in route to you sir, what is your name?”*

*“Caleb Taylor. Her name is Lucy Taylor.”*

*I search the house once more, checking the backyard, the garage and the storm shelter but I can’t find her. Neighbors begin to gather around as I scream her name. The police show up, rushing over to me, I lead them to the mess I found.*

*Ali pulls up just as I am about to close the door. “Caleb, I need to talk to you.”*

*I nod.*

*The police conduct their investigation, sealing off the house, photographing everything, and interviewing me. They suspect she must have been attacked and kidnapped since there is no body but they also can’t confirm she is not alive either. My heart aches. I need to find her. I need to know what happened. Once the police clear out, the sheriff leaves me his card.*

*“If I have any updates Caleb, you will be my first call. I am sorry this is happening. We will find Lucy.”*

*Ali pulls me in for a hug as she exhales a shaky breath. I pull back and observe her face. Something isn’t right, she has been quiet the entire time, keeps checking her phone.*

*“Ali what’s wrong?”*

*“Caleb I am so sorry.” She hands me a letter, Lucy’s handwriting on the top of the white envelop with my name on it. My heart sinks, my eyes water.*

*“What is this Ali, who gave it to you?”*

*She takes a seat on the sofa, her hands clasp together as she looks down at her lap.*

*“It was in my mailbox, along with one for me. I read mine which is why I came over here as quickly as I could.”*

*I look at the envelope in my hand once more. “What was in yours?” I suck in a breath as I try to remain calm. My mind is racing. Is this real? Did she get taken? Is this a ransom?*

*“Read yours and then we will talk about mine.”*

*I quickly tear the envelop open, letting the contents fall out on to the floor. I quickly scoop the letter back up and turn around to read my wife’s beautiful handwriting.*

*My love Caleb,*

I am so sorry for what I am putting you through. I know you don't understand right now. I made the decision to leave this world on my own terms. Please try to understand. I received a call from Dr. Thornton, two weeks ago while you were away for work. He diagnosed me with stage 4 ovarian cancer, which would explain why we weren't able to conceive. I couldn't tell you baby, because you would want me to fight and I don't want to fight anymore. I enjoyed these last few weeks, I just wish I could have seen you once more. I know you are always working hard for us, and I appreciate you so much. This decision is so hard baby, believe me, but I'd rather make the decision alone then break your heart with false hope when I know how this ends. You know what my grandmother went through. I can't do that to you. I love you too much to see you suffer while I suffer in silence. I hope one day you forgive me. I hope one day you find a woman who will love you hard, someone you can create a family with and grow old with. I want you to live your life and be happy. Please be happy baby. I will always be looking out for you, but please don't blame yourself, you are perfect. You have made me the happiest woman on this world, everyday your love has

*kept me going. I will never leave you. If you ever need me, just look over at the peaks and I'll be there.*

*Love,*

*Lucy*

*I* shake my head. “No.”

*I clutch my chest; my heart feels as though it is breaking into a million pieces. I can't breathe. I am hyperventilating. I suck in a breath but no air fills my lungs.*

*“Caleb, breathe.” Ali shouts as she stands up rubbing my back.*

*My hands shake as I re-read her letter to me. She must have written this before she....*

*I can't even finish my sentence as anger takes over. I grab my lamp and toss it across the room. Shards of glass fly across her pristine floors and I lose it.*

*“Why would you leave me? You didn't let me say goodbye.” I sob against the floor.*

*I can feel the veins on my forehead, my eyes burn from salty tears, my hands ache as I bang against the floor. I loved her with everything I had. I worked hard for the life we lived. It was comfortable, adventurous, romantic. She was the love of my life. How can we go from I will see you tomorrow baby to she is gone, and I can't find her?*

*“Oh god, please help me.” I yell out.*

*Ali immediately drops down to her knees. She doesn't pay attention to the cuts from glass on her knees. She holds my cheeks in her palms and lifts my eyes to hers.*

*“You listen to me. Lucy loved you. She didn’t want you to see this. She had her father take care of it.”*

*She pulls out a similar letter, only this one is addressed to her. She doesn’t show me but her eyes tell me. She is protecting me from knowing more than I can handle right now.*

*“This pain, it won’t last. You will grieve, you will be angry, you will be sad, but you will move past it. She will never leave you. She is always right here.”*

*She points to my heart, and I close my eyes as I sniff back the snot dripping from my nose.*

*“I don’t think I will ever be able to love someone as much as I loved her.”*

*She pats my back still keeping me close to her.*

*“And that’s okay too. But you know she wants you to be happy, with or without her.” None of that matters. I have no desire to do anything but clean these floors and find out where Lucy is.*

*“I need to clean this up. She cleaned up this morning and I made a mess.” I attempt to clean up but Ali places her hands on mine. She stands up.*

*“You will not clean this up. Break something else. We will clean it up later.” She hands me another lamp. “Go on, smash it. Tell the empty room how you feel and then come to the kitchen. I’ll make you some food. Caleb, the mess you make is nothing compared to the mess in your head right now. Get it all out.”*

*She leaves me alone once more and I let out something fierce deep inside me. I roar out, throwing the lamp til it is just shards scattered across the floor. I cry until no tears trickle down my cheeks. I yell at the walls talking to no one but yelling as if she was still here.*

*“You said you would never leave me. You lied. You left me here to clean up this mess, your mess.”*

*I toss the flowers in the garbage can.*

*“What am I supposed to tell everyone? How am I supposed to live without you?”*

*I yell up to the ceiling, only to not hear her words back to me.*

*“You have broken me for anyone else.”*

*I go through the emotions, sadness, anger, then to the biggest one.*

*Regret.*

*“I should have never left. I should have been here. I could have stopped you. I should have seen your pain. I failed you.”*

*I laid my head down sobbing once more as I smell her pillow and pull it closer to me. The adrenaline must have worn off because I doze off into a deep sleep.*



That was the worst day of my life. I had called her father once I had steadied my breathing. He informed me, she passed away from inflicting harm to herself. He went to the house after she called him in panic and he took her to the hospital, but they weren't able to save her. When I asked to see her, he denied my request saying he already had her cremated, it was too much for them to bare.

I cried so hard, I didn't get a chance to say goodbye or kiss her cheek one last time. They robbed that from me. I had to plan her funeral in Colorado, where her grandparents were buried in the family plot. It was two days of sadness. Her parents didn't blame me, they felt my pain, the sudden loss of their daughter was hard on them.

I couldn't understand why they didn't even shed a tear, but I guess everyone processes grief different, so Ali said. She went on a dating app when her husband passed away, not to hook up with anyone, but to have someone to talk to. I couldn't do that. It took me one year just to go on a blind date that Ali set up for me. It took me two years to have sex with a woman other than my wife. It felt amazing at the time but

afterwards the guilt and betrayal took over. It's since been four years since Lucy passed away. I still won't open myself up for the love, the fear of losing that love is too strong.

Lucy had mentioned that I worked a lot, and that she wished I was there with her that week. I wished I was too. But I wasn't and that guilt will never leave me, no matter what my therapist says or anyone else. I failed her, that's on me. I won't fail someone else. I don't want to hurt anyone either, which is why I set boundaries, set expectations. I let them know what I am looking for, a good time.

Typically, they are okay with it at first but as time goes on, they tend to catch deeper feelings. Feelings I can't reciprocate, so they break it off with me. I shrug it off, as I can move on, I didn't have any emotional connection with them, but Julia, she is different. I can sense it; she has the ability to shatter my bubble. She has the ability to take my heart from captivity and cure it back to its previous condition, but that is a terrifying power to have.

She already has me wanting to crash to my knees begging her not to be mad at me and I only just met her for Christ sake.

*Who is she?*



JULIA



## WATCH ME BURN BY MICHELE MORRONE

Yesterday I sulked in the house all day. I ordered Chinese food, which took an hour to get here and was cold by the time I sat down to eat. I re-heated my plate, grabbed a throw blanket, wrapping it around me, and sat out on my bedroom patio. I watched a sappy romance movie and cried myself to sleep. I was sad about my life, hurt that everyone just keeps using me for what I can give them, angry that my grandmother isn't here to talk sense to me, and angry that I haven't had a decent fuck in months.

I need to go out more, I need to get out of this funk, meet new people and just sleep with some hot stranger. With protection of course, I am responsible. I wasn't mad at Caleb, I just thought things would be different here. I wouldn't be Julia from LA, the author. I'd just be Julia. To my disappointment my reputation follows me.

I texted Madison earlier asking her what she was doing tonight. She said she was going out with some friends to a night club tonight, its half off drinks and the dance floor is always full. Apparently on Sunday's everyone in town closes early as they head out to Molesbury for some night-time fun. It's already 9 pm and I hear my doorbell chime.

"Give me a minute." I yell out, hoping she can hear me as I slip into my red cocktail dress.

I can't zip it so I hurry to the door, I swing it open without looking and turn around.

“Can you please zip me up?” I feel the heat of a hand hover over my back as the zipper is fastened.

“Do you always greet people at the door barely dressed?” His voice causes shivers down my spine as I realize he had a clear view of my thong.

I cover my mouth as I turn around to look at Caleb. He smiles as he takes in my dress.

“Wow. You sure know how to make a man’s heart stop.”

I pull a strand of hair from my face and tuck it behind my ear, as I attempt to slip into my heel.

“Does that line work on everyone?”

He chuckles as he places one hand in his pocket.

“I don’t know, you’d have to ask them.”

He is very cocky.

I nearly topple over as I try to fasten my heel strap. He kneels down and pats his knee.

“Here let me help you. If we don’t hurry, Madison will freak out.”

He grabs a hold of my ankle and sets it on his knee. He grabs my heel and slides my foot into it. His soft hands glide across my skin and I can feel my cheeks burning. He is on his knee’s touching my feet and all I can think about is how I wish he would part my legs and lick my pussy. I swallow the lump in my throat as he fastens the last strap, slower than the first and I can feel his eyes trail up my legs.

Shit, my panties. I quickly set my leg down, grabbing my purse and walk to the door.

“Thank you.” I say before exiting the house and locking the door. As I approach the red jeep he smiles and opens the car door. Madison whistles as she takes in my dress.

“Damn Julia, how is it every time I see you, you get hotter?” She laughs as I get into the back seat. I close the door and I am face to face with the pool girl.

“Hi.” She waves to me as Caleb gets into the car, next to me.

“Hi.”

I reply as I stare out the window. I can't help but smile at the fact that I know how she looks naked, how she fucks, and what she is willing to do. Caleb puts his arm around the back seat which makes his shirt rise up, showing off his V and happy trail. I adjust myself in my seat as I try to keep my focus off of him. He is on a date for Christ sake. I wanted to get away from him, but apparently Madison is one of his best friends, so I am the fifth wheel in this car. Madison brought Connor who can't keep his hands off her, Caleb brought pool girl and I am solo.

**A**fter thirty minutes in the car, we pull into a parking lot that is packed. There are people sitting on their car hoods, making out, people smoking and people waiting in line. Connor opens the door for us, and we all walk up to the line. All eyes are on us as we wait at the back of the line. I suddenly want to hide under a rock when women continue to look back at me and then whisper into their friend's ears, causing them to look back at me too.

“Oh, my god.”

A girl squeals as she runs towards us. Caleb immediately holds out his hand, trying to keep them out of my personal space.

“You're Julia Harrington, right? The Julia Harrington that wrote Down Deep?” She smiles.

She looks like she is about to pass out.

“Yes I am.”

“Ahhhh oh my god. Can I please get a picture with you?”

I nod my head and turn towards her camera. The flash is bright, I have to blink repeatedly to clear my vision.

“Your books are so amazing, all the sex, the drama, you keep my book club on edge and then leave us fully satisfied.”

The way she says that makes everyone giggle. “That sounded sexual, didn’t it?” She blushes.

I grab her hand, “It did but we all know what those hangovers are like.” I wink at her, and she once again smiles as she waves goodbye.

“She’s a romance author?” Pool girl points at me. Caleb nudges her.

“Sabrina.”

Oh, Sabrina is the pool girl’s name.

“It’s okay, yes I write romance novels, no big deal.”

“Says the woman who has been on the USA Today’s Best sellers list all year.” Caleb blurts out.

Him knowing that information only confirms he has looked me up, that he is thinking about me when he shouldn’t be. I ignore the rest of the bickering as we enter the club. I just want to let loose and have fun. Madison grabs my arm as soon as we see the bar.

“Can we get two shots please?”

She holds up two fingers as the music blares through the air. It’s suffocating in here. I already feel sweat seeping from my pores.

“Oh, hottie checking you out, 1 o’clock.” I tilt my head slightly as if I have a sore neck and spot him. I down the shot and make my way over to him. This is it. I am going to be fearless.

“Okay, I’ll be over here if you need me.” Madison calls out but I have one thing on my mind. Dancing.

“Want to dance?”

I grab his arm, pulling him to the dance floor. His hands immediately grab a hold of my waist as I sway to the music. He is tall, dark and handsome. His hands grip me tighter as he pushes my head down making me touch my toes as I wiggle my ass in his crotch. He pulls me back up and turns me

around. I place my arms around his neck as we continue to dance.

“You are fucking gorgeous.” He whispers into my ear.

“Thank you.”

He leans in to kiss me and I allow it. His lips press against mine and before I can even part my mouth his tongue is poking my lips. I open my mouth slightly and his tongue is battling my tongue that hasn't even moved yet. I pull back from him.

“I'm sorry I have to go.”

I squeeze my way through the crowd and spot our group in the corner.

“Ow ow, Julia. He was hot.” Madison claps as I approach.

“And a terrible kisser.” I add.

She pouts as she plops down on the seat beside me. “Don't worry, if no one else makes out with you, I will.”

I pucker my lips and laugh.

“Now that would be hot.” Connor sets some more shots down before grabbing one for each of us. I take my shot from him and dip my chin.

Looking over I can see Caleb staring at me, his eyes burning into me, it's as if he is angry. But then again, Sabrina is sitting on his lap like a dog, swaying to the music, disconnected from the group's conversation.

“So, Sabrina, how long have you and Caleb been together?”

I can't help but smile at Caleb. His jaw tenses as he sits up slightly. I already know they aren't together. I just want some kind of reaction from him, I don't even know why.

“Oh, we aren't dating. Caleb is too good for relationships.” She rolls her eyes at him before she walks down the stairs and on to the dance floor.

Apparently, I missed a conversation they had, because she looks pissed. She walks over to a guy and starts kissing him, she pulls away and looks up at us, flipping Caleb off.

“Oh shit, what did you do?” I laugh as I take another shot. If I don’t slow down, I am going to be a sloppy sad mess.

“Nothing.” He growls as he sips his drink.

“Oh geez, really guys?” I shift in my seat to get a better view of the dance floor, since Madison and Connor are practically humping on the couch across from me.

“Well at least someone is getting kissed good tonight?” I joke as I stand up. I look around the club, searching for the restrooms.

“It’s over there. I’ll walk you.”

He holds out his hand, I grab a hold of him as he leads me to the restrooms. We are constantly bumped and elbowed. I take an elbow to my lip and yelp.

“Jesus, watch where the fuck you are going.”

Caleb pushes a guy who throws his hands up, immediately apologizing. I lick my lip and taste blood, but I am not in pain. My body is on fire from the shots we took.

“Come in here.” He pulls me into a single bathroom and locks the door.

“Caleb, get out. I need to pee.”

I try to push him out, but he doesn’t budge.

“So fucking pee.”

He turns around to face the door. I am too tipsy for this shit, if I don’t pee right now, I will pee on this floor. I pull my panties down and hover over the toilet seat. I never sit on public toilets. I wipe up and flush the toilet. Once I have secured my dress back over my ass, I wash my hands. Caleb turns me around and lifts me up by my hips, placing me down on the sink. I inhale sharply, as he man handles me, turning me on without even touching the sensitive spots I crave to be

touched the most. He grabs some paper towels and wets them, before he presses the paper towel to my lips.

“I’m fine.”

I try to move off the sink, but he steps between my legs, blocking me from moving.

“Will you just relax? I’m trying to help.” He barks as he dabs the paper towel against my lips. I turn to look in the mirror, only noticing a tiny cut. I huff as I push his hand away.

“It’s only a small cut Caleb. I will survive.”

He drops his hands to each side of the sink and drops his head with a sigh before he steps back.

“Why do you want someone to kiss you so bad?” He asks. My eyes widen as I re-adjust my dress to an acceptable position.

“It would feel nice to have a man’s touch once in a while, I haven’t gotten laid in months is all.”

His jaw tenses slightly while his eyes search mine. He is an intimidating man. His presence alone commands attention, but when he only has eyes for me in this moment, I can’t even move.

“So, when I have my hands on you, why do you want to run?”

I laugh as I sway in place, the shots definitely making me more chatty about my sex life.

“Because you frighten me. I don’t trust myself around you.”

I blink my eyes a couple times, attempting to focus my vision. I need air. I open the door and scurry out the bathroom. I don’t think he follows me as I make it through the crowd and outside. I inhale the fresh cold breeze. Sweat is covering my skin, my hair is sticking to my neck and face, I feel like a hot mess.

“Hey beautiful. I thought you had to leave?” The handsome man I was dancing with earlier strolls up beside me.



I step back slightly.

“Yeah, I lied.” I giggle as I grab his drink and down it.

Probably not smart to drink a stranger’s drink but I am definitely wasted at this point. The wind is picking up as thunder rolls over the mountains.

“Julia.” Madison calls out to me.

Caleb is right beside her and is shooting daggers at the handsome man.

*Is he jealous?*

I can’t help the giddy feelings stirring inside me.

“Sean.”

My eyes revert back to the handsome horrible kisser. Oh, okay that oddly suits him.

“Nice to meet you Sean, maybe I’ll see you around.”

I shake his hand, which is weird thing to do to someone you just recently kissed. He notices the awkwardness too as his eyebrows pinch together and a sweet smile forms.

“Get home safe.”

As I am walking up to the group, Caleb’s eyes never leave Sean. He tracks him until he is no longer in sight. Sabrina strolls out of the club and pulls Caleb towards her.

“I’m sorry, okay? Let’s not fight. I will make it up to you.”

Caleb doesn’t even look at her, his eyes are on my face. I shiver when the cold wind picks up again and drops of rain splash against my cheek. I look up into the sky, letting the rain drops cool my skin off.

“Come on guys, I don’t want to get caught in the storm.” Madison bangs on her hood before she closes the door and starts the engine. We all pile in and buckle up.

The entire car ride back was quiet, aside from Sabrina attempting to kiss Caleb’s neck. He continues to move his face away from her, but she obviously can’t take the hint. I clear my throat as we approach her stop.

“Sabrina, you are up girl. Get out.” Madison calls out.

Sabrina looks at Caleb, her eyes practically begging him to come with her. When he shakes his head, she sighs and then flips Caleb off. He just smiles and waves her goodbye.

“A little harsh don’t you think?” I snicker as I look out the window. Our houses are a couple blocks away, so I unbuckle my seat belt and grab my purse.

“Alright Julia, I will see you tomorrow. Bye Caleb.” Madison waves us goodbye before she speeds down the hill, out of sight. I sigh when I notice she dropped us off right in front of Caleb’s house.

“You really do have a nice place, Caleb.” I mumble as I wobble up the hill.

I drop my keys on to the wet cement. I groan as I attempt to pick them up, but instead I fall over, scraping my knee on the road. The rain picks up, almost as if God is laughing at me hysterically.

“Jesus.”

Caleb jogs over to me, kneeling down he looks at my knee. He tsks as he scoops me into his arms and begins to walk towards my front door.

“I can walk Caleb.”

He fiddles with my keys, unlocking my door, and then uses his foot to push it open. He doesn’t stop to take off his shoes, so he is tracking all the mud, dirt and water along my floors.

“Put me down Caleb, I am fine.”

He sets me down on the rim of the bathtub, as he searches for the first aid kit under the sink.

“Caleb really, it’s not that big of a deal.”

“Will you just shut up and let me take care of you. You’re fucking drunk, you keep getting hurt, and you look like a hot mess.”

I jerk my head back as he yells at me. “But I am still hot?” I giggle as he shakes his head and rolls his eyes.

“You have beautiful brown eyes.”

I mumble when his face is directly in front of me. He cleans my knee with peroxide and places a Band-Aid over the scrape. I rub my fingers through his brown hair; It's been recently cut but there is still enough to play with. He lifts up and tosses the trash in the garbage. I begin to remove my dress, but since I can't unzip it myself, I pull it up my body, wiggling it over my hips, and above my head. Caleb comes back into the bathroom at the exact moment as I dropped the dress to the floor.

“Fuck.”

He quickly turns around, placing his hands on the door trim. His knuckles whiten from his hold on them.

“I need to shower.”

I shimmy out of my panties and unhook my bra, setting them on top of my dress. I hop into the shower and close the door. The shower instantly fogs up concealing my body.

“There are some dry t-shirts in the closet if you want one.”

I point out to him as he slowly turns around. He heads into the closet and returns with a black t-shirt in his hand. He takes a seat on the bench along the bathroom wall.

“So, why haven't you had sex? You are a beautiful woman. Surely men throw themselves at you.”

His tone suggests he would rather not know the answer, it's the hint of jealousy that makes my body tingle, but he is asking anyways. It's almost as if whatever answer I give him would hurt him.

I bite my lip, unsure if I should answer that question. I shake my head and remind myself I am not Julia from LA anymore.

“I was married”, I blurt out. My hands cover my face, it's not like he can see me but it's embarrassing to say out loud. *Oh poor Julia, couldn't keep a man no matter how hard she tried.*

“Were?” He questions, obviously seeking more to the story. I sigh as I lather myself up.

“Yeah, I got divorced before I moved here.”

I rinse off my body and my balance feels off. I sit down on the cold stones as my vision becomes blurry.

“Julia, are you okay?”

Caleb’s shadow is against the glass.

“I feel dizzy.”

“I’m going to close my eyes and open the door, put your arms around my neck.”

I do as he instructs. I wrap my arms around his neck, my face directly against his skin. I can’t help but inhale his scent and man does he smell fucking delicious. I have to bite my tongue so that it doesn’t slip out of my mouth and glaze over him.

He places a towel around my body before he lifts me up and out the shower. His strides don’t stop until he lays me down on the bed and pulls the covers over me. He walks out of the room only to come back seconds later with a glass of water and a slice of left over pizza that was in the fridge from Friday. He sits on the edge of my bed as he holds the pizza up to my mouth.

“Here eat this, it will soak up the alcohol and drink the water.” I open my mouth and take a bite. As I chew a question comes to mind.

“Why would you rather fuck around then be in a relationship?”

He shakes his head and stands up. I instantly regret asking him that. I can see it’s not a story he is ready to share with me. So, I decide to share more with him.

“I got divorced because my husband cheated on me and wanted me gone. He didn’t love me anymore. But that was clear when he hit me before and I over-looked that sign. Clearly, I am a great judge of character.”

I begin to sob. Covering my face with my blanket so he can't see my silent tears. But of course, Caleb has to see my face. He pulls the cover from my face and places his hand on my cheek. He leans in closer to me and I swear I stop breathing. His lips are centimeters away from mine.

“He didn't deserve you. You deserve to be worshiped and loved.”

He presses his lips to mine, and I die. I scream on the inside, but on the outside, I moan into his mouth as he kisses me softly and passionately, his tongue dips into my mouth when I part my lips. I kiss him back with the same passion as I try to pull him closer to me. He pulls back panting as his chest rises and falls. His eyes search my face, a hint of panic glazes over his eyes.

“I'm sorry, I couldn't help it. I wanted to kiss you all night. But I shouldn't have. That's not fair to you.”

He pulls away shaking his head, but I am there left breathless. That kiss did something to me. It awoken something inside me. A hunger I have never felt before.

“I am a grown woman, Caleb. A kiss is a kiss. Don't make it out to be more than it was.” I whisper before he pulls back completely.

I lay my head back down on the pillow. He doesn't move. He stays on the edge of my bed. I can tell he is contemplating what to do or say next.

“So, me kissing you had no effect on you?” His brows hike up as he waits for my response.

I'm not going to tell him how my body was thrumming with electricity just being close to him. Or how my pussy got overly excited when his lips pressed against mine. Or how I wanted him to kiss and touch every part of my body that craved him.

“Ask me when I am not drunk.”

Clearly, I can't trust my mouth or body right now, as both seem to be wanting to betray me.

JULIA



## LOVE ME LIKE YOU DO BY ELLIE GOULDING

I decide to go for a run today. It feels beautiful out, forecast shows a high of 75 degrees. The wind is blowing, and the sun is hiding in between clouds. I put my yoga pants on and a sports. I grab a sweater and tie it around my waist in case I get cold. I tie my running shoes, grab my backpack and head out the door. When I get outside, I shuffle through my playlist and place the earbuds in my ear tuning the world out.

Instead of going down the hill, I run up it, which already kills my legs. I pick up speed once I am up the hill. I look at the hiking trails and choose the one that points to a waterfall. I put my phone in my pocket and when I look back at the trail, I see Caleb. He stops running as soon as he sees me. He seems out of breath, the sweat slowly rolling down his chiseled abs makes me groan. I shake my head as I tell myself I can't have him.

I remove my earbuds placing them in my pocket. He wipes his forehead off with a towel he had hidden in his back pocket before his eyes meet mine.

"Julia. I didn't know you run." He smiles as he chugs down his water. I watch as his Adam's apple bobs when he swallows.

"I don't, often. I just felt like it today. Do you run? On this trail? Often?"

I sound lame. I can't even keep a conversation with him right now because all I want to do is kiss him again. I may

have been drunk, but that memory was seared into my brain. I have never been kissed with such intensity like that before. He places his hands on his hips, all his muscles flexed as he breaths.

He looks out at the trail ahead, “Mind if I join you? I’m not tired yet.”

“Sure. You lead the way.” I jog in place ready to follow behind him and gawk at his ass. What can I say, I am a horny woman who hasn’t been fucked in months. I’ll take any visual stimulation I can get at this point.

We spend the next half hour running up and down the trail. My legs were on fire by the time we reached the river. The trees whistle as the sound of rushing water fills the forest. The ground is covered with fallen leaves, coloring the floor with beautiful colors.

“This is beautiful.”

I admire my surroundings. He holds out his hand, I accept it as he leads me over a fallen tree trunk that takes us across the river. I clench onto his arm, ensuring I don’t fall. He looks down where my hand lays and smiles.

“Wait until you see hidden nook.” He says as he jets off down another path.

I try not to trip on the rocks as I follow him. I can see the river on the left of us, we are still along it. When we emerge from the trees, my eyes widen. The waterfall of Everwood Peaks is huge. The water cascades down into a large pond below us, dispensing down the river.

“Julia, this way.”

I look at Caleb who holds onto the rocks edge against the waterfall. He quickly disappears behind the curtain of rushing water.

“Caleb.”

I never mentioned to him that I am afraid of heights. I inhale as I place my hands in front of me, gripping on to the rocks as I shuffle my feet. I do the same motion that Caleb did,



ducking my head behind the curtain. I slip slightly and yelp. Caleb grabs onto me by the waist pulling me into him.

“I got you.” He holds me against his chest for a moment staring into my eyes before he lets go raking his fingers through his hair as he exhales quietly.

I take in the view surrounding us. We are inside the waterfall cave, but instead of it being dark, there is a large hole in the center, letting in all the natural light, green vines dangle down, and in the middle of the circle is a pool of clear blue water.

“We don’t know how this was made. But it’s warm.”

Caleb removes his gym shorts, socks and shoes leaving him in nothing but his boxers as he dips into the water.

“You going to join me, Julia?” He quirks a brow until I have no other choice but to strip down in my bra and underwear joining him in the most romantic place I have ever been.

There is no bottom that my feet can reach so I tread water in front of him. His arms move in the water as he circles me. I turn my head to keep my eyes on him. I hold onto the edge of the rocks when I get tired of treading. He splashes me with water, I splash him back. It’s playful flirting. I don’t mind it. He grabs a hold of my waist and throws me into the water. I kick back up to the surface and suck in a breath as I smooth my hair back from my face.

“That’s not fair.” I mutter.

“What’s not fair is, you being so damn sexy without even trying. That’s not fair.”

I shoot my eyes at him. I wave him off thinking he is just being a goof ball. But when I attempt to get out of the water, he pulls me back down, holding me against his chest before tossing me once more. He laughs when I come up for air. I splash him once more before I quickly hop out.

Once Caleb gets out of the water, he joins me at the edge. The curtain of water makes you sound like you’re speaking

into a fan if you are close enough. I look around the cave once more, admiring the peacefulness surrounding us.

“How did you find this place?”

He smiles and then nudges me, “Ask me something else.”

I want to question him as to why, but when he looks down at his lap, I can tell it's again something he doesn't want to open up about.

“Sorry.”

He turns his body to face me, sitting Criss cross as he leans his arms behind him.

“Why are you sorry?”

“Because you had to endure a pain that has made you never want love again, something us humans crave more than anything. Because it makes it hard for me not to kiss you again, when we both have cracks that need to be fixed.”

He scoots closer to me. His hand brushes against my cheek, its warm and I lean into his palm.

“What about you? How did you feel when you found out your husband had cheated on you?”

His question hits me in the gut. I was not expecting that. He went straight for the kill the vibe shot.

“I was embarrassed. I was on live television when the tweets started rolling in, telling us to look at a post. It was of him kissing her. I didn't find out until I got home, that he was fucking her in my bed. I left the house that night and didn't come back until the day I took all my belongings. I felt betrayed, you make vows with someone to love them for the rest of your lives, but you don't hurt the people you love. I may not be 100% over it, it takes time, like any loss. That was seven years of my life, wasted. I think back now, all the men I could have fucked but because I am a nice person I could never. Now I can fuck whoever I want but...”

I can't finish that sentence. The way he is looking at me right now has my heart pounding. The mere mention of the word fuck has lust twinkling in his eyes as he sits up.

“Julia.”

He doesn't need to say anything else. My body can sense what he wants.

“I know he doesn't deserve to love me. I remember what you said before you kissed me.” I bite my lip as I remember.

“I can't stop thinking about your lips against mine.” He stares at my lips as he talks in a slower pace and my skin hums.

The need to make a move comes over me. I lean forward grabbing the back of his head pulling him into me and kiss him. I give him a slow, lip-smacking kiss. It takes my breath away at the connection I feel when I touch him. My whole body is on fire and my heart is pounding. I can feel a connection to him that I have never felt before.

His hands cup my cheeks, and he pulls me in closer. We rise to our knees and kissing each other harder as I part my lips to allow him more access. His tongue dips into my mouth and I moan. I suck on his tongue which makes him pull me on top of his lap. My legs wrap around his. His cock is hard against me. I want to grind so bad, but I stop myself.

My phone rings and I quickly get off him when I hear the ringtone I assigned for Violet. I can tell Caleb is disappointed that this moment was interrupted when he takes a deep breath and peers out at the falling water.

On our walk back, it's pretty quiet. He doesn't speak much, but makes sure I am safe crossing the log, climbing the rocks, and not tripping as we descend the mountain.

“Julia. The town is having a carnival in a few days. Would you like to go with me? As friends of course. Or not as friends, as a date?”

I smile at the thought that him asking me this right now is making him nervous, he can't even look me in the eyes. Usually he is so direct, but right now he is crashing. I lift my hands to his cheeks and lift his gaze to mine.

“Sounds like a date.”

I kiss him once more before I let him go. He smiles and walks to his house. I can't help but feel giddy. As hard as moving on is, Caleb is starting to make it easier every day.

CALEB



## YOUR GUILTY PLEASURE BY HENRY VERUS

“*I*’m falling for her.” I barge into the kitchen. Travis is the only one here so I can speak freely to my best friend.

“With Julia?”

I nod.

“Okay, and that’s a problem because?” He continues to chop vegetables as if this isn’t a big deal.

“You know me man. I don’t get emotionally involved. I can’t.” I lean against the line, dropping my head down.

“No, you choose not to. You hadn’t found a woman who makes you feel alive, until now.” He gestures at my appearance. My body is practically shaking at the revaluation.

I look up at him. My eyebrows lift as I tilt my head.

“Don’t look at me like that Caleb. I know you remember. Ever since she walked her fine ass into this bar, you have been glowing, happy, excited, anticipating when you will see her again.” He pauses as he sets his rag down. “You need to start listening to your heart again. What happened today?”

I exhale as I remember our hike.

“I got to see a vulnerable side of her. She is like me, hurt, broken, seeking love from a place she doesn’t even know if she can reach. Yet, she can’t help but want me just as much as I want her. She won’t admit it, but her eyes and body tell me

the truth. I kind of get mixed signals from her. I am very confused, man.”

I rub my hands over my face and around my neck before looking back up at him. Travis is just smiling from ear to ear.

“Did you ask her out on a date? You know like normal people do.”

Travis knows I am not a normal person.

“I invited her to join me at the carnival this weekend. I told her it could be a date or as friends.”

He rolls his eyes and turns his back to me. I laugh as I head out to my office.

“You are not being bold enough Caleb. Take off the reins a little.” He yells out before I close the door.

I take a seat and images from the last couple of days pop into my head. I hated seeing her kiss that dude at the club, I was relieved when Sabrina noticed my eyes were searing holes into Julia’s back, I was relieved when Julia said she didn’t like the kiss. When she hurt her lip, I wanted to punch the dude, my instinct was to care for her. But when I saw her in her bra and panties, I wanted to fall to my knees and beg to taste her. I had the need to consume her and fuck her raw to confirm what I fantasied about, she tastes and feels fucking amazing. My cock was so hard it hurt.

When she was in the shower, I was praying for water to splash against the glass just so I could see more of her. She has long toned legs, her ass is round, her hips are perfect for holding on to and her tits are a perfect handful. When I kissed her, I felt that electricity I had only felt once before, with Lucy. It scared me. I had to pull away. But like she said, a kiss is a kiss. It didn’t mean anything. But it meant something to me. When I showed her the waterfall and she told me about her ex I wanted to strangle him. He had this gorgeous woman, and still he fucked her over.

*How?*

Life isn’t fair. Bad things happen to good people daily. We just happen to be two good people who were wronged, living

in the same town.

Today the town is wild, the streets are packed. It's carnival day in the middle of the only park we have.

The committee and I set up the entire event. We have a petting zoo for the small children, bouncy houses, paintball, carnival rides, face painting, axe throwing, and food trucks. The sun is shining, and people start trickling in.

I spot Madison wearing a sunflower printed dress and next to her is a tall blonde that is wearing a blue sun dress. She looks incredible.

“Thought you were bailing on me.”

She looks at her phone and smiles.

“I am early.”

I grab her arm and pull her to me. She finds her footing as I wrap my arm over her shoulder.

“Connor joining you?”

Madison smiles as she takes in my hand placement around Julia.

“He should be here soon. You guys have fun.”

She winks as I hand Julia her wrist band. I grab her a cotton candy and we head over to play some games. She is surprisingly good at shooting hoops. We eat kettle corn, ride the Ferris wheel which is oddly romantic, and head over to the paintball zone. She is a shitty shot, but she was having so much fun trying to shoot the moving targets. She took losing with so much grace.

“I haven't had this much fun in such a long time.” She laughs as she wipes some paint off her face.

She decided to open fire at me, so we had a game of tag. We ended up ditching the paintball guns and throwing balloons full of paint. I got one good shot that exploded over her head. She screamed and ran after me.



“I had a great time.” I wipe some paint off her eyebrow before looking at her lips.

“Caleb.”

I hear that voice and I freeze. I turn around to find it’s Sabrina staring at me and Julia. Her eyes lock in to where our hands interlock and she crosses her arms. I let go of Julia’s hand, “I’ll be right back.”

“So, you do date, just not me? Just fuck around with me for years and then some new bitch comes in and you’re on a date with her?”

I rub my hands through my hair and exhale. “Lower your voice. Sabrina, you knew from the start, all I wanted was sex. I have been nothing but honest with you. I am having a nice time out. I don’t have to explain myself to you. We are not exclusive. Do you understand?”

I point to me and her.

She nods and stomps her foot like a child before she walks away.

“You okay?”

Julia’s biting her lip with her eyebrows pinched, concerned that my mood has changed.

“I’m fine. Sorry about that.”

I wrap my arm around her waist and walk her out of the carnival. I will have to deal with Sabrina later.

I haven’t seen Julia in three days. According to Madison she is in writing mode. She has a deadline to meet and won’t be done anytime soon. I decided after I close up the bar, that I was going to bring wine over, give her a little break from writing. During work I was able to read one of her books as it was a slow night, and I was curious. It was an office romance, and it was pretty much a porno written up instead of a video.

*Who knew an innocent looking Julia had such a nasty mind?*

I was so surprised and captivated by her writing, that I couldn't put it down. I even had to relieve myself in the bathroom due to envisioning Julia as the female lead.

"Oh, yeah, I have read that one. It's hot huh?" Sydney peaks over my shoulder as I finish the last chapter.

"Yeah, it's really good. Do woman actually like the things in these books?" I ask.

Sydney isn't shy about sex talk. She has all kinds of crazy conversations in the kitchen with Travis and the line cooks.

"Well Chapter 21, where she gets tied up and blindfolded, that heightens all kinds of senses. It's a favorite amongst us ladies." She winks as she proceeds to clean off her table.

I make a mental note to go over this book with Julia. I finish clearing off the bar and turn off the lights. Sydney leaves out the back with Travis and the bus boy. I exit the front and lock the doors. It's a short walk home so I cradle the wine in my hand as I walk. Her house comes into view, the lights are on, so she is still up. It's only 12:20 in the morning so I am not surprised. I press the doorbell and wait for her to answer. I exhale a cold breath as I press the doorbell once more.

"Coming."

I hear her voice through the door and smile.

"Caleb. Come in it's freezing out tonight."

I step into her foyer. I can feel the warmth coming from the fireplace. She guides me to the living room. I take in her cozy leggings and matching long sleeve. She is bundled up, keeping all her assets out of sight, good that will keep my brain off fucking her. You would think, but when she turns, and her ass is practically trying to bust through the thin material. I damn near choke on my saliva. Her leggings show off her ass even more than jeans. I clear my throat as I hand her the bottle of wine.

“I brought some wine. Figured you could use a break from writing.”

I look around to find papers scattered across the dining room table, her laptop seated on the ottoman, and her pen tucked behind her ear.

“Oh delicious.” She takes the bottle in her soft hands. She lifts her eyes to mine.

“Um Caleb are you trying to get me drunk? Because you don’t need to get me drunk to have a good time.”

She winks before she heads over to the kitchen and grabs two wine glasses. I slip out of my coat and sit down on the couch with a grin plastered on my face.

“Sorry about the mess, I have so many characters talking to me that I have to jot things down as they come in.” She pours the wine and hands me a glass.

“They talk to you?” I question as I take a sip.

“Yeah, it’s like a movie playing in my head. I can see the whole book, every scene, climax, just spilling out. I have to write things down or else they are gone.”

She explains as she shows me her notebook. It’s a lot of notes, lines, X’s, circles. One circled item catches my eye. I choke on my wine as I try to swallow.

“Face fucking. Wow.”

I laugh, setting my drink down before I spill it. She laughs too as she didn’t realize that was the page she was showing me.

“Mmm yeah, that’s a good one.”

I quirk a brow.

“Speaking from experience?”

She slaps my arm, as her cheeks blush.

“A lot of what I write is either from experience or things I have always wanted to try.”

*Interesting.*

I have the need to pry more out of her.

“So, in chapter 21 of Deep down, was that experience or fantasy?” Her mouth opens wide at my knowledge of her books.

I nod, “Yes I read it, it was really good by the way, I had to jerk off in the bathroom.”

“Oh my god.”

She laughs so hard, but I am not joking as my face is stern.

“Wait seriously?” She places her hand delicately on her chest as if surprised.

“Yep. It really got me going. So, experience or fantasy.”

She sets her drink down and leans her forearms on her knees.

“Fantasy.”

*Oh my god, she has a wild mind.*

The way she says fantasy and draws the word out has my cock twitching against my jeans. I would love to test out that fantasy with her. The way she describes it, I was ready to cum within seconds. Even now just knowing it’s a fantasy of hers makes me hard. The things I want to do to her run wild in my mind.

“Do you still think there is love out there for you?”

I had to change the subject. I was getting too horny looking at her while being in her home.

She sets her wine glass down, licking her lips.

“Gosh I hope so. I’m too young to never find love again.”

I shift in my seat and lean forward.

“I didn’t think another great love was out there for me.”

Her eyes focus on me as she waits for me to speak.

“I was married, but my wife killed herself four years ago.”

She gasps as my words sink into her. “Oh Caleb, I am so sorry.”

I shake my head.

“I have come to terms with the reasons why and I know now there wasn’t anything I could do about it. But what kills me is that you could love someone so much and one day they could leave you, voluntarily or involuntarily. Just gone. Leaving you there broken. I don’t think anyone truly thinks about the devastation they leave behind.”

She inches her way closer to me.

“I don’t think we are broken. I think we are healing. You have already taken the beginning steps, you are out there with women, having sex. I haven’t even attempted that yet. I want it don’t get me wrong, but I am afraid that if I give myself to someone else even just a little, I will only get hurt.”

I set my drink down and lean back on the couch, my eyes never leaving hers.

“Do you mean your heart or sex?”

We are getting very personal right now and surprisingly I am not trying to run away from it.

“Mm both, I guess, but mainly my heart. Sex is sex but still there is a connection built, but when I love someone, I want them to love me so hard it would kill them to leave me.”

She lowers her head as if she is ashamed of what she said. I raise my knuckle under her chin and lift her face back up.

“He was stupid for ever leaving you.”

The left corner of her mouth lifts up, giving me a half smile.

“I’m not sure how he left someone as beautiful as you. I would have treasured every part of you.”

I think the wine is getting to me. I am saying things I shouldn’t, things that should stay in my mind. She just said she is scared to give her heart away, and I am in no position to take her heart, but I selfishly want it.

“Caleb.”

And the way she says my name stirs a growl inside of my chest. I hold out my hand to her, she doesn't hesitate, she holds on to me as I pull her down the hall to her bedroom. I walk her outside and press a button to open up the hot tub. I don't think she knew one was here, as her face lights up and her mouth hangs open in shock.

"Since when was that there?" She laughs as she watches the hot tub lift from the floor.

"A hidden gem I installed for Ali. She used it about two times. It self-cleans weekly, don't worry."

"You want to get in?" She quirks a brow.

I laugh as I pull off my shirt and drop my pants to the floor. I stand there in my boxers and watch her eyes drift down my abs.

"I didn't open it up for nothing, Julia."

I walk up to the hot tub and step in, the warm water swallowing my body as I sit down on the ledge. Her eyes take me in as she exhales, she lifts up her long sleeve, her black lace bra conceals her tits. She tosses her shirt to the ground before her thumbs dip under the hem of her leggings and she drags the material down her legs. I can't help but follow every move she makes, taking in her body before me. Her matching black lace thong hugs her hips, as she steps up and dips into the water.

She pulls her hair up into a bun, tying it in place before she settles on the ledge opposite of me.

We gaze up at the stars above us for a moment before she tilts her head down to look at me.

"So, you were pretty close with my grandma huh?"

"Yeah. She was like another mother to me. She was a huge part of my life."

"This is beautiful."

She changes the subject as the smallest glaze of moisture fills her eyes. She looks up at the stars above us. Her tits

sitting above the water, glistening as the lights from the hot tub provide a glow over her smooth skin.

“Julia. Come here.”

She tilts her head down. Her eyes linger on my lips before she is standing up and approaching me. I grab a hold of her waist and lift her slightly so she can straddle my lap. She squeals at the sudden movement but settles calmly once I plant her feet on each side of me. I don't stray my hands from her hips, I just hold her still. Her nose touches the brim of mine.

“Do you want me to kiss you?”

She doesn't answer me. I push her hips into me, letting her grind against my hard cock, once. She moans as her eyes go wide when she realizes the situation she literally walked into.

“I won't ask again.”

She inhales before her tongue slips out and slides across her lips. I know what she is doing, she writes about it. She wants me to take it. She likes to be dominated. I can see it in the way she is looking at me, the way I told her to come to me and she did without argument. It turned her on, her cheeks are flush as her pulse picks up.

When she doesn't respond again, I shoot my shot. I pull her hips into me again and grip onto her hair, crashing my lips against hers. She parts her lips allowing me to consume more of her. My hand holds on to the side of her neck while the other hand grips her hip, keeping her close to me. I dip my tongue into her mouth, and she moans as my tongue collides with hers.

God, she tastes so good, the sweetness on her tongue just makes me press against her mouth more. I pull back allowing her a moment to catch her breath. Her chest rises and falls as her eyes search my face, she shifts on my lap, and I can feel her core seeking friction. It makes my cock jump with need. We sit there, staring at each other, contemplating our next move. I know what I want mine to be, but I need her to let me know if it's okay. For her to know what she is getting herself into.

“Caleb.”

She moans as she can feel my cock growing against her pussy.

“Tell me to stop and I will.”

She moans again when I push her hips inward again, letting her feel the length of my cock. She tilts her head back, her hands pressed against my chest.

“Do you want me to stop, Julia?” I press her into me again, she licks her lips and shakes her head.

“No.”

A soft whisper leaves her lips and I spring into action. Lifting her up and out of the water, I set her right on the edge of the hot tub. I spread her legs as I kiss her lips, trailing down her neck, the middle of her chest, her stomach, until I reach the spot that has her eyes rolling back. Her hands grip the ledge for support as I swipe my fingers across her lace panties. She moans out at the sensation. I pull her panties to the side and admire her bare pussy. Her arousal is glistening against her. I swipe my tongue through her folds as the urge to taste her becomes too strong and I can't hold back any longer.

“Oh fuck.”

She moans out as I swipe my tongue again. I groan as her taste swarms my taste buds.

“Jesus, fuck you taste so fucking good.”

I haven't gone down on a woman in years. I forgot what good pussy tastes like. I couldn't wait to taste Julia. I want to pleasure her, whereas before all I cared about was pleasuring myself. She begins to grind her pussy against my tongue. I stroke my cock under the water, it pains with need as Julia bucks against me. I slide two fingers inside her tight pussy and groan.

“Fuck, my cock would be strangled by this tight pussy. I bet you would crumble within seconds.”

She nods, biting her lip as she watches my fingers disappear inside her. I pound against her, locating her g-spot



and rub against it. I dip my head back between her legs and suck on her clit. The sounds of sucking, pounding, and moaning fill the night air.

“Caleb.”

She moans out as her walls close in around my fingers. I suck harder, pound faster, as she pants and holds on to the edge for dear life. Her climax hits her like a truck, her pussy clenches down, warmth pools around my fingers, as her arousal seeps out. I remove my fingers, sucking them clean before I lick her clit and suck all the arousal off of her pussy. She jerks against the feeling as she comes down from her release.

“Such a good girl coming for me.”

She whimpers at my words.

*Someone has a praise kink.*

I smile as I lift her up and carry her inside. She kisses me licking my lips clean.

“I taste so good on your lips.”

She moans and I grip her ass hard.

“Fuck yes, you do.”

I taste amazing with her on me.

JULIA



## DANGEROUS HANDS BY AUSTIN GIORGIO

*I* just had one of the best orgasms of my life. Caleb licked my pussy and fingered me like a man. Daniel could never make me cum from oral stimulation. We always had to fuck or let me ride him for me to release. Caleb carries me over to the shower, turns on the hot water and steps inside with me cradled in his arms. He sets me down and turns me around. My ass is nestled against his hard cock, just teasing me. He unbuckles my bra but before he lets it fall to the ground he leans in and whispers against my ear causing me to shiver with lust. He knows what he is doing to me.

“Tell me to stop and I will.”

*Oh god, please don't stop.*

He is edging me on so much right now, the anticipation is killing me. I shake my head as my bra falls to the stone floor. His hands rub along my sides until he reaches my panties. I hold on to the wall in front of me as I keep my legs together allowing him to slide my panties down. He kisses the dip of my back before he kisses my ass cheek. I lift my feet up and my panties are discarded on the floor.

I imagine what this scene could be for a split second, only to be surprised when he pushes my face against the wall. He pushes my back down to provide a good arch as he aligns his tip with my pussy.

“Are you on birth control? I need to feel all of you.” He asks, his voice shaking as he slides his hands over my spine.

“Yes.” I moan as I move the hair from my face.

He moans as he slides his cock between my folds collecting my arousal before he dips his tip inside me. I tilt my head back moaning against the wall as I can feel his wide tip enter me slowly. He grunts as he sinks deeper inside me. His fingers dig into my hips as my walls clench down on him. He is definitely bigger than anyone I have been with.

I claw at the shower wall when his thrusts pick up speed.

“Oh, fuck you feel so good wrapped around my cock. Tell me Julia, will you be sore from me fucking you raw?”

My pussy pulsates at his words as I moan feeling my hot breath against the tile. He grabs a fist full of hair and pulls. I cry out from the pain when he slams into me full force, bringing on the pain and pleasure I seek. I buck him off of me and drop to my knees. I have not seen his cock yet, so I salivate at the thought. His eyes drop down to me. I look up into his eyes. My mouth falls open when I admire the cock that stuffed me full moments ago. He has length and girth and balls that will fill me up with cum.

Without warning I suck his cock into my mouth. Paying special attention to the sensitive tip as my tongue swirls around it. His thighs tremble as I suck up and down his length. He holds on to the back of my head with one hand as the other is propped up against the shower door.

“Oh fuck, yes just like that. Oh, fuck Julia.” He stutters.

I pop off his cock and suck his balls, letting the popping noise fill his ear. He moans as I suck them again while stroking his cock.

“Tell me to stop and I will.” I tease.

He smiles as he lifts me up, my legs instinctively wrap around his waist. His cock taps against my core.

“Don’t ever stop.”

He presses me down on to him, shoving himself to the hilt as he holds me up.

I cry out at the sudden fullness. He stills for a moment, his breathing is rapid and shallow as he allows me to adjust to his

length. My arousal builds up allowing him to access more of me. He lifts me and up and down his cock. It's like I can feel him in my stomach. All the pressure is building up in my lower belly as I scratch at his back, fighting to hold on and not fall. He opens the shower and walks us out on to the patio. He doesn't pull out of me, so I can feel his cock sliding in and out, almost as though he is still thrusting inside me.

The cold air hits my nipples causing them to bud up even more. He looks down as he leans my back against the railing. His warm tongue circles around my nipple as he thrusts into me faster.

“Look up at the stars, sing your beautiful song to your god, Julia.”

He bites down on my nipple and my whole body crumbles. He doesn't stop thrusting as I am slammed into another forceful orgasm.

“Oh, Caleb, yes. Ohhh. God.”

I moan out to the moon as my legs squeeze against Caleb.

“That's it, cum all over this cock.” He grunts out as he kisses my neck and his thrusts become ragged, un-calculated, until he stills. I can't take my eyes off him. I can feel his cum streaming out and coating my walls as my pussy pulsates at the warm sensation. He steadies himself, resting his head against my chest. His chest rises and falls as he attempts to gather his bearings.

“You feel so fucking good baby.” He mumbles as he carries me back into the house. Which is good because I don't think I could walk right now. My legs feel like jelly.

That's the first time he has ever called me a nickname other than Mystery woman and Julia.

It's cute, it made me smile as I rested against his beating heart.

y blinds automatically open up at sunrise, so the morning sun shines through the window, waking me up. I turn over and

stretch out my arms. A groan behind me startles me as I turn to  
**M** look. Caleb pulls the covers over his head to shield himself from the light.

“No, let’s just stay in bed all day.” He tries to pull me back down but he is out of reach.

I will be honest I wasn’t expecting him to stay over. I thought he would try to sneak out in the middle of the night, pretend like last night never happened. You know typically asshole shit, but he stayed.

There is more to him than the town gossip knows.

“Good morning.” I say as I pull on my oversized t-shirt, slip into my house shoes and grab my robe.

“Mmm”, is all he can muster out.

He is not a morning person like myself. I head to the kitchen and brew my coffee like normal. I stop at the refrigerator to check my calendar.

“Shit. Caleb, you have to leave.” I call out as I rush back into the room.

Caleb springs up, his eyes groggy as he tries to blink away the sleepiness. I toss him his boxers, pants, and shirt.

“You have to go. Madison will be here any minute.”

He laughs as he pulls his shirt over his head and lifts himself off the bed. He bends over pulling his boxers back up. I whimper with disappointment as I would love nothing more than to fuck him right now.

“Why do I have to leave just because Madison is coming over?” He questions as he slips into his jeans. I look at the time and quickly escort him out of the house.

“Last night, that..”

He stops me from talking, capturing my lips and my heart flutters. His lips are so soft, his tongue so smooth as it glides over mine. I am sure he can taste the coffee on my breath.

“Last night was amazing.”

I nod.

“How about I cook you dinner Wednesday night? I saw your schedule, it seems like 6 pm works for you.”

“Okay.”

I smile as I close the door.

I quickly get dressed and fix my bed. I can't have Madison knowing that I had sex with Caleb. Not yet anyways, it's her first day on the job, last thing she needs is to be stressed out about possible town gossip involving me when she will already have her hands full with the media.

Madison spends the day with me, going through my calendar. I show her where to find the events I need to attend, I give her my business card to book our travel, tell her my requirements for hotel stays, give her a list of ARC readers to review, and give her a list of ideas for promotion. She doesn't even bat an eye. She takes all the information and heads over to her new desk I set up in the office. I also provide her a PR phone, that way she doesn't receive calls on her personal cell.

“Hey so what's going on with you and Caleb?” Madison asks as we sit down to eat dinner. I choke on my noodles as I adjust myself in the seat.

“What do you mean?” I try to play it cool, but she squints her eyes.

“He was walking out of your house at 7 am on a Monday, buttoning up his pants. Oh, come on Julia, give me the juicy details.”

She begs. Literally her hands are pressed together as the tips of her fingers rest under her chin as she pouts.

“Fine, we had sex last night. No big deal.” I pick up my plate, scrapping the leftovers into the garbage can.

“No, that's a huge deal. He's your first since your divorce.” She turns in her chair. Her smile is contagious. I can't help but smile back.

“I know and it was fucking amazing, but that’s all it was, sex.”

“I call bullshit. No one has sex with Caleb Taylor and it’s just sex to them.” She gets up and flings her plate into the sink.

“Madison, be careful.” I check the dishes as I would hate for one of my grandmother’s plates to be ruined.

“Admit it, you like him. Like you really really like him. Just say it, no one here would judge you. Ali wouldn’t judge you. She wanted you to meet him a long time ago.”

I shake my head, not believing a word she says.

“Why do you think she always used to send you invitations to the town’s events? It was to set you up with Caleb. Come on, he is perfect for you.”

“He doesn’t do relationships Madison, remember?” I hold out my arms, waiting for her to give me more useless advice. She rolls her eyes not believing a word I say. I don’t believe a word I am saying either. It didn’t feel like just sex, it felt like much more.

“We are just friends, who fucked once, and will cook dinner on Wednesday. That’s it. I am not ready for another relationship. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have work to do.”

I dismiss myself as I run from the endless questions in Madison’s eyes. I need to sort out these sudden feelings I am feeling and fast.

Wednesday comes around fast as time moves quickly when you are focused on nothing but work. I wake up to check the mail and notice a dozen roses on my porch. The roses are beautiful, each petal a vibrant red, the green leaves thriving, and a glass vase filled with black stones. There is a note attached.

*I look forward to dinner tonight. -Caleb*



I smile as I bring the flowers inside and set them on my dining table. The idea of a man like Caleb showing a softer side brings butterflies to my stomach. I don't know what I am doing with him, but I have the need to make sure I look my best. If I am going to keep seeing him, casually, I always want to look my best.

Today's weather report indicates it will be a cold 50 degrees with a low 43 degrees. So, I button up before I head out to the salon. My hair is in desperate need of a deep conditioning and trim. I also want to get a manicure, treat my typing fingers to some massage and cuticle treatment.

"Want to get our nails done?"

I walk into the office. Madison is sorting through fan mail. She looks up from the pile of envelopes and holds up her overgrown acrylic nails.

"Yes please." She smiles as she grabs her purse and follows me out the door.

"So, are you excited for your date tonight?" She keeps her eyes on the road as we pull onto Main Street.

I haven't been down main street yet, with all the writing I have been doing, I don't have much time to explore Everwood.

"It's not a date Madison. It's just dinner."

"Right, because friends leave flowers at someone's door before their dinner plans."

I turn to her, my eyes squinted, "They should. Its polite."

"God, please tell me you aren't that delusional to think that Caleb Taylor, isn't trying to court you?"

The fact that she always addresses him using his first and last name is creepy. Like he is some hot commodity in this town. I sigh as we pull into the parking lot. Luscious Locks was the only town hair and nail salon that I could find. The reviews were great, so I figured why not keep my money in the community instead of flying my hairstylist out here.

“Julia. Caleb really likes you. He never likes anyone, not since Lucy.”

I stop walking, just hearing her name brings sadness to my heart. I place my hand on her hood and close my eyes for a moment.

“He told me about what happened to her. I didn’t want to ask questions, didn’t want to pressure him into telling me something he wasn’t ready to. I couldn’t imagine going through a pain like that.”

She fiddles with her keys before she walks up onto the curb beside me.

“He was devastated. That loss broke his heart. He thinks by not opening his heart to someone that it will keep him from ever experiencing a loss like that. But I see the way he looks at you, watches you. He cares about you already, and if you are not into him in that way, then back off. I don’t want to see my friend hurt, again.”

I take a moment to soak up her words. I would never want to intentionally hurt Caleb. I care about him, even though I haven’t known him long, but some indescribable feelings are there, somewhere. I can feel a pull between us, but I try to ignore it half the time because I too am afraid. I’m afraid that if I fall in love again that the rug beneath me will be pulled and I will slam face first into the ground. Love shouldn’t hurt so much, but it does and I’m terrified to love again.

“Julia Harrington, you look stunning.”

My new hair stylist, Dia, gawks at my shining blonde hair as she twirls me around in the chair. She deep conditioned my hair, trimmed and curled my golden locks.

“It’s a no wonder she is the talk of the town.” A bystander chimes in as she sits under the hairdryer.

“Yes, She talked about you a lot. My book club has read your books. We made Declan our book boyfriend of the year.”

I giggle as the old ladies bicker back and forth about their favorite character's.

"I had no idea this town even knew about my writing." I blush.

I have never been good at receiving compliments. It feels almost like they lie to me to make me feel good, that's how I take compliments. Daniel used to compliment me, but that was all a lie too.

"Well of course, your grandmother even hosted a book event in your honor. She ordered copies of your book and handed them out to the guest. She was extremely proud of you." Dia states as she fingers my curls before she taps me to follow her to the color wall.

Dia is a young woman. She reminds me of the girl who stars in the movie, 'Through My Window'. She has this way about her that makes talking to her easy. She can connect with you within seconds of meeting. She sets down the color pallet on the table and points.

"Go with red. Red is definitely your color. Bold. Dangerous. Fierce." She smiles.

"Hot." Madison adds.

I laugh and agree, Red will look amazing with my outfit for the red carpet tomorrow. I am not getting all dolled up for dinner, although it is perfect timing, I have obligations tomorrow, so I have to look my best.

**M**y dining room is gorgeous, the wood round table in the middle of the room, surrounded by large glass windows, a black chandelier dangling from the ceiling, tan rug beneath the legs and eucalyptus plants in vases on the wall. I set the table with two white plates on top of black placemats, add two wine glasses, and utensils. Flicking on the lighter, I light the candles at the center of the table. The glow from the flame casting against the walls.

“This does look too romantic.” I say to myself as I take in the room.

Ding, dong. The doorbell chimes before I have time to make adjustments. I fix my maxi dress and check my hair in the mirror before I open the door.

*It's just two friends having dinner, stop smiling so much.*

But maybe I want it to be more than friends. Shit, Madison is getting in my head. The nerves creep up as I open the door and the air is taken from my lungs.

“Daniel.”

CALEB



## BROKEN BY ISAK DANIELSON

I grab a dozen fresh roses from my garden, clipping the thorns and rubber band them together. I had placed roses on her doorstep earlier but a couple more won't hurt. I have this sudden need to impress her and show her my caring side. Something about her is pulling the old me out and making my heartbeat pound faster.

I fix my black long sleeve sweater and comb my fingers through my hair. I check myself over in the mirror, I want to look my best for her. She is an amazing woman, and I can't get her out of my head no matter how hard I try. So, I decided to stop fighting it and open myself up to the possibility of loving someone again. My therapist said nothing in life is easy, there will always be obstacles that you have to overcome, but the reward at the end is worth every ounce of pain you experienced to get there.

I put on my jacket before I head out the door, winter weather is rolling in. Soon the mountains will be casted with snow and what better to have someone to snuggle up with during the cold months. I walk up the sidewalk towards Julia's. A cab rolls past me and I notice the brake lights beam as the cab pulls up to the house I am headed to. I quirk a brow as I continue walking forward. A man, I don't recognize steps out of the car, waves to the cab driver and approaches her door. I stop my steps as I shield myself behind a tree.

I look like a stalker now, hiding behind a tree and peering out from behind it. I texted Julia thirty minutes ago that I was heading over soon, so she is probably expecting it to be me at

her doorstep. He rings the doorbell, and she opens the door with an abrupt shock displayed across her face.

“Daniel.”

Oh hell no. Her ex-husband?

He pulls her into him for a hug. She doesn't stop him, but she also doesn't wrap her arms around him either, yet it pisses me off.

“Can I come in? I would like to talk for a minute.”

She waves him in and my heart thuds against my chest. I drop the roses, my legs wanting to march up to her door and drag him out, but my head is telling me that would be a bad idea.

“Fuck.”

Realizing our date is probably not happening I head back to my house. When I close my door my phone chimes. I sigh as I know exactly what I am about to find as soon as I unlock my screen. My heart already knows it's from Julia.

I inhale as my phone illuminates, unlocks, and pulls up the text.

I'm sorry, I need to cancel. Raincheck?

Sure, everything okay?

Yeah. Just something came up.

I throw my phone onto the couch. She couldn't even tell me that he was here. I walk through the living room and into the kitchen to grab a drink. I pour some whiskey into a glass and step out onto my balcony.

From my balcony I can see parts of her living room and kitchen when the blinds are open. The lights are on in the living room and the dining room is dim with a light flickering, probably from candles. It warms my heart to know she tried to set the dining table with candles. But then I see him standing next to her in the living room. Her arms flail around as she

talks and walks away from him. He reaches out to grab her, but misses. My fists clench as I watch.

*Definitely a stalker now.*

I can't take my eyes off her. I can see her mouth moving, she is yelling at him, he is yelling back, rubbing his face, as he takes in her appearance. I can tell he is wishing he could fuck her right now. She looks amazing from what I can see.

He finds his opportunity to pull her into him. She tries to get out of his grip, but he holds her tight. She sighs and his nose presses against her cheek. Anger fills me. Jealousy rages through my veins. I don't want anyone touching her, it physically pains me.

“You better fucking not.” I mumble to myself.

I will fucking strangle him if he even thinks of moving another inch. But he can't hear me, and he crashes his lips against hers. She tries to deny it, she pushes against his chest, but he continues to kiss her. Next thing I know her lips are crashing against his. Her hands comb through his hair, his hands wrap around her waist, lifting her up and setting her on top of the counter.

My glass goes flying into the wall, shattering to pieces against the wood planks. My hand drags over my face as I watch him devour her mouth the same way I wanted to. She tilts her head back as his hands caress her body. I will fucking break his hands for touching her. That's not his body to touch.

I shake my head, *she's not yours, she can fuck whoever she wants, you are not together.*

I try to keep reminding myself, but the anger is too much. She is mine. She was mine the moment I saw her. When I look back at her kitchen window they are no longer on the counter. They disappeared. I look at each window, searching for a glimpse of her. The kitchen light shuts off, the bedroom light turns on seconds later.

*Nope, that's enough of this shit.*

I rush through my house, running as fast as I can to her front door. I bang on the stupid black wood that separates me



from her. I bang my fists against it hard, loud, over and over until the door flings open. Daniel has his shirt half open and panting.

“Can I help you?”

I shake my head.

“Julia.” I yell out.

He blocks me from entering the home. “She is busy right now. What do you need?”

“Julia.” I yell again.

I’m practically foaming out the mouth. I am pacing like an angered bull, if he doesn’t step out of the way, I will bulldoze right over him. Julia quickly exits her bedroom, her dress from earlier still on, as she fixes her hair.

“Caleb, what are you doing here?” She asks as if she can’t see why I would possibly want to stop whatever the fuck was just about to happen.

“Why the fuck is he here?” I point to the douchebag who is sizing me up.

If he fucking flinches wrong I’ll swing.

“Who the fuck is this?” Daniel questions as he perches his forearm against the door frame, still shielding me from entering.

“I’m the guy that wouldn’t cheat or hit his wife and break her heart that’s who the fuck I am.” I step closer to him. I can feel my veins running hot against my skin.

“Stop, Caleb.” She touches my chest, and I can feel her warmth against me. I look into her eyes, and I can see sorrow in those beautiful blues.

“Go home.” She begs.

I squint my eyes, trying to find any sign that this isn’t happening, that she wants me to save her, but all I see is in her eyes. She has a glimmer of hope that maybe he will be different this time as she looks at him and then back to me.

She is dreaming if she thinks this man wants anything more than a quick fuck.

“He won’t ever love you the way you deserve.” My finger is right in his face, but my eyes are locked on hers. I need her to see that she is making a mistake, if she lets him back in.

He swats my finger out of his face, “Man fuck you. You don’t know me.”

I laugh as I step back out of the doorway. She clutches her chest as she watches me.

“Oh, I know you. I was you, until I met her. Why be tied down to one woman when you can have them all right? Its why you fucked someone else, even though you had a beautiful, talented wife at home. You didn’t care that you were ripping her heart out. You just wanted some easy pussy. What happened, did your pussy run away? So, now you’re crawling back to the one woman who you know would never hurt you the way you hurt her?”

“That’s enough Caleb. Please.” Tears swell in her eyes as she begs me to leave once more.

My breathing is heavy, my chest tightens as my arms swing out to my sides as I continue to step back from her porch.

“Fuck me, right? Fuck me for even trying to give an ounce of me away. I would have given you the world.” She pushes past Daniel who just looks like a confused puppy at the pound.

“I never asked you to. I told you I wasn’t ready for anything.”

“You’re right. You never asked. You also didn’t tell me to stop, Julia.” I throw my hands up in the air, retreating.

I shake my head as I walk away into the darkness behind the trees. I slam my door and shut off all my lights. I don’t need anyone seeing the hurt in me.

I run down to my basement and scream out, letting my anger go, just like I do every time I feel overwhelmed. My heart is beating so fast. My mind is racing, wondering if they

resumed whatever the fuck they were about to do or if she snapped out of her lust trip and kicked his ass out of her house. I never meant to grow feelings for her, I should have stayed away like I wanted to initially, but she sunk her claws in me. She obviously had no idea she was sending mixed signals.

I make my way to the balcony; not once do I look to my left. I stare up at the peaks in front of me, I can only see the shadows casted by the moon. I lean against the railing and sigh.

*If you ever need me, just look over at the peaks and I'll be there.*

“Lucy, I am struggling. I wish you were here.”

The next morning, I wake up and make my morning coffee, grab my newspaper from the front porch and sit on the balcony sipping my coffee, and watch the sun rise above the peaks. I glance over to Julia's balcony that has a view of her bedroom, the blinds have already opened up, but I see no movement in the house. I check my phone, no new messages. I finish my coffee and head down to the bar.

“The boss has returned. How was your date last night with Julia?”

I ignore Travis as I walk through the kitchen and lock myself in the office. The morning rush has the bar packed, orders of coffee, breakfast to go, and lunch orders are keeping us all busy.

“Hey Caleb.” Madison smiles as she approaches the bar. She has a winter coat on as she lugs around a suitcase.

“Can I get a Latte with extra sugar, please?” She smiles as she hands me \$3.00.

I silently get her coffee and slide it over to her.

“Thank you.”

I nod.

“Are you okay?” She questions as her face scrunches up when I don’t respond.

“Did you know her ex-husband was in town?”

She looks around her as if she is making sure the “She” we speak of is not around.

“I didn’t, what happened?”

I get back to making the drink orders that keep getting rung in.

“Where are you headed?” I ignore her question. She smiles wider, excitement taking over her.

“LA, Julia already left this morning. She has a movie event, you know walking the red carpet, being a complete badass.”

I roll my eyes and thank her for the tip.

“Okay. Well, I’ll be back tomorrow. Have a good day, Caleb.”

She leaves the bar and my motivation to work today leaves with her. I reach into my pocket, retrieving my phone and dial.

“Hey, do you want to come over tonight?”

JULIA



ALWAYS BEEN YOU BY JESSIE MURPH

“*J*ulia, over here. Give me that sweet smile.”

Paparazzi pulls my attention in every direction as I stand posed and smile. Flashes hit me from every direction. My vision blurs as I try to blink. Daniel grabs ahold of my arm to move me down the carpet.

“Are you guys back together?” A reporter questions as cameras still flash around us.

*God, no.*

“Kiss her”, Another reporter shouts out.

My whole-body tenses as I try to remain graceful and happy as the cameras are shoved in our faces.

Daniel smiles as he pulls me into him. I place my hand on his chest to stop him but of course he wants to perform for the cameras. Him having me here tonight only helps his image. The crowd goes wild when he pecks my lips.

*I hate this, it's a lie.*

I was requested to arrive with Daniel on the red carpet, an amicable duo despite the fact that he is a lying ass cheater.

Last night, I almost made a huge mistake. If Caleb wouldn't have interrupted us, I would have fallen into Daniel's trap full of *baby I am sorry, it will never happen again, I never meant to hurt you, you know how much I love you.* I would have never forgiven myself for sleeping with Daniel.

I found out after hours of yelling and talking, that Daniels whore, is pregnant. So basically, he felt overwhelmed at the unexpected pregnancy and the sudden loss of following, the lies of domestic charges, and that he wanted to try to rekindle our flame. But really, he was running to fix his problems like he always does. He tried to tell me it was my fault. That everything going on in his life right now was because I left him instead of having his back.

*“In sickness and in health babe.”*

I kicked him out of my house so fast he barely had time to catch himself before he fumbled to the ground. I was once again being used like a toy at a daycare center. Once the child is bored of the toy, it's tossed to the side, replaced by a newer one.

Caleb was right, Daniel would never love me the way I deserve; he doesn't know how. Caleb's words bore into my soul, I could see he was hurting, and I wanted to console him. But I was blinded by the overwhelming amount of desire I was feeling. I went from not having sex to having two men wanting to devour me. I felt wanted, needed. I wanted to run over to Caleb's house and tell him I didn't have sex with Daniel and that he was right. But I couldn't. I still don't know if I can give Caleb the love he so desperately seeks from me, the love I would love to receive.

“**A**nd the award for Best Novel to Film Award of 2023 goes to.....”

I stop breathing. Violet squeezes my hand. Madison closes her eyes.

“Julia Harrington.”

My heart pounds against my chest. I jump up as the crowd cheers. Violet hugs me tightly as she rocks us side to side.

“You did it.”

Madison screams out, clapping as I shuffle down the aisle, holding onto my black train, making sure I do not fall. I reach

the stage. A hand is held out to assist me up the stairs. I turn around to face the crowd of shadows, the lights are so bright, I can only make out the front row. Madison's thumbs are in the air. The cameras are in my face, the red lights blinking indicating we are live. I grab ahold of the award and hold it in front of me. In this moment I should be happy, I should be smiling but I can only think about him.

"I have been through a lot of heartbreak in my life. It astonishes me how I am able to write such popular romance novels, but maybe it's because I still believe in love. I believe a great love is out there for me. I seek it. I crave it just as much as you crave to turn the next page. This award means more to me than you can possibly know. There is one person missing tonight that I would like to share this moment with more than anything. Mystery man, if you are watching this. I would burn down the world for you."

I raise the award in the air and wave goodbye. I exit the stage and am escorted to the back for photos. I stand there and smile for more cameras but the only thing I want to do is get on the jet and fly back to Everwood.

"Are we done?" I ask Madison who has the itinerary.

She nods.

"Good. Let's get home."

"I knew you would come to your senses."

She smiles as she takes my hand, calling the driver and leads us out the back exit. Our car pulls up and paparazzi begin to swarm the car. We take off towards the airport.

Our flight home was only two hours, during that time I changed out of my dress into sweatpants and a hoodie. I called Caleb twice but no answer. I was sent straight to voicemail. My knee bounces up and down as I become impatient.

"Relax. We are almost there." Madison places her hand on my knee, I turn to her and smile. She has been such a great friend to me, and I am constantly putting up walls with her.

"You are a great friend Madison, thank you."



She rests her head on my shoulder as our Uber drives through Downtown. We pull up to my house and I quickly exit the car.

Madison hops into her jeep and speeds away yelling out the window, “good luck!”

I drop my bags at my front door and head down the hill to Caleb’s house. The lights are on, and his truck is in the driveway, so I know he is home. I walk up to the door and knock. He doesn’t answer the door. I look into the window, but I don’t see anything. I hear faint music coming from the backyard, so I walk around the side of the house, opening the gate. I slowly walk up onto the patio, my footsteps come to an abrupt halt.

“Oh fuck, I’m coming.”

Caleb is in the pool, pounding into a naked Sabrina. I gasp covering my mouth. Caleb stops thrusting, his eyes searing my skin. I turn around and run quickly out the gate, closing it shut.

“Oh shit.” Sabrina giggles as I walk up the hill.

I am embarrassed. I shouldn’t have gone to his house unannounced. What I didn’t expect is to feel jealous, angry, that one slight argument would lead him to sticking his cock inside his routine fuck. That just tells me when shit goes wrong his first instinct is to run into the arms of someone who wants just sex from him. But I can’t blame him. I almost slept with Daniel.

Jesus, what am I doing? I have never been so confused.

“Julia.” Caleb calls out to me as I walk up my front porch.

I turn to face him as he jogs over to me.

“I didn’t know...” He tries to speak but I interrupt him.

“No, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have come over unannounced. I’m sure Sabrina is waiting for you to finish her off.”

I turn to unlock my door. His hand shoots out onto the door. His head is so close to mine, I can feel his breath against my hair. The hint of whiskey on his breath fills my nose. He is drunk.

“I already finished her off. I just wanted to say congratulations. You two make the perfect couple.” He laughs as he removes his hand from the door.

*Asshole.*

I close my eyes, wanting to tell him to kiss my ass and that I didn't go back to Daniel, that I want him.

But what good would that do?

He is hurt, lashing out, and just fucked Sabrina. I am not someone's second choice. Just like I wouldn't want him to be my second choice. He shouldn't have walked away last night, he should have begged me to choose him, he should have gone to LA to surprise me, something. But instead, he chose Sabrina. I can't blame him, I didn't make it easy, but a girl can dream of getting those happy endings in the novels she reads and writes, can't she?

“Not everything you see in tabloids is true.”

With that I close the door. I sink down along the door until my ass hits the cold wood. I can't even cry. My eyes are so dry. I just fall to the side, resting my cheek against the floor. I stay there sulking in my mistakes, thinking about how my life continues to get fucked up by Daniel.

*When will this end?*

I wake up from an erotic dream and my panties are soaked. I am breathing fast as my pulse races against my skin. My dream involved Caleb and it was so hot that I have to reach into my night stand and grab my vibrator. I reach under my blanket and slip out of my pajama shorts. I hold down the pink button and the vibrations buzz through my hand as I place it against my clit. Immediately jerking from the sensation. I lick my lips and close my eyes as I try to picture my dream once more. It was similar to our hot tub experience.

*His tongue sliding over my skin,* turned me on so much.

I circle the vibrator over my clit, mimicking his tongue. I grind against it as I moan.

*He pulls my hair and thrusts into me hard.*

I hold the vibrator still as I spiral into a release. I lift my hips, humping the vibrator mid-air as I cum. I quickly move the vibrator off me before my clit is overstimulated. I toss it onto the bed as I bite my finger and laugh.

It's been two weeks since the award show. I haven't seen much of Caleb. When I do see him, he doesn't pay much attention to me, granted he has been swamped with orders. I have been writing my book every day, all day, so I haven't been out of the house much. Madison brings me dinners and then heads out to be with Connor.

Thanksgiving is this weekend, and the snow has fallen on to the ground. People are running around, getting last minute shopping done and grabbing firewood. I happen to be in the grocery store picking up items for the Thanksgiving dinner I am throwing. I invited Madison, Connor, Travis, Dia and even extended the invite to Caleb and Sabrina. But I haven't received his RSVP.

“Julia.”

I turn around to find Sabrina rushing up the aisle pushing her cart.

“Hey Sabrina.”

I reach up and grab a box of captain crunch.

“I won't be able to make it to your Thanksgiving dinner. I have to fly to my parent's house. Thank you for inviting me though.”

“Of course, have a great weekend.” I smile as I continue on. I'm sure Caleb won't be attending then.

“He doesn't love me, you know. He cut ties with me.” She calls out as I turn down the next aisle. I turn back around and approach her once more.

“You deserve someone who will love you more than you love them.”

I can tell her brain is trying to understand what I just said.

I smile, “Happy thanksgiving Sabrina.”

Even though tomorrow is Thanksgiving, I can’t help but prep food with Christmas songs playing. Outside the snow is falling to the ground, the grass is no longer visible. The mountain peaks are white, while the bottom half still has green grass. The sun is going down, so I light some candles and add another piece of wood to the fireplace. My house smells like cinnamon and pineapples as I begin to make sweet potatoes, and sweet potato pie. I roll out the dough, sprinkling a pinch of flour on to my rolling pin and spread out the dough evenly before I drape it over the buttered baking pan.

The doorbell chimes, so I wipe my hands off on my apron and trolley over to the front door.

“We are here to help.”

Madison, Connor and Caleb stand before me. I smile as I wave them on in. I swallow hard when Caleb’s eyes meet mine. I haven’t seen or spoken with Caleb outside of picking up my coffee at the bar, so this should be interesting.

“Here I’ll take your coats. You guys wash those grubby hands.”

I grab their jackets, as I reach out my hand for Caleb’s, his eyes take me in and my heart stops. He steps closer to me, and his whiskey scent invades my senses. He reaches past me and grabs his own hanger, placing his coat on to the hanger and placing it in the closet. My heart rate spikes to a higher tempo.

“Where do you want me?” He whispers.

All I can think about is shouting out, *in my mouth*, but I know that’s not what he is referring to, that just my horny mind.

“Mashing sweet potatoes.”

He walks behind me as we make it into the kitchen. I can feel his eyes on me the entire way. I only have on black biker shorts, a white t-shirt and an apron. My hair is up in a messy

bun and I am pretty sure I may have flour on my face, so it's not like I look attractive.

They all join me in the kitchen.

“Okay Caleb will mash the sweet potatoes, Madison, you melt the butter, and Connor you get us some wine from the cellar.”

Connor salutes as he disappears down the stairs to the wine cellar.

I reach up into the cabinet to obtain four wine glasses. I have to step up on the tips of my toes, so my shirt rises showcasing my lower back. I can hear the growl that vibrates against Caleb's throat. When I look back at him his eyes are narrowed in on my ass.

“Can you pass me the corkscrew?” I point to the drawer as I clear my suddenly moist throat. He reaches into the drawer and hands me the corkscrew before he proceeds to mashing.

“Alright, let's drink up and have some fun.” Madison requests as Connor pours the wine.

JULIA



## RIVER BY BISHOP BRIGGS

The music is playing, and we are two wine bottles down. I feel so good as I smell the sweet potato pie baking. The spicy sugar fills the air. I begin chopping up the additional sweet potatoes while the water boils. Caleb and Connor sit at the island drinking, while Madison sways to the music playing.

“Okay, let’s play truth or dare.” Madison suggests, raising her glass in the air. Connor agrees and pats Caleb’s back. I shrug as I continue to chop.

“I’ll go first. Truth or Dare, Connor?” Caleb asks.

Connor shifts on the bar stool, taking a sip of wine before he answers, “Dare.”

Caleb grins an evil expression as he points to Madison. “I dare you to give Madison a lap dance to the Magic Mike theme song.”

Madison screams out, “Fuck Yeah.”

She takes a seat on the dining chair and waits. I can’t help but giggle as I ask Alexa to play Pony. The music begins and Connor slides across the floor and lifts his leg, humping the air. Madison eats it up, she whistles and purrs at him. My eyes widen as I did not know Connor could dance. He gets up and grinds against Madison. He pushes her chair back slightly removing his shirt and straddles her, pretending he is riding a horse, swinging his shirt around in the air. She laughs so hard she snorts.

“Okay, that’s enough.” Caleb chuckles as he commands Alexa to stop. He looks happy in this moment.

“Julia, truth or dare.” Madison asks but her eyes are directed at Caleb, she winks.

I can’t help but set my knife down and look at Caleb. Madison is always up to something, so I ponder my options before responding.

“Dare.”

I brace myself for Madison’s retort.

“I dare you to give Caleb a strip tease, down to your bra and panties.”

Caleb snaps his eyes to Madison.

“What? It’s not any different than a bathing suit.” She shrugs.

I swallow the lump in my throat before I build up the courage to dance for him. I never turn down a dare.

“Come on, make it sexy.”

I know Madison is secretly loving this. She is forcing me to step out of my comfort zone. But this also makes it impossible for us not to talk after. I am going to make this sexier than anything he has experienced. I will have him begging to take me to my room.

“Alexa, play River by Bishop Briggs.”

Madison and Connor whistle as I step around the corner. My fingers curl around the corner, and I pop my leg out.

“Ow ow.” Madison howls.

I spin across the floor and drop down into a split, tilting my head up at Caleb, who can’t look away, his eyes are already dark with lust. I crawl forward, swinging my legs behind me, as I get up on all fours and pull my hair tie off. I roll my head around causing my hair to swing around. I slide back on my heels and remove my shirt, letting everyone see my red bra.



“Julia.” He growls as his jaw tenses.

His grip on the stem of the wine glass is tight, it’s close to shattering.

*Shatter for me Caleb. Be the cracked man I so desperately desire.*

I slide in between his legs, turning around so my ass can sit right on his crotch. His hands tremble as he places his wine glass down. I shake my ass as I drop my head forward, allowing my ass to wiggle against his already hard cock. Even he can’t deny he wants to fuck me as his hands shake to touch my body, but he keeps them planted.

I climb up onto the island, swaying to the music as my fingers dip into my waistband and I slowly slide my leggings down. Madison covers Connors eyes as she laughs.

“She’s too hot, look away Connor.” He swats her hands away from his face as he drools over the scene in front of him.

Caleb’s tracing every movement I make. His eyes are fully black as he bites his bottom lip, and tries to keep his composure. My red thong is now displayed and because he is so close, he can see the wet spot of my arousal. The way he is looking at me has me turned on. He is fighting an internal battle, one that I plan to win.

I move to stand behind him. His eyes shift to the others quickly before they return to me and I drop down, spreading my legs and grabbing his head, leaning him back so he is looking up at me.

“Oh Fuck.” Madison mumbles as she grabs Connors arm and leans forward off the couch.

“Open.” My tone is sinful as I take a sip of his wine and hold it in my mouth.

He opens his mouth and I lean my tits forward. I release the wine as it slowly trails down the crease of my breast. The wine slides right into his mouth. He swallows before he lifts himself up. I get back on my knees and crawl away from him, letting him get a full view of my ass.

He slams his hand down on the counter making me jump as he rushes over, lifts me off the island and tosses me over his shoulder. He doesn't listen to my squealing or Madison saying we aren't done playing. He heads straight to my room with me on his shoulder. His hands grip on to my thighs right below my ass.

He tosses me down on the bed and paces in front of me before he climbs over me, hovering above my parted lips. His muscled arms strained on both sides of my face.

“You are such a fucking tease.”

He leans in and kisses me. I instantly wrap my hands around his neck and pull him into me. He places his hand under my back and rolls us over.

“You don't get to ignore me for two weeks and then come here like everything is fine.”

I kiss him again, his hand grabbing ahold of my ass. He rolls us over again, this time grinding his clothed cock against my panties. I moan at the need for more. He reaches his hand around my neck and pulls me to him slightly.

“You don't get to blow me off for some pompous ass prick, who will never love you like you deserve.”

He tightens his grip, not cutting off my air but demanding my attention. My pussy is soaking wet. She loves to be dominated in the bedroom. I reach out and grab ahold of his cock. He groans at the sudden pressure.

“You think you can love me the way I deserve to be loved?”

He doesn't speak, he thrusts into my hand seeking more from me. He hops off the bed and removes his pants and boxers, his cock swinging as he walks. I can't help but lick my lips.

“Yes.”

He gets back between my legs and spreads them open.

“Tell me to stop and I will.”

There he goes, that's the Caleb I know. Commanding me. Possessing me. Making me seek my release. I lift my hips up so his already leaking cock can brush against the very place it's begging to be buried.

"I will never tell you to stop. I want you so fucking bad it hurts." I admit.

He reaches down and rips my panties off, the material scorching my skin with a fiery burn. I whimper with pain until he slams his cock all the way until there is no part of his length not submerged in my pussy.

"Ah."

I moan as he fills me up with every inch. He groans as he stills, letting me adjust to the abrupt invasion. Once I have relaxed my body, he thrust into me harder and faster. I grab onto his ass cheeks and push him into me, seeking him to be closer.

"Make me scream your name, ruin me." I beg.

He lifts my legs up, setting them on his shoulders as he grabs onto my hips and thrusts into me. This position allows him to go deeper and at a new angle that has my eyes rolling. He stops as he pulls out of me and flips me over onto my hands and knees. He presses my head and shoulders down against the mattress leaving my ass in the air. He smacks my ass making me moan out as he aligns himself once more and fucks me senseless. I can feel my walls tighten as I inch my way towards release. He grunts and thrusts as he reaches his hand around me and circles my clit.

With his other hand he grabs my hair and pulls it back making me arch. I am being over stimulated, the pain of the hair pulling, the rubbing of my clit while his fat cock fucks my pussy is driving me insane. I can barely moan out with how hoarse my throat sounds. He pounds into me harder when he lifts one leg up and dips his cock further inside me. He doesn't let go of my hair.

"Are you going to cum on my cock like a good little slut?" He pinches my clit.

“Ahhh, fuck. Yes Caleb.” I moan out as I brace myself.

I grab ahold of the sheets beneath me and bite down. My walls clench around his cock.

He moans, “Fuck, Julia. Oh Julia”, as he explodes his own release deep inside me.

My climax hits a new wave when his warm cum fills me up. I convulse beneath him. I grind my hips as I ride the waves of climax. He holds my hips still as his cock pulsates, before he pulls out. He falls to the bed wrapping his arms around me and pulling me against him. There is sweat dripping off his delicious tan skin, and I try to slow my heart down. I start to laugh, uncontrollably.

“What?” He turns on his side, his head perched up by his fist.

“I just remembered Madison and Connor are here. They probably just heard everything.”

The embarrassment crawling over my face as I blush. He gets up and pulls his clothes back on. He tosses my clothes and I put them on following him out of the room.

We creep down the hallway, looking in the kitchen, there is no sign of them. We walk up to the living room, and we can hear moaning. We round the pillar and Connor is naked as he thrusts into Madison from behind.

“My couch.” I blurt out and start laughing.

Connor smiles but he doesn't stop.

“Jesus.” Caleb covers his eyes as he pulls me away from the indiscretions of those two.

“Sorry, oh fuck.” Madison tries to apologize but her head drops as she is mid orgasm, complete bliss.

Caleb walks us through the kitchen, quickly grabbing a bottle of wine as we scurry past the dining room and onto the balcony. He closes the sliding door and busts out laughing, slapping his leg as he sets down the bottle of wine on the railing.

“I don’t think them hearing us was a problem for them.” He chuckles as he pulls me into him. He smells like whiskey and sin mixed into a beautiful package.

“Do you think we are capable of truly opening up to each other and letting each other hold our hearts fully?”

I can’t help but ask, it has been on my mind since we left my bedroom. Make up sex is always hot and passionate, but then reality sets in and everything we were running from comes crawling back.

He holds me tighter, “I want to try. I’ve never wanted to since Lucy. You scare the hell out of me. As soon as I laid eyes on you, I knew you would ruin me.”

“I don’t want you seeing anyone else.” I mumble into his chest.

“I don’t want to. I want you, Julia. But I don’t want you seeing anyone else either.”

“I didn’t have sex with Daniel. After you left we argued. When I rejected him after finding out more truth, he pushed me and I kicked him out.”

He kisses the top of my head and rests his chin as he looks out at the snow falling from the sky.

“He is such an asshole”, he whispers into the cold air.

“I want you too, Caleb.” I smile as my heart feels content.

There is commotion in the dining room before the sliding door opens. Madison stumbles out onto the balcony followed by Connor who adjusts his shirt. Madison pushes her hair behind her ear and her smile is brighter than ever.

“Sorry about that. You turned me on, and I couldn’t resist fucking Connor while we heard you moaning. It was empowering to chase whatever fucking high you were on.”

She giggles as she pulls Connor in for a teeth shattering kiss. She pulls away from him and observes our position.

“So, are you two good now?” She winks at me.

“Yes, Madison.” I roll my eyes as she jumps up and down.

“Do you need us to help you clean up?” She points to the kitchen. I shake my head. I like cleaning, especially to music.

“I got it. You two get home. Oh and Madison, you need to have my couch sanitized.”

She salutes me, “Yes Ma’am.”

CALEB



## ALL I EVER NEED BY AUSTIN MAHONE

*A*fter I helped Julia clean up the kitchen, I watched her as she mopped the floor. She used Pinesol and it smelled amazing. I got an odd comfort with the smell, it felt homey. I think it's because Lucy also loved Pinesol. I'm not a big sign person but if I was that is a clear one. We ended up passing out on the couch that Connor and Madison did not consummate.

I woke up to the fireplace still lit and the Tv still on. Julia is cuddled into my arms, sleeping peacefully. I brush the hair from her face and tuck it behind her ear. She looks so beautiful. Her lips are parted slightly but no sound comes out. I lift up slightly and just stare at her.

She told me how her ex was using her to escape from charges against him, that he got his girlfriend pregnant, and that he can't handle his responsibilities. Next time I see him, my fist will connect to his smug face. She must sense my eyes on her as her eyes flicker open and she stretches out her arms.

"Good morning." I kiss her forehead.

"Coffee." She mumbles as she removes the blanket and heads over to the kitchen. She brews her cup of coffee, adding creamer, and sugar. She takes a sip of her coffee and sighs.

"Good morning." She says as she opens the kitchen blinds.

"Coffee first then you talk?" I laugh as I begin to pour myself some coffee as well.

She nods.

"Good to know."



“You are not a morning person either.” She snickers.

“Not one bit. I need my coffee too.” I sip my coffee.

We spent the morning preparing the food. I season and cook the turkey, while she makes the sides. This house smells so good it makes my stomach rumble. I check the time. 4 pm.

“I better head over to my house and change. Madison and Connor will be coming soon.”

I pull her to me as I lean down to kiss her, and she melts in my arms. Her lips taste like pineapples, and I lick them clean, groaning as I pull her bottom lip between my teeth.

“If you don’t go right now, we will have another mess to clean up.” She giggles as she steps back, adjusting her apron.

I rub my head and walk towards the door, but my cock is so hard just from kissing her. I really need to release this ache before her guests arrive. I don’t want to have a hard on during thanksgiving dinner. I turn back to her and pull her into me, lifting her up and take her down to the floor.

“I just need a little dessert before dinner.”

I pull her leggings down just enough to have some access to her delicious pussy.

“Caleb.” She moans as I pull her panties to the side and lick her clit.

I pull her leggings down to her ankles and take one foot out. She spreads her legs allowing me to dive back in to eat. As I suck her clit into my mouth, I pull my cock out of my sweatpants, stroking my length. I rub the pre cum over my tip as I get onto my knees and settle in between her legs, aligning myself with her entrance. She moans as I sink into her.

“You better come quick, before we get caught.”

She moans again as my thrusts increase in speed. I pound into her, filling the air with wet skin slapping together. I lift

her up and consume her lips as she rocks back and forth on my cock. I know I am close when my balls draw up.

“Now Julia, take it.”

She grinds into my pelvis, filling her entire core with my cock.

“Fuck.” I moan as I can feel all the blood rushing to my cock.

“Your so fucking hard, oh my god.”

I pinch her nipple over her shirt, and she crashes, she comes undone all over me, warmth surrounding my pulsating cock as I fill her convulsing pussy. I grunt out my release as her pussy clenches tighter.

“You feel so fucking good.”

I kiss her before I release her. I watch as she sits up and my cum drips out of her pink pussy. She closes her legs, attempting to not get any on the floor as she runs to the bathroom. Her ass jiggles as she scurries down the hall, half of her outfit is dragging behind her. I laugh as she disappears.

*She is so perfectly mine.*

JULIA



## GO F\*\*K YOURSELF BY TWO FEET

The table is set and ready to go. I have a eucalyptus garland in the center of the table, pumpkins, and candles scattered throughout. I even made sure to burn a snowflake scented candle. It definitely sets the mood for our friendsgiving. Madison is in charge of games, Connor is bringing his mom's famous mash potatoes and gravy, Travis is bringing ham and yellow rice, and Caleb is bringing over the most expensive wine and whiskey he has.

When Caleb left earlier, I showered up and got dressed. I opted for comfortable attire, as I always find myself wanting to remove a button after consuming turkey. I head to the kitchen and pull out the apple pie from the oven, the sweet apples and glaze drip over the pan. I lick my thumb savoring the sweet juices.

“So good.”

The front door opens, and I can hear Madison bickering with Connor.

“I told you to bring Cards against Humanity. That's a party starter.”

“I forgot Madison, I had to rush to my mom's before she left.”

I walk over to the living room and put my hands out to help them.

“I have Cards against Humanity, don't worry.” I smile as I take some games off of Madison and set them down on the

coffee table. Madison removes her coat and boots before she is sniffing the air.

“Oh my god, it smells amazing in here.”

“It better be good. I have been slaving in this kitchen all day.”

Connor finds the remote for the surround sound and hooks his phone up to Bluetooth. He flips through his playlists before settling on one. The music fills the air and Madison puts the mash potatoes and gravy on the Island.

“Last night, was amazing. I didn’t know you could be so sexy and make me horny.” She laughs as she grabs a wine glass from the counter.

“I mean seriously Julia, that was top tier shit. You have to teach me. And then the sounds of your sex, I couldn’t help myself.”

I laugh as I grab a chilled bottle of wine from the refrigerator. “I used to dance when I was in high school and college. I can teach you some moves.”

“What are you teaching Madison?”

Warm arms wrap around my waist, and I can’t help but get excited. Caleb kisses my neck and I melt. This level of public affection is new. Madison gawks at us before she wiggles her brows.

“So hot.” She steps away and disappears into the living room.

My phone rings on the counter, I pick it up and check the caller ID.

*Daniel Foster.*

I roll my eyes before answering. I notice Caleb stiffen alongside me as I walk out onto the patio. I don’t want Caleb to listen to the bullshit that will come from Daniel’s arrogant mouth.

“Didn’t I tell you to leave me alone?” I put my hand on my hip as I look out at the peaks. The snow crunches at my feet as

I walk closer to the railing.

“I miss you, Julia. I made a mistake.”

I sigh as I listen to the lies.

“You don’t miss me, Daniel. You fucked someone else, asked me for a divorce, and then got her pregnant. Now you’re facing charges I know you deserve. You hit me before, so I don’t think they are lies. You need help.”

“I am not with her anymore. I want you baby please.”

I laugh into the phone as he completely ignores the latter of my comments.

“Typical of you to run away from your responsibilities. I don’t want to be with you. I will not be bailing you out this time.”

“Do you love him?”

I freeze in place, his voice went from mushy bullshit to stern anger.

“My personal life is no longer your business Daniel. Like I said, lose my number.”

“I swear to fucking God, Julia. You better not be fucking anyone. You are mine do you hear me? I will not live this life without you.”

I roll my eyes at his useless comment.

“Grow up Daniel. Goodbye.”

I hang up the phone, block his number and slip it into my pocket before I head back inside. Caleb is waiting by the dining table; his arms are crossed as he leans against the wall.

“Everything okay?”

He holds his arms out and pulls me in for a big hug. He holds me tight as I breathe out the air I was apparently holding in. My hands are a little shaky when I pull away.

“Yeah, just bullshit. Nothing that will keep me down.” I look out into the living room and spot Travis who must have joined us while I was outside.

“Let’s eat.”

Everyone gathers around the table, each taking a seat as I bring every dish we have. Travis grabs the turkey and ham, setting them in the empty space in front of my chair.

“Hostess does the honors of the first cut, then I’ll take over. You know since I’m the professional here.” We all laugh as he hands me the knife and I slice a layer off the turkey, setting the cut piece on my plate.

“Okay before we dig in, I wanted to say a few words.”

I clear my throat as I pour some wine in my glass and hand the bottle over to Caleb. I raise my glass as everyone finishes filling theirs.

“Since the moment I arrived in Everwood, you all have been nothing but kind and caring. I had no one in LA, friends came and went, I never had a place that I fit in. I thought coming here I would have peace and quiet, I’m glad that’s not the case. Madison, I know it’s only been a couple months, but I feel like you have so quickly filled the role of my best friend and I thank you. I am thankful for all of you.”

I raise my glass higher, but Caleb clears his throat and stands up. I take a seat and allow him the floor.

“I’m not good at this but, I am thankful for each and every one of you as well. Travis, you know you’re my best friend, you have been there for me through everything. So, thank you for continuing to put up with my fucked up life. Madison you’re awesome too. Connor you may be an annoying shit, but I love you too man. Now as for you, Julia.”

My heart stops, inside I’m screaming for him to just say thank you for dinner, but the way he is looking at me says otherwise.

“Julia, you have been a light in my darkness. I didn’t expect to ever let myself open up to anyone. You have this way about you, it makes me want to share and I feel like no matter what you are never judging, you just understand who I am and what I have been through.”

“And she is fucking hot.” Madison chimes in, raising her glass at Caleb.

“Yes, true, but its more than that. She still believes in love, even though the cards haven’t been in her favor. She believes a greater love is out there, and that gives me courage and hope.” He raises his glass.

Tears swell in my eyes as I smile up at him. This man is trying to steal my heart and I want to give it to him. I want to, but that requires me to trust him with everything. We still don’t know everything about each other.

The doorbell rings as everyone consumes their food and laughs at stories they share about one another. I wipe my mouth off with the napkin and head to the front door.

“Hi, can I help you?” I peer up at the older gentleman at my doorstep. He is completely bundled up and has a large beard. His dark eyes loom over me as he looks into my living room.

“I’m looking for my son C...”

He doesn’t get a chance to continue talking.

“Dad.” Caleb walks into the living room, his face looks angry, even his walk to the door is like a raging bull charging forward.

“Hey son, I stopped by your house, but you didn’t answer. Figured you were up here at Ali’s.”

Caleb holds on to my waist and gives me a squeeze before he grabs his coat and heads outside, closing the door behind him.

“That’s not good.” Madison whispers as she peeks out the window.

I can’t help but do the same. Caleb looks just like his dad, except his dad has white hair.

“What’s the story there?” I sit down on the couch and everyone else crowds around. The only sound I hear is the fire crackling. No one speaks. They all just look at each other, debating who is going to answer my question.



“Mr. Taylor blamed Caleb for Lucy’s death, because he was never home, leaving her alone a lot because he was working to provide for them. Well, he never apologized. Caleb resents him for not being there when he needed him. They always had a strained relationship.”

Travis opens up and my heart hurts for Caleb. To have your father blame you for something you had no control over is fucked up.

“He hasn’t spoken to his family in four years. His mother wouldn’t stick up for him and his sister had kids and was always too busy.”

“So, he had no one.”

I shake my head and hold back the tears.

“He had us, he had Ali. He wasn’t alone.” Madison speaks up.

The argument outside increases in volume and hands are being used excessively.

“You weren’t there for me dad, I needed you and you left me too.”

I overhear Caleb’s painful admission as he opens the front door, wiping his boots and leaves the door open as he strolls right past us and into the kitchen.

“So, which one of you is Julia?”

Mr. Taylor walks into the house and shuts the door. He doesn’t look fazed by his argument with Caleb. I go to stand up but I freeze mid-air when Caleb’s angry yell fills the room once more.

“No, you don’t get to talk to her.” Caleb strides back into the living room pointing at his father. He gets right in his face, but Mr. Taylor doesn’t back down. I sit back down, and Madison places her hand on my knee.

“If she means more to you than Lucy did, I want to speak with her. She is a famous author for Christ sake, why would she go for someone like you?”

My heart leaps out of my chest, anger consuming my eyes as I hear the way his father is talking to him. I stand up and rush over to Caleb as he lifts his hand ready to swing. I place my hands on his chest and tilt my head up.

“No.” I whisper, hoping and praying he doesn’t do something he will regret.

I am not the only one who jumps into action. Travis is looming over Mr. Taylor and Connor is rounding the couch. Each one of us is trying to prevent an altercation. Once I feel Caleb relax his body, I turn around, keeping my body pressed against him. If he wants to get to his father, he has to go around me. I will be the brick wall he needs.

“Mr. Taylor, I do not appreciate you coming into my home and talking to him like that. You have no idea who I am or what my morals are. And if you think so little of me just because my paycheck has a few extra zeros then so be it, frankly I don’t give a shit what you or the rest of the world thinks about me. People have been judging me for as long as I can remember. But I care about your son. I love the fact that he still has a sliver of hope that one day he will find himself and let himself love again. I love that he is cracked. It only means he is repairing himself to be even stronger than before. Now if you would like to speak with me, we can do it another day.”

He stiffens as he takes in the room. Everyone has their shoulders back, all eyes on him, and the tension is high. I can’t even breathe right.

“You have no idea who Caleb is.”

“I don’t think you know who Caleb is. Goodbye Mr. Taylor.”

I open the door and wave him out. Slamming it shut as he walks onto the porch. Caleb rushes to me and grabs my face as he smashes his lips to mine.

“Oh fuck, are we going to have another fuck session?” Connor grabs ahold of Madison who nods her head repeatedly.

“I hope not because I don’t have a girl with me.” Travis sighs.

Caleb pulls back and laughs, “No.”

Madison whines as she sits back down on the couch and opens a new bottle of wine.

“Thank you, baby.”

Caleb kisses me once more before he disappears into the kitchen. I need a moment to collect my thoughts, so I head outside, the fresh cold air filling my lungs as anxiety pours through my veins. The snow is falling, covering my head with white flakes as I stare into the foggy air.

“Are you okay?”

Travis walks out onto the balcony, lighting up a cigarette before joining me. He holds out the cigarette, but I shake my head.

“Yeah, I just have a lot going through my head.”

He nods as he inhales a drag and exhales the smoke from his lungs. It’s weird, I don’t smoke but I like the smell of a fresh cigarette.

“Do you love Caleb?”

My eyes widen at his question. The answer to this question has been on my mind lately.

“Caleb is such an amazing man...”

He interrupts me when he pulls his cigarette out his mouth.

“It’s a simple yes or no Julia.” He exhales the smoke from his lungs as he flicks ash over the railing.

“Is it though, Travis? When you have been through pain, is giving your heart away easy?”

My eyebrows rise up and my head swerves, my attitude seeping through.

“Love is painful. If it were easy, we wouldn’t want it. We have all been through shit. But my question still remains, do you love him? Because if you don’t, stop fucking his head up.”

Travis puts out his cigarette in the snow before flicking it off the balcony.

“I like you Julia, you are so good for him. I see the way he looks at you, I hear how he talks about you. He may not say it, but that man in there loves you.” He points to the kitchen. “He hasn’t looked at anyone the way he looks at you, not even Lucy.”

I clutch my chest.

*How am I the special one to take a place higher than Lucy?*

*Why me?*

I am broken.

I couldn’t even keep a husband from cheating on me. I was abused physically once although he would say it was an accident, but mentally for years. I was constantly called stupid, or useless when things didn’t go his way. Yet Caleb thinks everything I do is spectacular, special, beautiful.

Before I can even answer the brooding question, Caleb opens the door. Travis and I straighten up and focus our attention on Caleb.

“Madison is ready to play some games. You good?”

He focuses his attention on me as I look at Travis once more before responding, “Yeah.”

CALEB



CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE BY TOMMEE  
PROFITT

This Thanksgiving was eventful to say the least. Once things calmed down and my father left, we played games and drank until we all passed out in the living room. Waking up on the couch, I notice Julia is no longer cuddled up against me. Connor and Madison are passed out on the other couch, and Travis is passed out on the recliner. The fireplace is no longer burning so the house is colder than usual.

“Julia.”

I whisper as I walk through the house, peering into the kitchen, the office, until I make my way to her bedroom. I walk through the door to find her sitting down next to the fireplace, her laptop is on her lap and her coffee mug is next to her. She looks focused as her fingers type away. I crouch down behind her, setting my legs on each side of her and scoot closer to her, letting my chest rest against her back. She leans into me as she types.

“Good morning baby.” My newfound nickname for her rolls off my tongue.

“Baby seems to be used a lot lately.”

I lean back on my hands and sigh. I can't get a read on her. I don't know if I am being too fast or too slow for her.

“Are we not exclusive? Didn't you say you didn't want me seeing anyone else?”

I try not to sound disappointed. I know she has her fair share of hurt, but I am pretty sure that's what she said.

“I said that. I just didn’t know that meant we were together, together.”

I smack my lips and get up from the floor. She quickly gets up grabbing ahold of my arm, preventing me from leaving.

“Look, I don’t know what is going on here, Julia. I am trying to open up to you. I am trying to open up my heart, I have many feelings coursing through my veins. But you are infuriating with all the mixed signals. Help me out, Julia. What is this?”

I point between the two of us. Her eyes watch my fingers before returning her gaze to me, a grin forms on her face and I am even more confused.

“I have been in here all morning, writing.”

I sigh as she decides now is a good time to talk about her books.

“No, listen to me. I’ve been in here all morning writing a book. It’s about a young woman who has been through many trials and heartbreak, she felt so alone in the world, and needed a fresh start. She didn’t expect to fall in love with a man who was equally as hurt as she was. But she did, she fell for him, but didn’t know how to express herself to him because she was afraid of being hurt again or denied.”

My eyes trail over every part of her face. The words she uses to describe her book match her story, our story.

“Are you trying to tell me that you are in love with me, Julia? Because I need you to be very fucking clear right now.”

She smiles as she tucks a piece of hair behind her ear. She rises on her toes and wraps her arms around my neck.

“I knew I was falling in love with you the day you took me to the waterfall. I was just too scared to say it.”

I don’t let her speak anymore. I lift her up, holding on to her ass as I kiss her, sucking her bottom lip before I bite down softly. My tongue darts out to lick her lip easing the pain before I set her back down. She whimpers when I step away

from her and walk out of the room. I hustle to the living room, pulling off blankets and shaking bodies.

“Wake the fuck up and get out.” I yell out.

Sleepy eyes blink up at me as I shake them awake some more.

“What the fuck Caleb?” Madison stretches her arms out.

“You guys need to go. Right now. I need to make love to Julia, right fucking now. Go, let’s go.”

I grab their shoes, tossing them at their feet. Travis just smiles as he grabs his coat and leaves the house. Madison angrily picks up her coat and purse before turning to me.

“Wait.”

She tries to question what I just stated but I deny her.

“You heard me. Go, please.” I beg of them.

I need to get back to the room. My heart is racing. My cock is begging me to be inside Julia and my stomach is turning over.

“Caleb.”

Julia yells at me from the hallway, her hands on her hips tapping her foot.

“You didn’t have to kick them out.”

I close the door, locking it before I rush over to her, almost sliding on my ass as I come to a halt.

“They can’t hear what I am about to do to you.”

I pick her up and close her bedroom door for extra measures. Madison has a key so I need another barrier in case she comes back for something she may have left. Knowing her she would come back just to listen, she is so perverted.

**J**ulia sits on the edge of the bed. A black silk tie from her robe is secured around her eyes, her inability to see has her tensing. I had removed her shirt and pants, so she sits



on the bed with the sexiest lingerie outfit. I didn't even know she had that under her clothes. I was surprised when I saw her all black lace garter set. She has a thing for all black lingerie it seems. She looks so fucking sexy, the way some straps cross her stomach, just makes me want to run my tongue along every part of her body.

When I took off her pants, she was turned around so her plump ass was in my face, I wanted to bite it. I grab another robe tie and reach for her hand. She jumps at the sudden movement, licking her lips as her breathing increases. Her perfect nipples are budded up against the lace, begging to be sucked or pinched. She is excited.

“Hold your hands together Julia.”

I tie her hands together, tightly before I lay her back with her hands above her head. She squirms against her sheets as I trail my finger lightly down her tits, over her nipple and down her stomach.

“Caleb.” She moans as she lifts her hips up signaling me to go where she craves my touch the most.

“Oh, don't you worry baby. This was your fantasy, remember?”

I lean down between her legs and inhale her sweet scent. My mouth salivates as her pussy is pressed against my nose. I bite down on her pussy, the lace blocking me. She gasps at the sensation. I groan as I lick her clothed clit. I get off the bed and pull her panties off her before I walk into the bathroom and grab a candle that sits on the sink. When I return to her, I can tell she can hear every little thing. When you lose a sense, your other senses enhance. I flick the lighter letting the flame ignite the candle. The wax builds up in a pool at the center of the candle.

“Caleb what is that?”

She panics slightly as she attempts to sit up. I hold her down with my hand as I get back into position between her legs. I caress her tit with my hand before I kiss her inner thigh, slowly rising towards her pussy. I pour some wax on her inner

thigh as I lay my tongue over her clit. The hot wax hits her thigh, and she jerks up as the wax hits the sensitive skin, but her jerking causes my tongue to dip inside her and she moans at the sensation.

“Oh fuck.”

I suck her clit, keeping her mind off the pain and providing her the pleasure she desperately wants.

“Such a good girl Julia. Grind against my tongue baby.”

I continue licking and sucking her clit as her arousal seeps from her core. She thrashes around when I pour a little more wax on her thigh. I bite down softly against her clit as I slip a finger inside her tight pussy.

“Caleb, please.”

I want her to beg me to fill her up.

*She is so sexy when she begs me.*

I remove the wax and set the candle down. Standing up on the edge of the bed I pull her legs to me. She yelps at the sudden pull. I turn her body around so her head rests at the edge of the bed. I stroke my cock directly in front of her face. If only she could see how beautiful she looks, submitting herself to my control.

She is still blindfolded, her tits want to escape their confinements as her budded nipples press against the lace. Her wrists are still bound, and her breathing is elevated. She licks her lips anticipating my next move. I grab my cock, squeezing at the base and rub my tip over her plump pink lips, spreading my pre-cum over them making her all shiny. She tenses at first until she realizes it's my cock. She moans as she licks her lips tasting me.

“Open your mouth, Julia. Suck my cock just how you like to.”

I command and she obeys, opening her mouth within a second of my asking. I rub my tip against her tongue and dip it to the back of her throat. She gags as I pull back out of her mouth.

“Breathe through your nose baby.”

She nods before she opens her mouth once more allowing me to enter that warm hole. She wraps her lips around my cock, and I push my way to her throat, she relaxes her jaw and doesn't gag this time. I moan out as I thrust into her mouth.

“Let me know if it's too rough, baby.”

I warn her before giving her that face fucking she wrote about. She moans around my cock, the vibrations making me groan as I pump into her faster.

My legs tremble from squatting and begin to burn. I lean forward, my hands resting on each side of her. I can see my cock sliding in and out of her mouth, her throat stuffed full. I pull back, allowing her a moment to catch her breath. She gasps for air as she squirms against her thighs seeking friction.

“Are you ready for me Julia?” I groan as my tongue slides against her stomach.

She nods her head and I grab her legs and swing them once more to the edge of the bed. I grab her hips and turn her on to her stomach. Her head pops up as she tries to steady herself with tied hands in front of her. I rub my hand along her ass before I crash my hand against her skin. She screams out, but her pussy is drenched, it is primed and ready to be fucked.

“Such a dirty little whore, aren't you?”

She whimpers as she sags her head.

“Tell me Julia.”

“I'm a dirty little whore.”

“Yes, you are. You are my dirty little whore who is going to make herself cum on my cock.”

She whimpers at the words as I rub my tip between her folds. I thrust inside her fast, letting her feel every inch of me, the burn of the stretch, giving her all the pain and pleasure she needs. I would do anything to make her forget all the hurt she has endured.

“Caleb, fuck, yes. More.” She inches her ass closer to me as I hold onto her hips and thrust her onto me.

I reach for her hair, letting it loose from the bun and cascade it down her back. Such beautiful golden locks. I grunt as I am pulled deeper inside her, her walls suffocating my cock as she inches closer to her climax. I grab a hold of a hand full of hair and pull her head back. She hisses out as I pull tighter and pound against her ass. I slap her ass cheek making it red as I ride the wave of her orgasm. She screams out her beautiful song as her pussy tries to milk my cock for all I have.

I let go, but I don't let up on pounding that sweet pussy.

“I want to see how many times you can cum for me.”

Her head turns back, and I remove her blind fold. She is a beautiful mess, her cheeks are red, tears swell in her eyes, her mascara is smeared under her eyes and her lips are red. I pull out of her, my cock coated in her arousal as I get on to the bed. I don't even have to utter a word, she climbs on top of me, straddling me as her hand wraps around my cock. She aligns herself before sinking down on me. I groan as the warmth of her is wrapped around me once more. I reach around her back and unhook her bra letting her swollen tits fall. Her pink nipples are hard as I suck one into my mouth before she is pushing me back down on the pillow.

“It's my turn Caleb.” She bites her lip.

She begins to bounce her ass up and down and I can't help but move my head to the side and watch. Her ass jiggles as she twerks on my cock. I grip onto her ass as she leans forward, her still tied hands hold on to the headboard. She tilts her head back as she grinds her hips, her walls closing in on me.

“I'm going to cum.” She moans as she rocks back and forth on my cock, using me for her own pleasure.

I suck her nipple back into my mouth, swirling my tongue around the nub before biting down gently. She screams out as her pussy pulsates around me. She sags down on my chest as her climax rolls through. I continue to thrust my hips up, my impending climax drawing near. My concentration is broken

when her phone lights up, an unknown number displayed on the screen. She rolls her eyes and hits ignore.

“Who is that?” I ask as I lift my hips pounding into her harder.

My sweat is covering my chest as I seek release. She kisses my neck as she ignores my question. Her phone goes off again, but this time I grab her phone.

“Caleb don’t.”

I ignore her this time, pressing accept on the screen.

“Hello.” I grunt as she climbs off my cock rolling her eyes but lays between my legs like the good girl she is.

*Fuck, yes baby.*

I look down as she cups my balls and tastes her arousal on my cock. I jerk into her mouth as she sucks my cock and strokes my length at the same time.

“Who the fuck is this?” The man on the other line demands.

I cock a brow as I look at the magnificent Julia sucking and drawing my cock to the back of her throat. I hiss as she swallows around me and moans.

“I want to speak with Julia.”

His tone and voice clicks in my brain, her ex-husband. Anger and jealousy course through me. I place my hand on Julia’s head and hold her down, while I thrust into her mouth making her gag and slobber all over my length.

“Sorry Julia can’t come to the phone right now. She is busy sucking my cock.”

She struggles against my hold as she mumbles around my cock. The vibrations make me crash, my cum spews from the tip and fills her mouth. I grunt as my body jerks and my heart thumps.

“Oh fuck, Julia, Yes. Swallow every. Fucking. Drop.” I grunt right into the phone, not giving a shit that he can hear every word.

Her eyes roll back as she moans and swallows my arousal.

“Fuck you, put my wife on the phone.”

I hang up the phone, tossing it to the side.

“I fucking love you, Julia.”

JULIA



LOVE THE HELL OUT OF YOU BY LEWIS  
CAPALDI

For the past week I have been in a constant state of orgasmic bliss. Caleb and I fuck all the time, exploring each others bodies, drenching in sweat and tears. I was covered in cum when he came three times in one session. I was amazed that he didn't need to recharge. He just kept pounding into me. I have never been so full in my life. It was like he was trying to recreate all of my novel scenes and surpassed them. I am so sore I can barely sit down without hissing.

The snow has been falling around us piling up at least four feet and the snowplow continues to drive past pushing the snow to the outer banks of the street. Christmas season is in full bloom. Downtown is strung with lights and Christmas wreaths hanging from the shop doors.

As I walk into the Tavern, the smell of fresh brewed coffee hits my nostrils as I inhale. Sydney smiles as she hands me my regular large Latte. I hand her my \$3 dollars and look around the bar.

"He is in the office." She nods her head towards the back.

"That's okay, I have to head back home. I am almost done with a novel."

She squeals with excitement, "Can't wait."

I wave goodbye as I head out the door. The wind is blowing, and the snow flurries fill the air. I walk past the antique shop, looking in the window at the displays of Christmas ornaments. A figure is staring at me from across the



street. My breath catches as I clutch my chest. It looks just like Daniel but when I turn around the plow is blocking my view. Once the road is clear, the spot where I saw the figure is empty. No one is there. I look around but I don't see him. I shake my head and proceed to walk up the hill.

*It was just in my head*, I try to tell myself but something feels strange. I get inside and I add a log to the fire, the embers flicker as the flame consumes the fresh log. I sit on the couch, getting back to writing my final chapter. The wind whistles through the door sweep, sounding like a creepy ghost screaming. Chills run down my spine as I take in the blizzard outside. The lights flicker as the electricity tries to hold on.

Power is out at the bar, shutting down. Want dinner?

I read Caleb's text and smile.

Yes please.

The lights shut off and the whole house is consumed in darkness. The only light I have is from the fireplace. I set my laptop down and step up to the sliding door, peering out at the forest beyond. The snow is covering the tree tops and the white mist makes it hard to see beyond a couple feet. But what is not hard to see is the figure staring right back at me. I step back slightly, my heart pounding in my chest. I can't see his face; he is dressed in an all-black hoodie and pants. He doesn't move, he just observes tilting his head slightly.

I step back again, reaching down to grab my phone off the cushion, my eyes never drifting off the stranger peering at my house. I dial Caleb's number, it rings but I am startled by the banging noise coming from the front porch. I jump from the sudden noise and scream. I hate scary movies, so this shit isn't funny. When my eyes snap back to the yard, the figure is gone. I immediately run to the front door ensuring it is locked, then make my way to the garage door, it's locked as well.

"Julia, what's wrong?" Caleb yells into the phone as I didn't hear him answer the call.

“Someone is watching me. I don’t know where they went.”

There is banging on the front door, and I scream again.

“Baby it’s me, open up.”

I hang up the phone and run over to the door, unlocking it as I swing it open. I run into Caleb’s arms. He holds me tight walking back into the house before slamming it shut.

“Show me.”

I walk over to the sliding door and point to where the person was standing.

“Okay, lock the door behind me. I’ll go look.”

I grip onto his arms, not wanting him to go but he opens the door anyways. I watch as the snow flurries make his image fade away the deeper he goes down the yard. My eyes flicker left and right trying to see where he went. The storm is getting worse by the second. A few minutes later I find Caleb walking up the patio stairs and I open the door. He quickly comes in, his lips shivering as he rubs his hands together.

“I saw footprints, but there is no one out there now. Did you see his face?”

I shake my head. His mouth scrunches up, worry setting in.

“I’m sure it was just meant to scare me. Maybe a prank or something.”

He places his phone to his ear, “Hey Sheriff, Julia just had someone in her backyard looking into her house. Can you send a squad car out to check it out?”

He shakes his head as he listens to the response.

“Okay, yeah. I’ll stay with her until you can get someone out. Thank you.”

He hangs up the phone and tosses it onto the table, before he proceeds into the kitchen.

“What did they say?” I ask as he grabs a coffee mug and hits start on the Keurig.

“Because of the storm right now, they can’t send anyone to check. They have to wait for the roads to be plowed.”

I am not worried now that Caleb is here. I feel protected, but I am concerned about who that was.

I wake up in the middle of the night to a text message. I forgot to put my phone on do not disturb, so the ringer was pretty loud.

You always look so beautiful when you sleep.

UNKNOWN

My heart pounds against my chest. I look over at Caleb, but he is peacefully sleeping. My eyes scan across my bedroom. I don’t see anyone. This has to be Daniel texting me. He is the only one who would know how I sleep. An eerie feeling creeps over me as I pull the covers off and slip out of bed. My feet touch the ground, but it’s wet and cold. I gasp as I turn on the lamp on the night-stand. Wet boot prints are tracked all over my floor.

“Caleb. Caleb wake up.”

I whisper in case he is still in the house.

*How the fuck did he get in?*

Caleb sits up, rubbing his eyes before he looks at me. He can see the panic in my eyes. He looks around.

“What the fuck?”

He attempts to shout but I place my finger against my lips signaling him to be quiet. He gets up and looks around the room once more before grabbing the fireplace prod. I stay behind him as he creeps out into the hallway. We check the entire house, following the footprints. The house is quiet, but the wind is growing louder the farther we walk down the hall. We round the corner and enter the living room, it’s freezing in here.

We turn right and notice the footprints lead right to the front door, which is wide open. Snow is blowing into the house and onto the floor. Caleb strides over to the door, looking out onto the porch before he closes the door and once again locks it in place.

“Julia, would Daniel be psycho enough to break into your house?”

I shrug as I pace the living room. “He texted me. Said I always look beautiful when I sleep.”

“Jesus Christ.” He fingers his hair as he leans against the couch.

Three days we have been inside the house, snowed in with no power. Luckily, I had plenty of firewood to keep the house warm. We constantly checked the doors and windows ensuring no one could get in without us knowing. We have barely slept just being on edge. Today the plow was able to come through and salt the roads, so the Sheriff and his men were able to search the area. They of course didn’t find anything suspicious, but all the evidence would be buried beneath the fresh blanket of snow. They took our statements and suggested getting a new security system.

Because Christmas is approaching, we decide to head out of the house and grab a tree for my living room but it’s also to clear my head. I bundle up with my winter coat, hat, scarf, gloves and boots. Caleb looks so handsome in his winter coat, red plaid long sleeve, pants and boots. He even has a hat on making him look more and more like a mountain man. It reminds me of when he was outside cutting firewood.

“How about this one?” I point to a small tree, the bristles full and green.

“It’s a little too thin. You want it to be grand. It will last longer.”

He walks over observing the nearby trees. The snow crunches beneath his boots.

“This one.”

He finds a large tree that would in fact look perfect with my high ceilings. It's vibrant green, no missing limbs and full of pines. I nod and he begins chopping the trunk. He cuts it almost all the way through before he rests his hand on the trunk and pushes it over.

“Timber.” He yells out and laughs.

I can't help but smile at how happy he looks. I am happy too, but I am also on edge. It's been three days since my house was broken into. Nothing was taken, but my security.

“Julia, are you okay?” He strokes my arm as he lifts the trunk of the tree and drags it behind us.

“Yeah, just tired I guess.”

I don't want to worry him that I am worried. I continue walking along the trail until we reach the tent where we need to check out. Madison and Connor already found their tree and are cuddled up by her jeep waiting for us.

“I'll pay, you go get warm.” He kisses my forehead before I head over to Madison.

“Julia, your tree is huge. But you like climbing huge trees so it suits you.” She winks and I can't help but laugh. Connor nudges her and rolls his eyes as he realizes her innuendo.

“You're such a dirty girl Madison.” I nudge her as I get into her jeep.

On the way home, we stop at the local home goods store to pick up lights to string up around the house. Madison and Connor are helping me decorate and then we plan to have dinner and a movie night. A nice couple's night. After looking at the displays for about thirty minutes, hearing Madison complain about how indecisive I am, I finally pick white lights. Caleb throws his hands up in the air and laughs as he grabs about 10 boxes of lights.

“I said white lights about 15 minutes ago.”

I laugh as I shrug. “I wanted to go with the colorful ones, but it doesn't go with the neutral tones.”

Madison crosses her arms and taps her foot.

“I hope you’re not this indecisive in the bedroom.”

I roll my eyes at her. She is always trying to know more about my sex life.

“Trust me, in the bedroom she is not indecisive Madison.” Caleb grabs me around the waist pulling me in and kisses my neck.

“Alright enough, Madison you’re such a perv.”

“You love it. Oh, hey I got a message from Violet, she needs the final Chapter so she can edit it before the release date.”

Christmas is only two weeks away. I already finished the last chapter but forgot to submit it to Violet.

“Shit. Okay when we get to the house, I’ll send it over.”

I click submit and my manuscript is sent through the web and into Violet’s inbox. I can hear the notification through the phone.

“Okay got it. I’ll review and edit. I’ll send you the final copy and some cover options within the week.”

“Thanks Vi.”

I hang up the phone and head back out into the living room. Caleb and Connor are already setting up the tree and Madison is opening the ornament boxes.

“Let me help.”

As I walk over and sit down on the floor with Madison, my phone dings, I look up at Caleb and he looks at me. I look at my phone and my face must stiffen because before I know it my phone is being ripped out of my hands. Caleb reads the message and decides to cut the games and dial the number. He puts the phone on speaker as it rings.

“Julia.”

Daniel speaks and my face gets red, I can feel the fire in my cheeks.

“No, this is her boyfriend, Caleb. I am going to tell you this one time. Leave her the fuck alone or you will have a problem with me. And that’s not a problem you want to have, trust me.”

All you can hear on the other line is heavy breathing.

“Julia? Why are you letting your little fling talk to me? You know that will never last. He doesn’t know you like I do. I know every curve of your body, every pleasure that gets you wet.”

My mouth falls open at his blatant disrespect and lies.

“You know nothing about me, Daniel. You couldn’t even make me cum. I had to do that myself. Cut the shit. Don’t make me call your father and tell him all about the shit you have been up to. He will cut you off completely.”

He yells into the phone, and I step back slightly. “You wouldn’t fucking dare you, stupid bitch.”

“Daniel the next time I see your fucking smug face, you better run.”

Caleb hangs up the phone. “Change your number right now.” He demands.

I take my phone and call the phone company. My hands are shaking when I walk into the kitchen. I lean over the sink and rest my head on my hands. The agent puts me on hold and I just need a minute. It doesn’t make any sense.

*Why is Daniel acting this way?*

*Why is he so concerned with who I am with?*

He broke us, he cheated, he asked for a divorce, he got another woman pregnant. I left LA to escape the bullshit and he is bringing it right to my front door.

*When does it stop?*

We already filed a police report and I filed a Protection order against him, which he received because I received the

signed copy. He shouldn't even be contacting me.

“Come on, let's put some Christmas music on and add these ornaments. Connor, can you get some wine open?” Madison grabs my hand and leads us to the tree.

Caleb disappears in the bedroom for a while. Madison and I dance around the tree while adding the ornaments, sipping wine, as we try to clear my mind of the bullshit. It works, I don't think of anything but the fun I am having with my best friend.

Caleb pulls me to him, and we dance, swaying to the music.

“I love you.” He whispers into my ear as he dips me back and kisses my lips.

Madison yells out, “Awwwwww.”

I can't help but smile and turn red. Displays of affection are my weakness. I love that he is not afraid to let everyone know how he feels about me. It's so new to me. Usually, I am the one who falls hard and fast for someone. But Caleb, he gushes with love and admiration as he stares into my eyes.

“Okay, let's play never have I ever.” Madison plops down on the couch, pulling me down with her.

“I have never played.” I admit.

I never went to parties in college, I was always the girl studying hard in her dorm. I was constantly called boring because I didn't do what, “normal”, adults my age did. I was okay with that. I didn't want to drink, smoke or do drugs, and if that was what normal people did, I didn't want any part in that. They all look at me surprised and I shrug.

“You have a lot to learn my sweet Julia.” Madison laughs as she explains the rules of the game.

“Okay so correct me if I am wrong. We put 10 fingers up and take turns saying never have I ever, whatever, and if someone has done it, they put a finger down and take a shot?”

Madison nods enthusiastically.



“Okay, let’s play.”

Connor grabs the tequila and four shot glasses as he joins us on the couch. Madison starts and of course her never have I ever is extremely dirty.

“Never have I ever had a threesome?” She shoots her eyes around the room, as she places a finger down. She is the only one in the room who has a finger down. We all laugh as she huffs and takes a shot.

“Ya’ll should try it.” She shrugs.

“I don’t like to share.” I admit as I look at Caleb. He winks at me before his turn comes around.

“Never have I ever been arrested?”

My fingers remain in the air. I am not one to get in trouble. Connor places his finger down and takes his shot.

“For what?” I can’t help but ask.

“I got into a bar fight last year, got arrested for drunken disorderly.”

Okay, so he didn’t kill someone so that’s good. His rugged, bad boy appearance would have you thinking otherwise. My turn rolls around, and it takes me a minute to think of something.

“Never have I ever watched someone fuck in a pool without them knowing and masturbated?”

I can feel Caleb’s eyes on me as he watches me place my finger down. I turn to look at him as he lifts his brow and grins.

“Oh my god, I love that. Who? God I would love to get so turned on watching someone get fucked in front of me.”

Madison blurts out and Connor places his hand over her mouth. How he puts up with her crazy outbursts is beyond me.

“When I first moved here, I was on the balcony, and I saw my neighbor fucking in the pool. It was hot to watch. I was fascinated by the way he moved.”

Madison and Connor shoot their eyes to Caleb who just shrugs.

“Did you know she was there?” Connor asks, as curiosity spreads throughout the room.

“I felt someone looking, so I looked back as I finished.”

He places his hand on my thigh and squeezes. The slight touch sends heat to my core. I take my shot and the burn slides down my throat as I cough, wiping my lips. The game continues until I am the only one remaining with fingers left up in the air. I guess I have not experienced much in my life.

“Don’t worry we will rectify some of those later tonight.” Caleb kisses me as we put our plates in the sink.

JULIA



## LOOK WHO'S CRYIN NOW BY JESSIE MURPH

*I* just arrived home tired from my flight. I have been away doing press for my new book release. I signed pre-order copies and met some fans at a local book shop in Denver. My book launches on Christmas Day and the pre-orders have been through the roof. Everyone wants to read about the heart throb Belamy, who will burn down the world for his new captive. It's an exciting dark romance that is for sure to be a top seller, according to Violet. The roads have been salted, families are bundled up in their homes as my cab drives through town.

The picket white fences surrounding the homes are covered in snow. The pumpkins that were decorating the porches are barely visible. The trees are completely bare of leaves as the snow is perched on the limbs. As we pass the Tavern, its completely empty, as is every shop in town. Everyone is tucked away enjoying their Sunday. We pull up to my house, the lights are off, so Caleb must be at his house. I thank my driver before rolling my suitcase inside.

I turn on the heat and set my suitcase down. I walk over to the fireplace, striking a new match and setting the flame against the firewood and watch it catch fire. The warmth from the fireplace is perfect. Removing my coat, I set it in the closet and head to dining room, lighting some candles, as I ordered dinner which should be arriving shortly. I proceed to my bedroom for a quick shower. Before I remove my clothes, I turn the shower on and text Caleb.

Babe, I am home. Come over, I missed you.

I set my phone down on the counter and hop into the shower. The steam clears my sinuses as I lather my body, the smell of winter candy apple fills the air. I love bath and body works scents. They have a scent every mood or holiday. I move on to shaving, making sure there is no stubble in sight. I hear a faint door closing and my heart gets excited, the anticipation of seeing Caleb is high. I have missed him this week. He has been busy with the impending holiday, guests in town, and the helping plan the New Year's eve party, which I volunteered my house for.

"I'm in the shower babe."

I yell out, as I quickly rinse off my body. I reach for my towel and dry off my legs before stepping out. Wrapping my towel around my body and tucking it in before I proceed to the mirror and wipe away the fog.

"Caleb." I call out again, as he seems to be taking longer than usual.

I peer around the door, looking into my room but I don't see him. I grab my robe and walk into the hallway.

"Caleb."

I approach slowly. I could have sworn I heard the door close, but I don't hear or see him.

As I walk into the kitchen, I hear a creaking board behind me. My whole body freezes as hands caress my arms before I am pushed down to the ground. I grunt as my face is slammed to the floor. I turn over and attempt to get away, but a boot is pressed against my chest.

"Hey baby, did you miss me?" Daniel smiles down at me as he lays more pressure.

My hands wrap around his ankle attempting to get his foot off me but it's no use. I look to my right trying to find something to hit him with. I turn to the left, noticing the wine cellar door open and Caleb is passed out against the stairs, he has a cut on his forehead and blood trickles onto the floor.

“Caleb.” I yell out, panicking. “Daniel, what the fuck are you doing?”

I cry out as he grabs my hair, dragging me on the floor back to my bedroom. He doesn't answer me as he pulls me onto the bed. I try to run but he slaps me so hard across the face, I see stars. I grab my face, my mouth wide open as I process what the fuck is happening to me again. This happened before, during a drunken night, he slapped me around and I forgave him like an idiot. This is who he is, drunk or not, he should never put his hands on a woman.

“Sit the fuck down and don't move Julia. God, do you ever fucking listen? I have been telling you, you are mine. I don't care that I wanted the divorce, I made a mistake. Everything is wrong.”

He paces back and forth looking at his hands as he rubs his red knuckles. A clear sign there was a struggle with Caleb.

“What did you do to Caleb?”

He paces in front of me, his nostrils flaring.

“That fucker Julia? You fucked him? What does he have that I don't?”

He is in my face as his breath hits my skin and I cringe. I can feel the bile creeping up my throat. His hand shoots out grabbing ahold of my throat, and he squeezes hard. Blocking my airways. My hands grip his wrists attempting to break free. My lungs are burning as they beg for oxygen. My legs twitch, reminding me that they still work.

I knee him in the balls and run out the room. I slip on water from his boots and slide down the hallway across the floor until my back hits the corner of the wall. My back burns, as the air is once again taken from me. I gasp for air as I attempt to stand up. Daniel walks fast towards me as I step back looking over to Caleb who is blinking, completely dazed and unaware of what is happening. I notice him lift his hand as he tries to sit up.

“He has everything you don't. Me.”

I need his attention off Caleb. His eyes snap to my legs as he notices I am only in a robe and towel. His brow hitches high on his forehead and the sickening feeling of his intentions are clear when his lips curve up.

“Let me remind you what it’s like to be fucked by a real man.”

I try to high tail it around the table, but his hand grabs my hair and tosses me back towards him. I scream out in pain when he pushes my face against the wood table.

“Shhhh, it will feel so good baby. Don’t you remember how loud you used to moan for me?” His cold slimy tongue glides across my ear and I gag.

I thrash around attempting to get out of his hold, but he keeps his arm pressed against my back as he hikes up my robe. I reach out, grabbing the dinner plate in front of me and swing it back, hitting him over the head. He releases me as shards of glass cut his face and head. His hand covers his eye as he roars out and charges me. I grab a vase, but I knock over the candles and linens in the process. I smash the vase over his head.

“You fucking bitch. I will fucking kill you. You ruined me. Now I will ruin you, so no man will ever want you.”

He charges me and knocks me down to the ground like a fucking football player tackling the quarterback. Something that should never happen with good defense. I can’t hear anything but a loud ring in my ears. His mouth is moving but nothing registers. All I can feel is his hands trying to pry open my legs.

“Get off me.” I shout as I shake my head.

A loud bang goes off as his body goes limp on top of me. Standing above me, Caleb holds a cast iron pan. He hit Daniel so hard from behind, it knocked him out and made a cut on the back of his head ooze blood onto my chest.

“I fucking want her you sick motherfucker.” Caleb yells as he drops the cast iron to the ground.

“Oh god, please get him off of me.”

I beg as I struggle to get up. Caleb pushes Daniel off of me and helps me up. He is looking over my whole body but winces and places his hand on his forehead again before shaking his vision clear.

“Julia, did he hurt you?”

“No. He tried. To... I fought him.”

Anger fills his eyes as he looks back down at Daniel. I start to sniff the air, the smell of smoke fills the room. I turn around noticing the table and linens are smoking as a fire is burning the rug where I dropped the candle.

“Fuck, get the fire extinguisher.”

The fire alarms go off, the loud beeps make it hard for me to focus on what Caleb is saying. He grabs the extinguisher from my hands, pulls the pin and blasts the fire with white foam. The fire has spread from where he is spraying as the curtains catch fire, and the kitchen cabinets start to turn gray.

“Caleb, I don’t think we can put it out fast enough.” I panic.

He drops the extinguisher and grabs my hand pulling me towards the front door. Before we exit, he grabs a blanket draping it over my shoulders and grabs our shoes. The thick smoke is spilling into the living room making us cough as we swing the front door open.

Once outside, Caleb calls the fire department, but they had already received a call about smoke, so they are just around the corner. We sit there watching my grandmother’s house, my house, catch fire so quickly. The kitchen windows shatter as the temperature increases.

“No.”

I cry as I watch everything burn. The police show up and begin asking questions. We tell them about Daniel breaking in and attacking Caleb and I. We tell them he is still in there and they go in once the fire is contained.

“The fire is out. Your kitchen and dining room were damaged. Unfortunately, your ex-husband is deceased, most



likely from the flames and smoke inhalation.”

Is it bad that I don't feel anything towards that last bit? My only concern and heartbreak is about my kitchen and dining room. I will have to rebuild and make it exactly how she left it for me. I am just glad the remainder of the house is okay.

“Baby, are you okay?” Caleb asks as he checks me over again. I grab onto his shoulders and pull him into me.

“I'm fine. I'm okay. Are you okay?”

He nods.

I kiss him with everything I have. It's as if the whole world around us disappears. I no longer hear the fire truck sirens, I don't hear the police, the bystanders, or the whistle of the wind.

“I'm going to talk to the Sheriff, get this sorted so I can take you home.”

“Caleb your head.”

He shakes his head before whispering, “I'm fine. I was just caught off guard.”

He walks over to the Sheriff and deputies while I finish getting checked out by the paramedics.

“Julia.”

Madison calls out as she runs towards me. She hugs me tight. She turns around and notices them wheeling out a black body bag.

“Is that...?” She doesn't even finish her sentence when I place my hand on her shoulder.

“Yes.”

She leans her head on my shoulder and just watches as the firefighters continue to water down my house. I can feel Caleb's eyes on me.

*There is no way he will still want me after this.*

CALEB



## DRINK ME BY MICHELE MORRONE

*F*orty Minutes ago....

Babe, I am home. Come over, I missed you.

**T**he text I have been waiting for all day lights up on my screen. I just finished showering, so I put on my clothes and head out the door. Its a cold winter night, the snow crunches under my boots as I walk up the sidewalk. Julia's house lights up as I approach. Her living room lights are on and the chimney steams. I twist the knob and walk inside. The sound of the shower fills the quietness as I slip out of my boots and hang my coat.

"I'm in the shower babe."

She calls out and a smile is plastered on my face. Her voice lights me up and my heart hammers in my chest. I head to the wine cellar to grab a bottle of wine. Her grandmother always had a wide variety of wines. From reds, whites, pinks, you name it. I grab what I know to be Julia's favorite, Stella Rosa Watermelon. She likes the sweet stuff, whereas I am more of a whiskey guy, but I don't mind dabbling in something sweet once in a while.

The stairs of the wine cellar are metal and steep, it's a wonder how an eighty year old, managed to climb these. When I approach the cellar door, I am met with a set of eyes that should not be in this home. Before I can even register

what is going on a fist connects to my temple, my vision goes black, and I am falling hard against the metal steps.

When I finally come to, my eyes blink rapidly. I wince at the pain as I try to lift my head up off the stairs. Blood is pooled where my forehead was resting.

“He has everything you don’t. Me.”

Julia’s voice registers in my ears. I can hear panic in her voice, an unsettling feeling courses through my body as I turn my head to the direction her voice came from. She is struggling to get him off her, he has her pinned against the table. She must have just stepped out of the shower, as she is in her robe. I attempt to rise up but pain shoots to my temple. I shake my head to get rid of the pain before I try again.

This time when I look at Julia, she is fighting him and tries to go around the table but he body slams her to the ground. A burst of adrenaline spikes and I am on my feet hurrying around the kitchen. I look around for anything I can hit him with, something to get him away from her. I will fucking kill him if I have to.

*Self defense.*

He broke into her house and attacked me and now her. I grab the cast-iron skillet that sat on the burner.

“Now I will ruin you, so no man will ever want you.”

Gripping the handle I approach his back, her eyes meet mine for a split second before my hand rises and falls against his head. Her eyes snap shut as blood splatters against her clean skin.

“I fucking want her you sick motherfucker.”

Pain once again slams against my temple. I reach up, palming my head. I pull my hand away; blood covers my palm.

“God, please get him off me.” She screams out as she attempts to push his limp body.

He definitely isn’t a skinny dude; he is pretty stocky. I push his body off her lifting her up as her arms immediately

wrap around mine. I look her over, checking for any wounds, marks on her perfect skin and look into her eyes. The last thing Julia needed was for this asshole to take one more thing from her. I am angry with myself for letting him get the upper hand on me. I am angry I wasn't able to help her sooner.

*God, did he rape her while I was unconscious?*

I'll fucking beat him to death. But all I could ask her is if he hurt her. Then the next thing I know the dining room and kitchen are burning. Smoke is filling the air and nothing I am doing with this old fire extinguisher is working. I get Julia out as soon as possible. The fire department pulled up to the house within two minutes of me calling, apparently someone had already reported the fire. Madison and Connor were at the house within ten minutes, they probably saw the fire from Madison's house.

Julia is checking on me, but my only concern is her. *Is she okay?*

What does she need?

How are we going to fix her home?

She can stay with me. I don't care, I don't want her alone.

*Is he still alive?*

He hasn't run out the house yet. Good, I fucking hope he dies. Fucking bastard. He had it all, the house, the fame, the perfect wife, and then he spat on it, like it was nothing; like she was nothing. And then now all of a sudden, she can't have anyone but him?

What the fuck do they teach in LA?

Madison talks with Julia, as I am speaking with the sheriff.

"So, is this the same person you called about stalking Julia outside her home?" Sheriff Patters questions. He has been sheriff since I was a little boy, so he knows everything about everyone in this town, including me.

"Yes. Her ex-husband, Daniel. He was calling her non-stop and broke into the house before this."

I watch as he jots down the information and takes my statement. They wheel out a black body bag and I am instantly relieved that the threat against Julia is gone. I don't feel sorry for him, he fucked up and couldn't handle his own decisions. His actions lead to his death, not mine. I will always protect what I love, and I love Julia with everything I have. I want to marry this woman. I know it's only been a couple months but every time I am with her, it feels like years. She gets me more than anyone.

"Come on baby. Let's get you inside. We will come by in the morning and check the damage."

I wrap my arm around her and rub her back. I know she must be cold, she has nothing on but a robe and blanket. She nods as she waves to Madison and Connor. I walk her down the hill to my house.

"I've never been in your home Caleb." She shivers against my hands as I pull my keys from my pocket.

I open the door and flick on the lights. She peers into the living room, taking in the stone work along the walls, the black fireplace and brown leather couches. My cabin is not as modern as hers, it's more of a rustic cabin with some modern touches.

"Caleb, this is not what I expected."

She trails her fingers along the leather as she makes her way into my favorite part of the house. The kitchen. The chef's kitchen has all stainless steel appliances, a large double door refrigerator, gas stove with a hood, farmhouse sink, you name it. I made sure to have the renovations happen mainly in here and the bedroom.

"What's your favorite meal to cook?"

I watch her as she takes in the kitchen. Her eyes scan over every inch before they land back on mine.

"How about we get you cleaned up and warm? Then we can play twenty questions." I laugh as I grab ahold of her hips and push her in the direction of my bedroom.

"I think I'll need more than twenty questions Caleb."

“Ask as many as you want, after we shower.”

We reach my bedroom and I turn the knob. Opening up the door, her eyes flash to mine as she steps inside.

“Now I understand why you are so popular with the ladies, Caleb. This room screams romance.”

I rub my hand through my hair.

“Actually, I never brought anyone into this room...Uh, too personal.”

She stops her movements as she turns around to face me. Her perfect eyebrows rise making her forehead wrinkle as she takes in the seriousness of my tone.

“So, no one but me has been in this room?”

I nod.

“Why?”

*Because I never cared if they were comfortable.*

“Questions after shower Julia.”

I walk into the bathroom and turn on the shower to the hottest setting. Within seconds the shower is steaming. I turn the dial decreasing the temperature so we don't sear our skin off. I pull Julia to me gently as I remove the blanket and then slide the robe off her shoulders. Handprint marks and scratches line her neck. My jaw tightens as I can physically see the marks against her fair skin. She stares into my eyes as I look over her body. The robe falls to the floor and my fingers unravel her towel. Her hand shoots up to my cheek.

“He didn't rape me, Caleb. He tried, but he didn't. Okay?”

I believe her. She doesn't show any hesitation when I touch her. Relief loosens up my muscles as I pull down my pants and remove my shirt. I lead her into the shower and reach for my body soap.

“I want to wash him off you.”

I lather my hands before gently rubbing her skin. She closes her eyes as she can feel my touch all over her skin. I

wash her arms, neck, softly caress her breasts making her nipples hard. I have to swallow a moan that vibrates in my throat. I move on to her toned stomach and over her hips, slowly rubbing her ass cheeks. She hesitates slightly as her ass muscles tighten when my hand gets closer to her puckered asshole.

“Bend over Julia.”

She bites her lip as she places both hands against the shower wall. She bends her hips and leans over.

“Good girl.”

My hand slides over her ass and she moans. I am not trying to make this sexual, but her body is on fire and she looks so fucking good submitting to my requests. My cock is already hard just from looking at her body covered in soap bubbles. I place my hand against her inner thigh and tap, signaling her to spread her legs. Her feet separate as she sucks in a breath.

I grab more body wash and slide my fingers between her folds. She moans as I clean her sensitive pussy before I grab the shower head and run the water over her skin. I watch as the bubbles slide down in between her ass cheeks, and down her legs. Once I finish rinsing her clean, I wash myself off. She turns around to watch as I rinse off the soap from my abs and arms before tilting my head back and rubbing my hands through my hair.

“Caleb, I want you to fuck me. Right now.” Her eyelashes bat as she bites her lip.

I look down at her and swipe a loose strand behind her ear, keeping my fingers against her jawline. My thumb slides across her plump lip as I fight back the urge brewing inside me. I would love nothing more than to make love to her right now, but she has questions she wants to ask and I have some of my own. I need her to feel heard and safe with me. I need her to know I will always do my best to protect her.

I turn off the water and grab the towels from the hook before I reach my hand out to her. She sighs with disappointment before she takes my hand and steps out of the



shower. I wrap her up as I head over to the sink, grabbing a hair brush from the cabinet and step behind her.

“Caleb.” She mumbles as I begin to comb her hair.

Her blonde wet hair runs through the bristles as I comb her hair back.

“Just let me care for you Julia. I just want you to see how special you are. You deserve the world, and I am here to give it to you.”

*Can't she see I am opening up?* I am trying my hardest not to crawl back into my shell. I am trying to let my heart lead me and not my brain, which is telling me this will only end one way; me, hurt. I don't believe Julia will hurt me. I think she has had her fair share of hurt to never want to do it to someone else. She relaxes her shoulders as I continue brushing. I set the brush down on the counter before I begin braiding her hair. She looks at me in the mirror and smiles.

“What?” I question as I focus on each loop I make. Her blonde hair has hints of brown making the perfect golden swirl in the braid.

“I've never had a man play with my hair like this. It feels amazing.”

“That's because you have never been with a man like me, baby.”

She dips her chin. “True.”

My brows scrunch together as I sense hesitation in her voice, her eyes don't lift back up to mine. I walk into the closet, grabbing a clean t-shirt and boxers from the drawers.

“Here. Put these on and meet me in the living room when you are done.”

I hand her the clothes, before I walk out of the bathroom giving her a moment to collect her thoughts. I grab my phone off the counter and send a text to Madison and Connor as I sit on the couch.

Christmas will be at my house this year, let everyone know. 5pm.

Okay. We will bring some things over. Is Julia okay?

She will be.

“Caleb.”

Her arms wrap around my neck as she hugs me. I grab her arm and move her around the couch to my front. She nestles on my lap as her head rests against my heart. The fireplace is glowing as the fire sears the wood. The snow has begun to fall against the window seal creating a foggy mist on the window.

“Ask me anything.” I mumble as I attempt to pour some wine into a glass.

I hand her one glass as she shifts off my lap and onto the couch cushion beside me. She crosses her legs and faces me, her hand playing with the stem of the glass as she bites her lip and thinks of what to ask.

“Okay, but if it’s too much, I’ll back off”, she states as she reaches her hand onto my thigh.

Her eyes are worried. I shift in my seat, waiting for the gut wrenching question I already know she is going to ask. She needs to know more. She just hasn’t had the courage to ask, or maybe she didn’t want to know before and now she does.

“Why did your wife commit suicide?”

She takes a sip of her wine before she realigns her sight to mine. I lean my elbow against the back of the couch and perch my head on my knuckles.

“We were trying for a long time to have a baby. Everything we tried failed. So, we were getting ready to begin IVF treatments. I was working a lot so I could save up, while I was away her results came back, she had stage four ovarian cancer.” I pause as I take another sip.

“Her grandmother had died a couple years before, was diagnosed with the same cancer and died two months later, it

was an extremely rough process for her grandfather, and Lucy didn't want me to go through what they did. She didn't want to go through all the pain."

While I was speaking, Julia set down her wine glass, her elbows resting up on her knees as her hands covered her mouth.

"Are you still....?" She tries to back track her question, but I finish it for her.

"Am I still in love with her? Am I still not ready to move on?"

She nods.

"I am in love with you Julia. I forgave Lucy for leaving me that way. I forgave myself for not being there. I thought I couldn't love again, but then you came into my life, and everything just felt exactly like it should. You have made me open up and face my own feelings."

"How? I don't know shit about love, apparently." She throws her hands out, signaling to look around. Her eyes immediately gravitate to the window overlooking her home.

"Just because you were dealt a shitty hand doesn't mean you don't know love. Julia, you love hard, I see it. We all do. He just didn't know how to handle your love. He wanted to control you."

She leans forward slightly. Her lips part as her tongue slides across.

"And do you?"

"Do I what Julia?" I set my wine glass down on the coffee table before I bring my attention back to her. I try not to focus on the fact that she is dressed in my white t-shirt, has no bra so her tits rest against the material as her pebbled nipples stare at me, and she is wearing my boxers. *How easily I could remove them from her body.*

"Do you know how to handle my love?"

"Ask more questions Julia. If you want this cock inside you tonight, get all your questions out. Then you can decide if

I can handle your love.”

“How do I know if the next time we argue, you won’t run into the arms of Sabrina?”

Okay, I wasn’t expecting that question. I haven’t even thought about Sabrina. I broke things off with her when I realized I loved Julia. I wasn’t expecting my feelings to come to surface but when they did, I let Sabrina know.

“Sabrina was nothing more than someone I could get lost in the moment with. As soon as I realized how much I cared about you, I broke things off with Sabrina. She was mad, but she understood that you were someone she could never compete with.”

“So, you never had feelings for her?”

I shake my head. I don’t want to sound like an asshole but the truth is just that, the truth. “No. You have nothing to worry about.”

She stands up and my body jerks up to reach out to her. She is too quick though, my mind races, I automatically assume the worst.

Did I say something wrong?

Does she not believe me?

Is she going to leave?

What I don’t anticipate is her next question.

“What’s your favorite color?”

I sit back on the couch and smile. Out of all the questions, she wants to know my favorite color.

“Red. But now I have a question.” I grab my wine and down the remaining wine. I clear my throat before I dare ask the impending question that has been in my mind.

“Do you love me, Julia? You said before you were falling for me. But do you love me?”

Her whole body freezes. Her eyes dart across the room as her cheeks turn pink. I’ve told her I am in love with her and

that I love her, twice, but she has never said anything back to me. She bites down on the inside of her cheek before her lips part and the words I don't expect seal my fate. My heart hammers in my chest as I think I may die.

“Yes.”

My ears can't register what she is saying. It's like she whispered it so low, I need her to say it louder so I can really hear her.

“Say it.” I demand as I stand up and make my way to her in front of the fireplace.

“Caleb.”

She insists on only saying yes, but I need more. I need those words to roll off her tongue, I need to hear her say it just as much as I need air to breath. My hand grabs ahold of her waist, pulling her delicate body into mine as she gasps.

“Say. It. Julia.” I lean my head down, almost touching her lips as she licks them, making me growl.

“So disobedient. You want to be punished, don't you? You want what Elizabeth in Down Deep had with Zac. You want to be dominated in the bedroom and worshiped in the streets. Don't you?”

She nods as she won't make it easy for me to hear those words I long for; For her to tell me she loves me. For her to tell me she needs me, because she is still scared.

“Okay Julia.”

I take a seat on the ottoman right in front of the fireplace and tap my thigh. Her eyes heat up with lust as I point my finger directly at my knee. She makes her way to me as she leans over my knee, her ass perched in the air as her hair sags down over her face. My hand rubs her ass before I slide the boxers down revealing her soft skin that I would like nothing more than to bite into.

“Are you going to say it, Julia?”

She shakes her head no and my hand comes crashing down on her plump ass. She jerks forward, but instead of wincing

she moans. I don't smack her ass hard, I just want her worked up begging for me to give her everything I have. I smack her ass again, this time a little harder than before.

"Fuck." She moans out as she begins to seek friction against my knee.

I lift her knees up to rest on my legs. She wobbles side to side as she tries to balance. I grab ahold of her waist as my hand rubs her red cheeks. My tongue slides over her hot flesh, cooling her skin down as my fingers slide between her wet folds. Her clit is dripping with arousal as she moans.

"Say it." I demand as I remove my touch from her.

She whimpers before she sits up, straddling her legs around me and her core against my hard cock. Her hands caress my cheeks as she leans in for a kiss, but I turn my head, denying her access.

"Caleb."

"All you have to do is say it, use your words, Julia. Tell me, what you are so afraid of?"

She removes her hands from my cheek as she exhales. "That I will give myself to you and I will be destroyed. You need to love me more."

My lips curve up as I listen to her confession. Those simple words mean so much to me, more than she even realizes. I lift her up, placing her down on the floor by the fireplace. It's hot in this spot but I can't make it to the bedroom. I pull down my boxers and slide my tip against her pussy, collecting her arousal before I slide inside her. She grips onto my shoulders as I inch my way inside her tight pussy. She moans out when I am fully submerged. I close my eyes briefly before I open them once more.

I thrust inside her, building up speed as she spreads her legs more. Her tits rock back and forth and my head dips down sucking her nipple into my mouth. Her back arches as I thrust harder.

"Caleb."

I shake my head. It's not time for her to speak unless it is those three words. I grab her legs and hold them in front of my face as I reinsert my cock into her. I watch as my length disappears and reappears, glistening with her arousal.

“Take all of my baby. Take my cock, my heart, everything I have.”

She moans as I slam into her. I lean forward against her legs going deeper. My arms burn as I hold myself up. She grabs ahold of my ass and thrusts me into her more. I flip her over and grab her waist pushing her into me and lift her ass up. She is on all fours as I stand up and make my way back to the couch.

She looks behind her and then looks around the room until she spots me. I lean forward and point to the ground in front of me.

“Crawl to me, Julia.”

She groans as she begins to crawl to me. Her eyes are darkened, and her breaths have increased. Her round tits form a perfect tear drop as they sway in front of her. I palm my cock as I watch her, slowly stroking my length as I prepare for her.

“Do you want to taste my cock, Julia?”

She nods.

I shake my head.

“Words baby.”

“I want to suck, *my cock*, Caleb.”

I groan as she takes ownership of my rock hard cock that screams to be inside her again. Pre cum seeps from the tip as she approaches me. She sits on her heels as she positions herself in between my legs. Her hands rub my inner thighs before caressing my balls. She licks her lips as she looks into my eyes and then wraps her hand around the base of my shaft, squeezing tightly before she parts her lips and closes them around my tip.

My head tilts back and my eyes close. I spread my arms out along the back of the couch and brace myself as she slides

my cock to the back of her throat. She bobs her head up and down, while stroking my cock and twisting at the top as her tongue swirls around the tip. She slides her tongue along every sensitive nerve and always makes sure to pay extra attention to the tip.

“Oh fuck. Julia. Please say it.” I moan as I beg her to say the words as I near my own climax.

I want to continue fucking her but the way she is swallowing my cock and gagging and slurping is sending me closer to release. It is a sensory overload and then she pops her lips as she releases my tip and smiles.

“I’m not ready Caleb.”

Before I can question her statement, she lifts up from the floor and straddles me once more. She leans down and kisses me, her hair draping over my face. I can taste her arousal on her tongue, and I crave more. She is like a drug; I am addicted to her. My tongue slides against hers and I suck on it. She moans as I release her tongue and kiss down her neck. She lifts her ass slightly and reaches between us, grabbing ahold of my cock and aligns it with her entrance. She sinks down onto me, and I jerk up. She holds my shoulders down, controlling the situation.

“Caleb.” She moans as she begins to twerk that beautiful ass up and down my cock. Her walls tighten as she rolls her hips, grinding against me, and then bounces some more.

“I.”

She stops speaking as I thrust into her. Her head snaps back as she plays with her tits. I lick between her tits as I continue to thrust. One hand shoots out, holding on to my shoulder as she lifts her hips higher and slams down.

“Fuck, Julia. If you keep doing. Fuckkk. That I’m going to cum.”

My cock goes deeper and I fucking moan as I am pulled deeper into the need to cum.

“I’m going to.. fuck.” She grips onto my hair as she crashes, her walls tighten as she cums all over my cock.



I thrust once more and let my cum fill her pussy. Her pussy pulsates against me as my cum coats her walls. She moans out, her body shaking as she grinds against me.

I hold on to her waist pulling her in closer as all of my cum is ejected from the tip. She wipes her now sweat drenched hair out of her face as she attempts to slow her breathing. Our bodies are covered in sweat from the heat of the fire and the extensive energy used.

Her body sags down, her head resting against my thumping heart. I rub her back as I can feel my cock sliding out of her. I will clean up the mess later, right now it's all about her.

“I love you, Caleb. I was just too scared to admit it. But I am afraid if I don't tell you, I will lose you. And I don't want to lose you. I cant.”

I hold her tight, not wanting her to see that tears are brimming my lids as I try to blink them away. I kiss the top of her head.

“Find someone who loves you more than you love them, that way if they ever break your heart, they suffer the most.”

She lifts her head as her tears slide down her cheeks. She sniffs and wipes them away.

“What did you just say?” She questions as I relay the words Ali once told me years ago.

“You said I need to love you more. And I said find someone who loves you more then you love them, that way if they ever break your heart, they suffer the most. I will love you more for the both of us, Julia. I will never break your heart, so I will never suffer.”

“But how did you know that?” She places her hand over her heart as she looks into my eyes which display nothing but sincerity.

“Because she told me that too.”

“I love you.”

Her lips find mine and we kiss, a magical bone shattering kiss that seems to last throughout the night. We cuddle naked on the couch, not caring about the world around us, just the world we are creating for ourselves in this moment.

*And that's when I know.*

JULIA



ONLY LOVE CAN HURT LIKE THIS BY  
PALOMA FAITH

The past three days have been a whirlwind of emotions. Caleb and I have been confessing our love to each other non-stop, I am dealing with the aftermath of the fire, dealing with the media circus revolving around Daniel, all while trying to put up Christmas decorations while Caleb is closing down the bar. He insists on calling me every hour to make sure I am okay, its sweet, but not necessary.

“I need Marci and Denver. Fly them and their team first thing Monday morning. I need the kitchen and dining room restored to the original state.” I state into the receiver as I speak with Madison. I had already sent photos from before the fire for them to match.

She has been in a PR nightmare but understands my request to not be involved with anything Daniel related. The news has been reporting on him constantly. Discussing how he broke into my home, attacked me, had other domestic charges brought against him from the woman he slept with while married to me. He was fired from his agency, which explained why he said it was all my fault. But really all the consequences he was facing were all based on his actions. His agency didn't want to represent an abuser or an adulterer.

“They will be there. Do you want me to send you the invoice to approve?”

I shake my head forgetting we aren't on FaceTime.

“No, go ahead and approve them. I need this done before the New Year's party.”

“I’m excited. Do you need anything?”

I look around the room I am in, mentally taking inventory.

“Nothing that I know of. Caleb pretty much has everything.”

“Okay, talk to you later.”

I spend the next two hours ignoring my phone and cleaning up the house. I’ve looked around the entire house, but I can not find any decorations other than the tree he put up last night. I find the access for the attic and pull the stairs down. Attic’s creep me out, all the spiderwebs and darkness gives me goosebumps. I begin to rummage through the attic for any decorations. I locate a couple of boxes as I move some picture frames out of the way. The dust collected on these boxes has me sneezing.

*Lucy.*

The box has her name on it. My head is telling me not to open it. But then I have my heart telling me I have to open it. I am curious how their love was, is ours the same or more. I know that’s pathetic, she is dead. I know but you don’t just stop loving someone just because they pass right?

*Okay, I’ll just take a quick look.*

I open the first box, setting the top on the ground as I move around the tissue paper. A picture of this beautiful brunette, perfect facial bones, full lips, perfect nose, and a petite body is smiling at me. Next to her is a younger, softer, happy Caleb. He is staring right at her as she looks into the camera. I place my hand over my heart. I can’t help but instantly feel sad. He is looking at her like she is his entire world.

*How could she want to leave him so soon?*

I set the photo down and continue shifting through the items, looking at clothing, letters, trinkets. I find baby items in one box, with an ultrasound photo, looks like the baby was about 15 weeks according to the *15wk 4 day*, labeled on the top left. *Lucy Taylor, age 25*. My stomach turns.

Caleb told me they were trying to have a baby, he never mentioned they lost one. I am assuming they lost one, because there are no more sonograms after this one, and he never mentioned he had a child. Realizing this is not right for me to snoop, I put the items back in the box, place the lid on top and slide the box back into its original spot. I look around the attic once more, using my phone to illuminate the darkness, I spot three boxes that say Christmas.

“Jackpot.”

I haul three boxes, one by one, to the living room before closing up the attic. I spend the next two hours, cleaning the decorations and finding a place for them throughout the house. Once I finish, I am starving. I open the refrigerator but notice there is barely any food. I head over to the market to get some food for dinner.

“Julia.”

I turn around to find Dia waving at me as she hustles down the aisle. She looks breathtaking, her short black hair, fair skin, red lips, and round shaped glasses against the brim of her nose. She is the sexy nerd type, and it works for her.

“Dia.”

I give her a big hug. She definitely found a Bath & Body Works, as she smells like a delicious sugar cookie. I make a mental note to hit up the holiday sales soon.

“I wanted to let you know that the holidays have always been a sentimental time for Caleb, I will bring my homemade apple pie to the party. It was Lucy’s favorite, always cheers him up.”

She smiles as she reaches for the apples she will need. I set the apple that was in my hand down before looking at Dia. I bite my lip.

“Do you think he is capable of really being in a relationship? Or will whoever he is with always be in the shadow of Lucy?”

I can’t get this question out of my head, no matter how many people I ask and even though he already answered it, it’s

still lingering in the back of my mind. Self-doubt is seeping into my mind and my confidence is going out the window.

I never saw photos of Lucy, or Lucy and Caleb, before and I can't help but think, I don't want to get half a man because someone already had all of him and broke him. I want all of him, but who am I to talk? He probably feels the exact same way I do, the only difference is my ex tried to kill me, whereas Lucy only took her own life, but ruined Caleb in the process.

"Julia, I didn't mean to make you feel any type of way."

I can tell she is nervous as she looks side to side to ensure no one else can hear our conversation.

"No. You didn't." *I did that to myself.*

"To answer your question. Yes. He is capable. Sometimes men just need a good reason. You're that reason." She smiles as she places her hand on my arm and gives me a rub. Her eyes relay sincerity and warmth. I can't help the tears that build up and I try to hide them by giving her a quick hug.

"Thanks."

She pulls back looking into my eyes before she mutters, "Are you okay hun?"

The question everyone has been asking me. Am I okay? I don't even know how to answer that question, other than my standard response.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just the holidays get me emotional. My grandma loved holidays." I lie. I know something is brewing inside me, I just don't know what. My grandma did love the holidays though, and I do miss her dearly, so that part is true.

"She sure did. We will have fun. You go home and get some rest, okay?"

I nod as I grab ahold of my cart and continue on down the aisle.

sing on the top of my lungs as I wash the dishes in the sink. Its dark outside and the house is warm from the fire. Caleb should

He home soon, so I prepare his dinner. I made chicken parm with angel hair pasta, Caesar salad and garlic bread. I grab a wine bottle from the fridge and set it on the dining room table. Reaching in the drawer I grab a lighter and flick the igniter, the flame burns the candle wick as I set the candle in the middle of the table.

I place two wine glasses on each end of the table and then set the plates.

I harmonize with Little Mix, as I belt out high notes, envisioning being on stage with them.

I hold out my arms as I close my eyes and serenade the empty living room as I twirl.

“I don’t know Julia. Why can’t it be like that?”

I tumble over my feet as my heart pounds against my chest.

“Jesus Caleb, you scared the shit out of me.”

He smiles as he rounds the couch to stand in front of me. He leans down and kisses my lips before he removes his coat and drapes it over the couch.

“Interesting song choice.” His eyebrow lifts with curiosity.

He looks around noticing the decorations I displayed. I went with the white lights around the Christmas tree, the white ornaments with frosted tips, the frosted garland and some Christmas farmhouse decor on the walls. I look at him as he walks around the room, leaning into the decorations, that’s when I notice his body stiffen.

“You went into the attic?”

I swallow the lump that suddenly appeared before I respond.

“Yes, I was looking for decorations. I hope that’s okay. God, I can take it all down if you hate it.”

He turns around to look at me, his hands are in his pockets, his shoulders are dropped, and his head hangs down slightly as his eyes are on the floor instead of me.



“Caleb, say something.” I can’t take the silence, not knowing if he is angry, not knowing if I did something wrong, is the worst feeling. Usually I can read him, but right now I can’t.

“Did you look through any other boxes Julia?”

He stands up straighter, this time his eyes are on mine, he wants to see the truth on my face. I am a big girl. I can admit when I do something.

“Yes.”

I straighten my own posture. It’s only natural when you are in your boyfriend’s house that you snoop a little when he isn’t home. *Right?*

“What did you see?” He steps one step closer and I can feel myself cower in front of him. *Fuck.*

“A photo of you and Lucy. A box with... umm with baby stuff.”

He exhales a long breath before shaking his head.

“You had no right to go through my things Julia. No right.”

He sits on the couch. His hands clasp together as he shakes his head to the ground.

“I’m sorry, it was right there, and I couldn’t help it. You never...” I get cut off mid-sentence when he shouts out.

“You never asked. Over and over, I give you opportunities to ask any questions you want. I am an open fucking book. I tell it how it is. You had no right to go through my personal things, her personal things. My son’s personal things.”

My mouth was previously open, but it has snapped shut. Tears burn my eyes as I hold them back. I step back as he stands up and walks over to the fireplace, leaning against the stone. He can’t even look at me. To me it was no big deal, just a couple boxes, I didn’t see much, but apparently it’s huge to him.

“It’s called respect for personal property. I would never go through your things without speaking with you.”

He is angry, his veins pop against his throat as he yells.

“Are you mad that I went through your things or are you mad that I saw her and the child you failed to mention?”

I use my hands a lot when I am upset, so my hands are flailing in the air. I don't even understand why he is so mad at me.

“Or are you mad because you finally realized you will never love me more than you loved her?” I swallow as I take in his body language.

His head jerks back as his face twitches at my outburst.

“You're fucking kidding, right?”

“No, I am not. I saw the way you looked at her Caleb. She was everything to you.”

“And she fucking left me. Killed herself to get away from me. We lost our son and she killed herself. She left me.”

At this point I can't hold back the tears, my face is soaked as I cry, but no sounds escape my mouth. His eyes trail over my face but he doesn't move, he doesn't comfort me. I just stand there, a vulnerable mess. The doorbell rings and both our heads turn towards the door.

*It's 11:45 pm, who would be coming over at this time?*

His eyes come back to mine for a split second before they return to the door. I cross my arms shielding myself from his unexpected coldness. Caleb walks over to the door, flicks on the porch light, before twisting the knob and opening the door. I can't see who it is but Caleb steps back slightly as he peers into the stranger's eyes.

I uncross my arms as I wait for him to greet whoever it is inside and out of the cold air.

“L...Lucy?”

My heart stops for a moment before it slowly kicks back into rhythm. He steps back holding the door open and in walks Lucy Taylor. The supposed to be deceased wife of Caleb. She has shorter, duller hair than she did in the photo I saw of her

just hours ago. She is not as petite as she used to be but still incredibly beautiful.

“Caleb. Let me explain.” She walks into the living room frantically, her eyes meet mine and she stops.

I have no idea what to do.

*Do I stay?*

*Do I go and let them discuss how the fuck she is here right now?*

“Caleb.”

My voice is low and shaky as I look up at him. He doesn't look at me, his eyes are glued to Lucy's face, trailing all over every inch of her. I can tell he is shocked, unsure if this is real or not. I step closer to him but still he doesn't peel his eyes off her.

“Julia, you need to go.”

His voice is stern and short. Straight to the point, he wants me gone. My heart hurts, I don't understand. I am confused. I have so many emotions coursing through me, as I am sure he does too, but he isn't even going to introduce me or give me reassurance that I am his and he is mine. He can't even look at me.

“But.” I try to explain that I have nowhere to go. My house has a huge burnt hole in it. He knows this, but he cuts me off, with a type of rudeness I never heard come out of him before.

“Leave. Now. Just fucking listen for fuck sake.”

I stumble backwards as I reach the bedroom and grab my purse. I hightail it out of that stupid fucking house as quickly as my sobbing ass can run. I don't look at him, I don't look at her, I don't even fucking close the damn front door. I run up the hill, unlock my car door and start my stupid fucking SUV. I cry hard, the type of ugly cry you don't want anyone to see. I have snot coming out of my nose and I wipe it off with my sleeve not caring how nasty that is. I pull out of the driveway and speed down the hill, through downtown, right past the Tavern, and right out of this town.

That's me, Julia Harrington, who runs when things get too complicated. Julia Harrington who opens up her heart, only to get it crushed every time. No matter how well I treat someone, I always lose more. I will never find the love I want. I drive down the snowy roads, faster than I should. I make it down the mountains and two hours later I find a hotel off the interstate.

"Room for one?" The front desk agent asks.

"Yes." I hand over my card before I continue looking for my phone. I could have sworn I grabbed it.

"Name?"

"Ali."

The front desk agent looks at me and then back at the card. She looks back at me and tilts her head.

"Look, I don't want anyone to know I am here. Check my ID, but please put Ali as my name."

She takes my ID to confirm before handing them back.

"What are you famous or something?"

"Something like that." I reach out for the room key and head to my room.

*401.*

When I enter the room, I toss my purse on to the couch and flop onto the bed. Have you ever tried to sleep when you are so completely and emotionally drained? It sucks. You're tossing and turning, kicking your feet to go to sleep, smushing the pillow against your ears, and flipping through channels to fall asleep to some boring infomercial. It was no use though. I got about one hour of sleep.

I head to the nearest mall and obtain a new phone. I must have left mine at Caleb's. I don't use my same phone number for this phone. I need space from everyone, again. I keep doing this to myself. I let people in and forget what my goals are, forget who I am. I can't keep doing this.

"Vi, it's me. I know. Just shut up and listen."

She shuts up as I tell her what is going on and what I need her to do.

“I’m not running this time. I need the house fixed in one week. Can they do that?”

“Yes.”

“Good, do not give my number out. Not even to Madison. Just let them know I am unavailable. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, but you’re okay, right? Do I need to come over there and bring you back home?”

“No, I will be fine. I always am. I just want to write and get all these feelings out and resolve them.”

“Okay. I will see you for New Years.”

“Thanks, Vi.”

I hang up the phone, placing it in my purse before I move on to the next store. Retail therapy always does the trick. I pick out new outfits, pjs, lingerie, shoes, purses, dresses, perfume, lotions, everything my heart desired I bought. I had to request security for assistance helping me bring all my bags to my SUV. But even after all of that shopping, my heart still longed for Caleb. I wanted to know how he was doing, if he was okay, why she is back after all these years, does he still want her, is she trying to get him back and so many other unanswered questions I now have.

“Grandma, if you were here, I am sure you would know what to say to me. But you’re not, so I will try. Julia, get your shit together, you are a strong independent woman, you don’t pine over a man, if it’s meant to be it will be, if not move the fuck on and under the next one.”

Okay, that’s probably not what she would say about getting under another man, but it sounded good for my inner sex vixen.

CALEB



## CAN'T LIE BY ALI GATIE

*H*ave you ever felt your heart sink to your asshole?

Well, that's how I feel at this moment. My heart literally dropped, I can't breathe, my hands are shaking as my eyes take in an older, not dead, Lucy. Lucy is in my doorway, meanwhile Julia is in the living room. We were arguing about her rummaging through Lucy's belongings, who is supposed to be dead, but is not dead, and I told her to leave.

I know she can't go home, but I figure she can go to Madison while I sort out this new fucking mess of my life. She looked crushed that I told her to get out. It came out harsher than I intended it too but I couldn't have the conversation I needed to have with her here.

"I don't understand. You're supposed to be dead. You have been dead for almost five years. We buried you. Your parents mourned you." I slam the front door as she takes off her coat and takes a seat on my couch.

"I know you have a lot of questions and I want to explain everything. I just need you to hear me out. That's all I ask."

I cross my arms as I stand close to the door. My feet plant themselves in place, as I don't want to be anywhere near this woman. I don't know her. I gesture to her to continue, and she adjusts herself, getting comfortable before she proceeds.

"I miscarried."

I interject, "I know that I was there."

“Yes, I know you were but what you don’t know is I got depressed. I started using drugs to help me feel again but I got in debt with the wrong people. I never told you how bad it was because I wanted to get out of it on my own. But they were going to come after you. I wanted to kill myself many times before that night but couldn’t bring myself to do it. Then I got the call from the doctor, he told me I had cancer and I lost it. I wrote you that letter and then I cut myself bad, which is the blood you saw.”

I am looking at her, but my blood is boiling. I feel like my tears are burning under my eyes begging me to release the dam I have been holding in.

“I panicked... I called my father. He came over, saw the state I was in and told me I needed to get out, seek help. He had me committed and I allowed you to believe I was dead, because I felt dead inside. I didn’t want you to be ashamed or embarrassed to have a weak wife. And I was going to die anyway. I was sick Caleb.”

I clench my fists, before I step a little closer.

“So, you let me believe that my wife killed herself because I wasn’t there to stop her, because I was working to save money to try IVF? So, you let your family make me believe you were dead? I had a funeral for you. I stopped talking to my parents for you. I mourned you for four years. I mourned a love that was not real.”

“No. That’s not true. Baby please. Listen.” She gets up and I lose it.

“Don’t fucking call me baby. I am not your baby. You are a liar. You are a deceitful person. How could you do that to me? You could have told me. I could have helped you. We were a team. You and I.”

At this point I somehow made it directly in front of her. Her body heat sears against mine and we aren’t even touching.

“My father told me not to, because the men that were after me, would come looking again to collect the debt.”



“Your dad lied to me, kept the truth from me. I spent thousands of dollars burying my wife, who is actually still alive. You could have saved me so much pain if you would have just said you didn’t want to be with me anymore. I could have moved on sooner.” I choke back the angry tears that are threatening to burst out of me. I have never been so angry before, so I try to steady my breathing.

“People were after me Caleb. I was scared. I didn’t know what to do, I thought I was making the right decision.”

“For you.” I yell. “You should have told me Lucy. I was your husband. You destroyed me. Us.” I point between the two of us.

“Please Caleb, you don’t understand.”

“How much?”

“I was down \$200,000.”

My hand smacks against my forehead as I exhale.

“My father sold his house last year and was able to pay the debt.”

I move away from her, needing some distance I take a seat on the couch.

“Why are you here?”

“I wanted you to know the truth. I left you so many messages with Ali, but I never heard back. When her phone disconnected, and I saw the news of her passing I knew I had to come back and tell you.”

My head snaps to her direction. My brows scrunch together as her words filter through my mind.

“What did you just say?”

“I left messages with Ali.”

“No. No you didn’t because Ali would have told me that you were still alive.”

She shakes her head and pulls out her phone. She presses play on the voice mail time stamped three years ago.

*“Lucy, if you know what is good for you, you will stay away from Caleb. He has been through hell that you caused. I don’t want to ever see you around this town. If I do, there will be a new hell to pay. He will never know his junky ex-wife is alive.”*

I clench and release my fist as I listen to Ali threaten Lucy. She had every right to be aggressive with Lucy.

“I was not aware that she knew. But she wasn’t wrong. You deserve to be hurt.”

She stands up and walks towards me. As a natural reaction my eyes go to her swinging hips. I sit further back on the couch. She crouches down in between my legs and places her palms on my knees. I can feel my whole-body tense up at the feeling of her warm hands.

“I have been in a lot of pain already. I lost two children Caleb. Our son before we got a chance to meet him and then I gave birth to our daughter Leela seven months after I left. She was beautiful.”

I didn’t know your heart could drop lower than your ass but mine does at the mere mention of another lost baby. I am not even sure if she is telling the truth, she has been lying this whole time, this could just be a ploy to get me back.

“What happened to her?” I swallow.

“She was stillborn at full term. They say it was probably the stress I was under, plus trying to get clean. I mourn our children every day. I am in pain every day. I go to counseling, I have been sober for three years now Caleb.”

“Is that all? Or was there anything else you needed to tell me?”

I need this conversation to be over. I feel many different emotions and I don’t know which one is going to come out. Lucy was the love of my life back then, but she died, but now she is here, and my heart is beating too fast to indicate if its mad or pissed at her, but my brain is mad at her for sure.

“I still love you, Caleb. I never stopped loving you.”

“You wanted out. You saw an opportunity and took it. You should have stayed dead.”

“Don’t say that.” She sucks in a breath as she cries, like I would feel sorry for her.

“I don’t know what you want me to say, I moved on.”

She grabs my knee harder, her eyes glare into mine as she bites her lip.

“Have you? Because from the sounds of it, you still hold me higher in your heart than you care to admit.”

I quickly get off the couch and over to the door.

“Get the fuck out of my house.”

She walks towards me and my heart hammers in my chest.

A sudden shift in her body language happens when she steps up to me, her lips only inches from mine as she inhales my scent.

“Are you sure you want me to leave Mr. Taylor?” She purrs.

*What the fuck?*

I open the door and wave her out, slamming the door behind her as I press my back to it and exhale.

“Julia.” I mumble to myself as I search for my phone. I walk into the kitchen and notice a phone sitting on the table. It’s not mine, it’s Julia’s phone.

“Fuck.”

I grab my coat and notice my phone still in the pocket. I open the front door and run up the hill to Julia’s front door. I bang on the door, but there is no answer, no lights on. Shit, of course not, there is still a hole in the house, she wouldn’t be in there. I look around trying to think where would she go?

I dial the first person I can think of.

“Madison, is Julia with you?”

“No. I haven’t spoken to her. Why is everything okay?”

I shake my head as I get back to my driveway and start my truck.

“No. Lucy is alive.”

With that I hang up the phone, not ready to explain the situation but enough to let her know the severity of the situation.

I drive around town, checking Main Street, the bar, the parks, everywhere. Nothing, she isn't here. I grab her phone and put in her password. I know it because she has asked me to look stuff up for her with her phone. Not because I am some creep. I dial another person who would know where she is.

“Hello?”

“Violet, this is Caleb.”

“Okay.”

“Do you know where I can find Julia?”

“Yep.”

Now I'm just getting annoyed as I grip the steering wheel tightly.

“Are you going to tell me?”

“Nope. Sorry, Julia is not available at this time.”

She hangs up the phone.

I slam my hands against the steering wheel, cursing into thin air, as I hit the horn over and over. I yell at the top of my lungs. Luckily everyone has gone home or else all eyes would be on me. I pull into the motel, quickly getting out to see if maybe she got a hotel room.

When I enter the lobby, I approach the front desk. The manager looks up from his computer screen and waits for me to talk but before I can, my attention is pulled elsewhere.

“Following me now, Caleb?” Her voice makes chills go down my spine, it's like hearing from a ghost. It's too fresh to have become reality yet. Lucy is alive. I shake my head.

“No.”

She tsks as she grabs her key from the desk agent.

“Caleb, I know it’s been a long time and that I hurt you, but I am still the Lucy you loved. If you need me, I’ll be here.”

“I don’t need you anymore, Lucy. You don’t need to be here. Not for me.”

“You sure about that Caleb?” She looks at me up and down once more before she hits the elevator button and all I see is her ass in those leggings and my cock jolts.

*Jesus, what is wrong with me? Obviously, my emotions are all out of whack and my cock has no idea what to do.*

Next thing I know, I am grabbing her neck, turning her around and pinning her against the elevator wall. My lips press against hers and she moans as I kiss her. She grabs ahold of my neck and presses me further into her as her hands wander along my back. My heart races as my palms feel her skin under them once more. She hoists herself up and my hands automatically grab onto her ass.

“Take all of me, Caleb.”

JULIA



## THAT PART BY LAUREN SPENCER SMITH

I have been held up in this hotel room for one week. I have done nothing but type up a novel I am not sure I want anyone to read. I eat, type, sleep, shower and repeat the process. I received a call from Violet this morning, letting me know that my kitchen and dining room were fixed, so I can go back home. I was happy to know that the team worked hard and fast to fix my home. I still want to host the New Year's Eve party, but I am not sure where Caleb and I stand, especially now that Lucy is back in his life, or isn't. I am not sure how that is going and quite frankly I don't want to think about it just yet. But I know I am hurt that he pushed me out.

I'm sure in ten minutes I will enter a town full of questions from Madison and Caleb of where I have been. Madison is probably worried sick. I should have told her where I was, that I was okay but then again, she was his friend first. *Conflict of Interest*. Christmas is tomorrow, so I will be celebrating it alone, in bed watching Hallmark Christmas movies that I will most likely cry to, while eating Chinese food. My life could be a movie. It would be a romance movie that ends in tragedy.

I pull into my driveway, opening the garage door. I put on the emergency break, shut off the engine and close the garage door. I don't want anyone to know I am home yet, but I am sure someone heard the garage. When I walk into the house, the kitchen looks amazing. Its back to its original state, the backsplash is white as can be, the white cabinets shine. The dining room table and chairs have been replaced and the rug is

brand new. I smile at the work completed before I head to my bedroom.

I walk down the steps and open my bedroom door. I get startled when I see Caleb standing next to my bedroom window.

“Get over here, Julia.”

He doesn't even turn around to look at me. He just has his hands in his pockets and looks out at the snow falling. I remove my coat and toss it onto the bench along the wall.

“No. I don't think I will. Caleb.” I sass as I sit to remove my boots.

“Julia.”

He slowly turns as his voice vibrates through my body. He always commands attention. He has authority over me, and in most cases I love it, but right now I don't want it. I ignore my traitorous body as I press my thighs together as the scent of him has my body vibrating with need.

“Don't do that. You have a lot of explaining to do. And right now, I don't want to be controlled by you in my bedroom.” I hold my hand up stopping him in his tracks. My eyes burn with tears as I hold them in and proceed.

“You got mad at me for going through boxes and then kicked me out like I was nothing to you once you saw her. You said you would never hurt me, Caleb. But you did. Explain.”

I brace myself for him to get upset but he doesn't. Instead, he sits at the edge of my bed and taps the bed for me to join him. I follow this command, as there is a softer approach to him this time. I can see his body relax as he exhales and keeps his eyes to the floor.

“She was on drugs and depressed when she got the call from the Doctor which made things worse. So, she tried to kill herself and had her dad cover it up. He had her committed. She owed people money and they threatened to kill her and me, so she left.” He pauses.



“Oh, and apparently, she gave birth seven months later to a baby girl who was still born. So, there’s that too. But everything could have been a lie. I don’t trust her.”

I swallow before I place my hand over his. I don’t know how much comfort he needs from me, if any. I don’t even know why he is here. The question that’s brewing in my mind still remains.

*Does he want to be with her or me?*

I pinch my brows together as I try to hear him out but everything he is saying has nothing to do with me and everything to do with his past.

“Do you love me or her, Caleb? Because if it is not me, I need to know. I listened to everyone telling me if I don’t love you then to leave you alone. I don’t want to be the fool again.”

He shuffles his position on the bed, facing me.

“I love you, Julia. I fucked up, I didn’t mean to be rude when she showed up. I was shocked and confused. I didn’t know what to do.”

He doesn’t put his hands on me but his eyes are still on mine. His eyes tell me there is something he isn’t saying. His brown eyes seem scared, a sight I haven’t seen before. I bite the inside of my lip as I battle between walking away or forgiving him.

“What else happened?”

I instantly regret the question as soon as it comes out of my mouth, as his shoulders drop, his head sags, and he exhales again. A clear sign that I was right. I hold my breath waiting on the inevitable truth.

“I kissed her.”

I pull my hand off his, quickly standing up, processing everything that’s being thrown at me.

“I don’t know what came over me, but I needed to know if there was still something there.”

I shake out my hands as I blow out a breath and tilt my head up to the ceiling. I can't look at him. I get it, truly I do. When you lose someone and then they come back, if you never had any closure feelings can be high, you panic and seek to see if the feelings are still there. It happened to me. But the thought of his lips on anyone but me, hurts.

“And? Do you?”

“No, there was nothing there. No love. No passion. No spark. I felt relieved.”

I smack my lips together as I turn to face him, huffing as I throw my hands up.

“Well, I am glad one of us is relieved, Caleb.” If my words don't tell him that I am upset, then my hands on my hips do the trick.

“Would you have rather had me never know if I still had feelings for her, the constant thought of what if or know that I don't? I thought she was dead, Julia. Come on.”

“Of course, I would rather like for you to know. But that doesn't mean I have to like my boyfriend's lips on his ex-wife. Be rational Caleb. Daniel tried to fuck me, and you were pissed.”

His jaw tenses at the mere mention of Daniel, as his eyes lock in on mine. He stands up and grabs my hands, pulling me towards him.

“I love you, Julia. You. Not her. I knew that before I ever knew she was alive. Her being alive has not changed my love for you. I want you. I need you.”

I close my eyes. Seeking help from the power up above, a sign that everything will be okay.

*Grandma, give me strength. For I am struggling.*

“It's all too much, Caleb. First, Daniel and now Lucy. Maybe this isn't meant to be. Both our pasts we tried to run from are coming back to haunt us. How are we supposed to move forward? Can we?”

I push out of his grip as I turn around, my hand covering my mouth as I hold back the sound of my sobs. I can't breathe, I feel as though I am in a reoccurring nightmare, a constant battle of pain.

“Yes, Julia. Listen to me baby, please.”

He turns me around cupping my cheeks as he tilts my head up to his. The feel of his warm hands sends electricity through my body. I blink up into his eyes and listen to that soft manly voice I love. Willing myself to be strong.

“I opened myself up to the one person who made me feel alive again. I don't want to lose you. Baby, you are a drug to me. I am addicted to you, you run through my veins. I give my whole body, heart, and soul to you. I have been processing everything, but you have always been on the forefront of my mind since that night. You. Only you.”

My pulse is racing. All I want to do is hug him. He has had all these emotions of her death bottled up inside him. He didn't want to love again because how could any love compare to hers. And now he found out it was all a lie; it was all for nothing. His hurt and pain was for nothing. All she had to do was tell him the truth but instead she cracked his heart in two. I turn around and walk into the bathroom, concealing the tears that fell as I wipe the evidence away.

“Julia.” Caleb calls out to me as I proceed to light the fireplace and turn on the shower. He walks into the bathroom and grabs my arm.

“Baby, please.”

He falls to his knees, bowing his head. I reach out to lift his eyes to mine.

*What is he doing?*

“Get up.” I command.

“No, I will beg for your forgiveness. I will grovel at your feet until the day I die, just so you know how much I love you and only you. I love you baby.”

“Get up.” I repeat before pulling my hands out of his grip and walking away from him.

He is left on the floor, his eyes down. I hear a gasp and turn to him as I notice him crying. My heart tugs and the lingering feeling of vomiting glides up my throat. I swallow as I open the shower door and remove my clothes letting them fall to the ground. I don’t look back at him, I can’t because then I won’t be able to cleanse him the way I need to.

“Get in the shower, Caleb.”

His teary eyes snap up. His body straightens as my words filter through his brain. It takes him less than a minute to shuffle himself out of his clothes and press against my back. I lean my head against him and close my eyes briefly. I give in to him. Everything that has happened, past and present, is trying to force us apart, but my heart is telling me to listen to him, trust him.

“I will wash her off you and then you can show me how much you love me.”

He exhales a shaky long breath as I feel his shudder against me. His hands caress my sides as I turn to face him.

I lather my hands with his soap he left here. “Where did she touch you?”

He points to the places that need to be cleaned. I lather the soap against his cheeks, lips, neck, back, and hips. He told me all they did was kiss and that she wrapped her legs around his hips. I wash until it feels like there is no more trace of her left on his body, before I rinse his skin.

“Let me make something clear to you. I love you Caleb, but I will not be hurt by you. Either you want me, this life with me, or leave now. Because I will not be strong enough to lose you when I surrender to you.”

I step back giving him a moment to collect his thoughts as I begin lathering my skin. Before I can even rinse the soap off my body, I am being hoisted up in the air, my legs wrap around his waist, and he pulls us both under the water.

“You.”

One simple word.

One simple word that makes my heart skip a beat.

One simple word that tells me everything.

He crashes his lips against mine. I part my lips as his tongue slides across mine. He moans as he holds on to my ass, squeezing it as he walks out of the shower. We are both dripping wet and have bubbles still on us, but he doesn't care. I can feel his hard cock rubbing against my pussy while his lips continue to consume mine.

We kiss with the perfect head placement, the perfect amount of tongue, and the chemistry lighting us up with sexual frustrations. I can feel his heart pounding against my chest, filling my ears, and notice our hearts pounding in sync.

He lays me down on the bed and spreads my legs. Before I can say a word his head dips down and his tongue glides over my clit, making me moan and arch my back. I look at him, his tongue on my pussy as he licks up and down, swirling around my clit and then dips his tongue inside me. His intense dark gaze never leaves mine. I melt into him as he grabs ahold of my hips and pushes me back and forth letting his tongue thrust inside me. His groan causing vibrations into my core have my whole body lighting up for him and my nipples harden. When he comes up for air, his beard glistens with my arousal. My chest rises and falls.

“I have been craving this sweet pussy all week. So, now you will be exhausted all week.” He continues feasting like a starved man as he brings me closer to climax, when he inserts two fingers inside me. He locates my g-spot and rubs it continuously as he licks and sucks my clit.

“Oh fuck, Caleb.”

“That's right baby, say my name.”

The sound of his wet fingers pounding into my flesh echoes against the walls. My moans increase as I can feel something build up inside the pit of my stomach. I try to scoot away from him, but he holds me still. He is so good at going down on me. I have never had orgasms from oral before he

came into my life like a storm. He has ruined me for any other man.

*No one could or would compare to my Caleb Taylor.*

“Ah fffff.Fuck.” My whole body spasm as I orgasm so hard, it feels like I just peed. My toes curl, my back arches, my eyes roll to the back of my head as my hips grind against his fingers and tongue. He sucks and moans as he dives his face deeper into my pussy, suffocating himself in my arousal. He laps up every drop I had to offer him. He slides his fingers out and sucks them clean.

“Fuck baby, I had no idea you could..”

I cut him off, “Now your mouth is clean, Caleb.”

I smile as he stands up, his cock is so hard it looks painful as the veins along his length bulge out. He grabs the base of his cock and squeezes. The grin on his face is sexy as fuck as he looks at my glistening body and licks his lips. His beard is covered in my arousal. He sniffs his upper lip and a growl vibrates deep in his chest as his eyes darken once they graze over my body.

He moans, “So fucking delicious. Are you ready for this cock to fill you up baby?”

I try to speak but no words come out as my pussy still pulsates just from the thought of his hard cock inside my walls. My legs are still shaking from that intense release and I can barely keep my eyes open.

I nod, “I’m ready for my cock to fill me up.”

“Oh, fuck Julia.”

His lips crash against mine and I can taste myself on his tongue. My arousal mixed with his sultry taste, together tastes like sin. His hands rub against every inch of my body as our tongue’s collide, both seeking more, delving deeper. His hands lift me up, as my legs wrap around his hips. He aligns his tip with my dripping pussy and I press down, feeling every inch of his cock sinking further inside me. I tilt my head back letting a moan slip out as my eyes close briefly. He groans as

he watches his cock disappear and become strangled by my walls.

“So, fucking tight.” He growls.

He lifts my hips up and down, thrusting his cock into me as he picks up tempo. I hold on for dear life as his shoulders are slippery with soap. He doesn't let up. His grip on my hips gets harder with each pump. I cry out at the pain and pleasure as he pulls my body closer to his.

“Who's pussy is this, Caleb?” I moan as I dig my nails into his skin.

The sound of wet skin slapping against each other fills the air, mixed in with moans and grunts. I peer into his darkened eyes, his forehead veins bulb against his skin as his labored breaths increase.

“This is my pussy Julia. You are mine. Do you understand me?”

With each word he spoke he thrusted harder inside me, bringing me closer and closer to the edge.

“Yes, oh god, yes.”

He turns me around, pressing my face in to the comforter as he dips my back and grabs ahold of my hips. He thrusts back into my pussy as he slaps my ass. I cry out as he pounds me into oblivion. He doesn't stop until I am crumbling around him. His pace falters as my pussy contracts and sucks him in further. I moan out as another orgasm rips through me. He circles his hips before he continues fucking me like a wild animal. I whimper at the intense build up in my stomach as I ride out my release all over his cock. He pulls out, observing the glistening arousal coating him.

“Fuck. Taste yourself.”

He doesn't give me a chance to speak as he grabs my neck, turning me around and pushes me to my knees. He taps my lips as he slides his cock into my greedy mouth. I wrap my lips around his tip, moaning as I taste my arousal mixed with his salty delicious pre-cum seeping from his tip.

“Just like that baby”, He hisses at the sensation of my tongue gliding his underside.

His hand fists my hair as he forces his cock deeper and deeper to the back of my throat. He bites his lip as he focuses on where our bodies connect.

“You are my dirty little slut, Julia. Your mouth, your pussy. All. Fucking. Mine.” He growls as his thumb caresses my cheek and wipes the tear from my eye.

I whimper around his pulsating cock. I breathe through my nose, relaxing my jaw, as he fucks my mouth like the dirty slut I am. I am ready to gobble up everything he has to offer me. I love this man. I will always do whatever he needs of me. I will let him use me for his pleasure, as I know he would for me.

I push against his thigh signaling I need a breath. He pulls his cock out, sliding his tip along my lips before tapping it against my tongue.

“I am yours Caleb. I want all of you.”

“You have all of me. And one day my baby will be inside you too.”

My eyes widen as I take in his last statement. I have always wanted to be a mother, but it wasn't the right time for me before. But now, the idea with a family with Caleb brings me excitement. Caleb would be an excellent father. I go to respond but he grabs ahold of his cock and shoves it back into my opened mouth.

“For now, drink my cum baby. Later I'll fill that pussy to the brim and watch it drip out of you before shoving it back inside where it belongs.”

He thrusts harder and deeper. I will for sure have a sore jaw and throat with how rough he is being. But my pussy loves it, I can feel the buildup glazing my bare skin. I move my fingers over my clit and rub in circles. Moaning around Caleb as I pleasure myself, which in turn sends vibrations around his cock. He jerks against my mouth and grips tighter onto my hair. His eyes never leave mine as he watches me take his cock



through hooded dark, lustful eyes. He swipes the runaway tears from my cheeks.

“Such a good girl. Make me cum, Julia.” He groans as he bites his lip.

I slide my tongue against his underside and suck his tip before releasing it with a popping sound. I wrap my hands around his length before sliding the remainder back into my mouth and suck him harder until his legs shake, his ass flexes and his thrusts become staggered, uncoordinated.

“Fuck, yes, just like th...that.”

I can feel his cock pulsate against my tongue, as his cock becomes harder and pokes the back of my throat. I grip onto his ass harder pulling his burning skin closer to me. He growls out his release as his cum coats my throat and mouth, filling it up so much I have to swallow around his cock which makes him thrust more into my mouth as more cum streams out.

“Ahhh, fuck, oh fuck, baby.”

He holds my head still as he pulsates the final remnants of cum and then releases me. His cock slides out of my mouth as I swallow the rest and wipe my lips.

“Mine.”

His sexy low voice makes me whimper as he crashes his lips against mine, and all I can think is thank goodness I wiped my lips off otherwise he'd be tasting his own cum. I purposely don't open my mouth all the way, only allowing him to peck my lips.

He apparently doesn't like that as he growls, causing the hairs on my arms to stand up and my pussy to pulsate with need.

*Apparently, she can't get enough of him either.*

“Open your fucking mouth, Julia. I want to taste us mixed together.”

Oh god, this man is so fucking hot, and he has no idea. He has me wrapped around his heart and I am never letting go.

JULIA



## PEER PRESSURE BY JAMES BAY

Last night after our steamy shower, we fucked three times. It's like we couldn't get enough of each other. Caleb doesn't need a cool down period that's for sure, his cock stays ready for more. He was harder each time before we passed out from pure exhaustion. We were two sweaty, naked bodies in a pile of wrinkled sheets.

The blinds open up, as the sun rays shine into the room. I open my eyes, blinking rapidly as I stretch. Caleb is passed out still, he looks so peaceful, so I don't want to wake him. I kiss his cheek and he mumbles, unrecognizable words. I smile as I walk across the room to the bathroom, grabbing my robe before tossing it on and head out to the kitchen.

I check the security monitor, *Locked*. I sigh in relief even though I know Daniel is no longer a threat. The snow is piled on the ground, the sun is out for a brief time, though the forecast shows it will be snowing again by noon. A white Christmas for sure, which is so different than an LA Christmas. I brew a pot of coffee as I check my phone, which Caleb gave back to me last night. I have 40 messages, 10 calls, and 5 voicemails from a very angry and worried Madison.

I dial her number and press the phone to my ear. She picks up the phone within the first ring and I have to pull the phone from my ear.

“What the fuck Julia? Are you okay?”

I laugh as I put the phone back to my ear.

“I am now. Can you come over?”

“Yes. I’ll be right there.”

She answers immediately before she disconnects the call. I pour my coffee and add my much needed sugar before I return back to the bedroom and into the shower. The hot water hitting my skin in the morning always wakes me up. I needed this shower though. I have dried cum all over my inner thighs and reek of sex. I smile at the remembrance of last night. I can’t believe I let myself think Caleb would choose that liar over me. I need to stop running whenever things don’t go the way I plan.

Things happen for a reason, and I have to accept change. I don’t want there to be change with me and Caleb. I want a life with him. I need to let myself be happy, let myself be vulnerable with him and trust him with all of me. As I rinse off the soap, the bathroom lights turn on and a sleepy walking Caleb waltzes into the bathroom, he is still naked, so I admire his sculptured Greek body. His beard has not been trimmed so he really looks like a mountain man, and I love it. He opens the shower door and joins me. He smiles as he steps under the hot water and combs his fingers through his hair as the water slides down his shoulders and back. I can’t help but just stand there and watch. My eyes glued to his body as I watch the water trail down his muscles. His eyes trace my face as he grabs the soap and starts to lather himself.

“Julia.”

My eyes snap back to his as I was lost in thought of dropping to my knees and begging him to fuck my mouth again. I loved watching all his muscles strain, the way his eyes burned into my soul, the way he moaned my name as he came.

“I love you.”

I smile as I grab ahold of his neck and pull him down to my lips. I kiss him softly at first, letting him feel just how much I love him. He wraps his arms around the small of my back as he pulls me into him. My nipples pebble up just from the heat of his body. He groans as his hands touch my skin and his tongue slides into my mouth.

“Madison will be here any second.” I whisper as I pull back from him.

“I just need two minutes.” He looks down and I follow his gaze. My eyes widen as I take in his extremely hard veiny cock standing at attention.

“You are one horny man, Caleb. You just can’t get enough can you?” I giggle as my hand wraps around his length. He groans as my hand tightens around him.

“Nope. You do this to me. All you have to do is talk and I am hard just thinking about all the things I can do to that mouth, this pussy.” He pauses as he slides his fingers through my lips and grazes my clit. I moan as I grip his cock harder, it pulsates against me. He looks down as he pulls his fingers away from my pussy.

“Come with me.” He turns around turning off the water before he grabs my hand and pulls me out of the shower. He grabs a towel from the hook and drapes it over me before he heads to the cabinets. He opens a cabinet reaching in before he turns around holding on to a tampon. My eyes widen as my face reddens.

“Oh my god. I didn’t know.”

He smiles as he approaches me and opens the tampon. He lifts my leg up on the bench. I realize what he is doing as he begins to bend down with the open tampon in his hand.

“Caleb, stop. I can do it.”

He moves his hand away from my reach as he looks into my eyes from between my parted legs.

“Let me. This is my pussy to care for.”

He spreads my lips before he inserts the applicator into my pussy. I hold my breath as no one has ever seen or put a tampon inside me. Usually, period play is not my thing, but this has me aroused more than ever, it’s so intimate, raw. The tender care he is showing me right now is turning me on. He tosses the applicator into the trash before he kisses my mound. I moan at the feeling, but I keep my hands on his shoulders.

“You will be okay.” He licks my pussy lips and I tremble against him.

“Caleb I’ll be fine.” I giggle as I attempt to push him away.

The thought of him getting any blood on him freaks me out. He removes my hands from his shoulders as he looks up at me with eyebrows pinched together.

“I wasn’t talking to you Julia. I was talking to my pussy.”

My eyes widen as he moves the string to the side and sucks my clit into his mouth. My stomach tightens as he continues to suck harder, not releasing. I moan out as I try to block out the uneasy feeling in my mind. It feels too good to have him stop now. I am super sensitive and can come faster when I am on my period.

“I’m going to..” I stop breathing as I crash against his warm mouth. My eyes roll back as my body spasms. I pant as he releases my swollen clit.

“Good girl.”

He kisses my clit and I want to scream for him to fuck me right now, not caring if I just started my period. He seems to not have a problem with it anyways.

“Hey girl, I’m here....ah.”

Caleb quickly springs up from beneath me covering his massive erection and jets to the closet. Madison squeals as she quickly turns around and starts laughing. I put my leg down and cover myself back up.

“Holy fuck Julia. You lucky bitch.” She giggles some more as she walks out of the bathroom. I can’t help but cover my face as I laugh too. Caleb comes out of the closet with a t-shirt and pajama pants. He doesn’t seem mad that we got caught as he is smiling and shaking his head.

“You need a bell on her.” He laughs as he too leaves the room. I quickly grab fresh clothes and head into the hall over hearing Madison laughing in the kitchen. Madison is leaning against the island with a glass of water in her hand. Her head

snaps in my direction as soon as I walk in. She winks at me as she stands up straighter.

“Okay, so I need to know what the fuck is going on with you two. I know what you two were doing just now, hot by the way, but not what I am referring to. Caleb?” She faces him as she crosses her arms.

“Well one, Merry Christmas.” He opens his arms to give her a hug, but she dodges him.

“As much as I love Julia, I don’t want her coochie anywhere near my face.” She laughs as she takes a seat on the bar stool. He smiles as he shakes his head and grabs a coffee mug.

“Lucy faked her death”, Caleb blurts out as if it is not a big fucking deal, as he proceeds to pour some coffee. Madison’s mouth drops open, shock all over her face.

“When you said Lucy’s alive, I thought you were losing your shit. That fucking bitch. I will kill her.” Madison slams her hand against the countertop.

Caleb sips his black coffee as he takes a seat next to Madison. I reach into the cabinet, grabbing my ‘On Wednesdays we wear pink’ coffee mug. The coffee smells delicious as I add my creamer and sugar.

“Apparently, she was using drugs, got in a bind, then got the call from the doctor, the people she owed money to threatened to hurt me, so she faked her death. Her father covered it up and she was pregnant again. Gave birth but the baby was stillborn.”

Madison’s eyes lift up to Caleb’s face and then to mine. My lips twist to the side as I lift my mug to my lips to hide my own sadness. No one deserves to lose a child.

“Jesus Caleb, are you okay?” She places her hand over his. She is such a caring human being.

He nods as he sets his mug down.

“I mourned her long ago. She looks like the woman I used to know and love, but she is not Lucy. Lucy is gone.”

Caleb looks into my eyes as he states the latter. I give him a half smile. After last night, looking into his eyes, I know he speaks the truth. He doesn't feel anything for her anymore. He loves me, I see it in the way he looks at me, holds me, and cares for me. I decided last night that I was going to let my walls down and let him drench me in his love, completely.

"Do you think she is going to be coming around?" I mustered up the courage to hear his response by inhaling a deep breath and swallowing the nerves.

Caleb stands up and rounds the island to stand behind me. Madison rests her fist against her cheek, admiring the luring sexiness Caleb is displaying. My legs tremble when his breath touches my neck as he nestles against it.

"If she did, she'd have two people who are completely in love with each other to deal with. I don't think she is ready for you, Julia." He kisses my neck before biting down. I wince before he kisses me once more.

"Okay, well Julia. Your fucking turn. Where the fuck have you been the past week? You can't just disappear like that. Especially right now, all the publicity your book is getting. I have people calling to have you at book signing events all over."

I clear my throat before I attempt to give an acceptable answer.

"I run. That's what I do. Things get hard and I just take flight. But I am not going to do that anymore. I am sorry Madison. I didn't mean to worry you. I am sorry Caleb. That wasn't fair to you either."

I pause, collecting myself before I expose my feelings to both of them.

"I thought that with Lucy being the love of your life, her being back would stir up those buried feelings again and you would no longer want me. It frightened me to know I was going to lose you, just like I lose everything I love. I love so fucking hard and all it has gotten me is disappointment and walls so high I can't even see over them anymore."



Tears fall down my cheek as I feel the weight shedding off my shoulders. Caleb holds on to me so tightly I can barely suck in a breath.

“Oh hunny. I would kill Caleb if he ever let you go. You are the best thing that’s ever happened to him. I didn’t even like Lucy. She was a stuck-up bitch.”

Caleb laughs as he kisses my lips. I sniff the snot attempting to leak out. I hate crying, I look so ugly.

“It’s true, they didn’t get along. But baby, I am not going anywhere. You’re stuck with me.”

I nod as I hug him tighter.

“Alright, now that I know you two are okay, I have a Christmas lunch to attend at Connor’s parents house. Love you, bye.”

Madison quickly kisses my cheek, pats Caleb’s back and then heads out the door. Once the door is closed and we hear the lock click in place, Caleb lifts me up and sets me on the counter. His hands caressing my hips as he steps in between my legs.

“Julia.”

“Caleb.” I exhale.

His voice is so sexy when his tone is low, it almost sounds like he is hungry and wants to eat me alive. He is face to face with me as he stares into my eyes.

“Marry me.”

My eyes widen.

*What the fuck? Is he joking?*

“I’m serious.”

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a red velvet box. My hands automatically cover my mouth as I gasp. My hands are shaking as my stomach turns.

“Caleb.”

“Just hear me out. Okay?”

I nod. Shutting my eyes for a brief moment. I couldn't speak even if I wanted to.

It's too soon, right?

What would people think?

What would my parents think?

*Oh god, they haven't even met him yet.*

*Is it crazy that I want to say yes?*

He is incredible. He loves me. He protected me. Would it be wrong to say yes?

*Oh god, breathe Julia.*

I suck in a breath before opening my eyes.

“I know it's only been a couple months. But in these months, you have made me feel like myself again, made me want to be a better man, helped me see that I am worthy of love again. I knew you were special the moment I saw you, I fell in love with you instantly. There is no one else in this world who completes me like you do. We don't have to get married this year, or next year if you don't want to, but I want to make this clear to you. I love you and want to be your husband and father of your children. I want to grow old and saggy with you. I want to be buried next to you so we can live our afterlife together. I want you, Julia.”

*Breathe Julia.*

Tears fall against my thigh as I look into his eyes. A sudden warmth crawls over my skin. I look up and it's almost as if I can feel a hand pressing on my shoulder as the warmth travels down my body curing me of the shakes. It sounds crazy but I can feel my grandmother near me as my heart beats a faster rhythm. A smile forms on my face as I take Caleb's cheeks into my hands. I pull him a little closer.

“Julia. You're killing me here.”

I tilt my head as I smile admiring every feature on his face. His beautiful brown eyes glistening at me.

“Yes.”

I take the leap I would have run from. His lips crash against mine, capturing my whole soul. His tongue glazes over my lips, as I part them letting his tongue dip into my mouth. He sets the box down before his hands are rubbing down my hair and cheeks as he picks me up off the counter. My legs wrap around his waist as my arms wrap around his neck. His large hands grip onto my ass as he twirls us around. Our lips separate and our chests rise and fall as we pant for air. I look over at the box, Caleb's eyes follow my gaze.

“Oh shit, the ring.”

He sets me down as he picks up the box. He holds out his hand, but instead of opening the box he pulls me to the living room and places me right in front of the lit up Christmas tree. He drops down on one knee and my heart skips a beat. Even though he just asked me to marry him, this seems even more official.

He opens the box and a beautiful oval shaped single band diamond glistens against the lights. It's perfect, beautiful and simple, just the way I like everything in my life.

“Julia Harrington. You are the love of my life. I thought I knew what love was, but I had no idea the love that awaited me until I met you. I'm going to ask again to make sure you really want this. Baby, will you marry me?”

“Absolutely, yes.”

He slides the ring on my finger and pulls my arms down to him, so I am also kneeled down on the floor. He kisses me once more, his warm lips pressed against mine sends heat to my core. I want to fuck him so bad right now. Being a girl sucks in moments like this.

We spend the next hour just talking in front of the fireplace. We talk about life, what we want to do over the next five years, goals, aspirations. I learn that he wants to open up a restaurant in LA, which we discussed at length as that's where my family is.

“I just don’t want to leave Everwood, this has become my home.”

“We could always just travel. You do your events while I check in on the restaurant. But this will be our home.”

“Yeah, that would work.”

I get up from the floor, after prying my arms out of Caleb’s hold. I head into the bedroom quickly to grab a gift I got for him. I rush back to find him in the same spot. His eyes track my every move. The fire brightens his brown eyes, but he is looking at me with a hunger I have never seen before. I have my Christmas pajamas on, so there is nothing sexy about my outfit. Now Caleb, he has red pajama pants on that showcase his package so much so, that when he walks you can see his cock swing. Not to mention his muscled arms pop from under his black t-shirt making him look delicious. I lick my lips as I approach.

With my hands still behind my back, I take a seat directly in front of him.

“Hold out your hand.”

He smiles as he holds out his hands like a kid awaiting candy on Halloween. I place the present in his hand. He looks down at the snowflake wrapping paper. He shakes it around, pointing his eyes to the ceiling as if that will make him be able to hear better. When he doesn’t hear a rattle he examines every corner, dip, and feels the top and bottom.

“Will you just open it already?” I blurt out, my impatience getting the best of me. I laugh as he rips open the neat wrapping and observes the book in front of him. He examines the cover and then opens it to the front page. He begins to read aloud.

“To the man I love with all my heart. Our story has yet to begin but I knew you were my person since the day I walked into your bar.”

I can hear his voice shake as he reads the dedication out loud. His eyes moisten with tears swelling at the crease. He may be a strong man, but he is a teddy bear at heart.

“This is what you have been writing?” He questions as he flips through the pages.

“Mhmm. Finished it last week.”

He flips through the book until he finds chapter 20 and a surprised look is displayed across his face. I lean in to observe the scene he is on and can't help but giggle.

“This hadn't happened yet when you wrote the book, so how would you have predicted it?”

“Let's just say, I wished hard for this Christmas miracle. Merry Christmas Caleb.”

“Merry Christmas Julia.”

Caleb grabs my neck and presses his lips to mine. I moan into his mouth as he bites my bottom lip, soothing the burn with his tongue gliding over it. His lips consume me, leaving me whimpering for more and breathless. The way he kisses me tells me everything I need to know.

*This man is mine.*

CALEB



## RIDE BY SOMO

I have kept Julia all to myself since Christmas. She didn't want to ruin the surprise by accidentally telling Madison, who would no doubt tell the whole world. But I selfishly wanted to keep her all to myself, I wanted to make love to her the night we got engaged but she felt uncomfortable. I don't mind having sex with her while she is on shark week.

In fact, research shows it helps with cramping, but she wasn't ready for all that just yet. So, we did a lot of foreplay which was amazing. She does this thing with her tongue, it's like a swirling motion on the underside of my cock and then a hard suck and pops her mouth off me, it's so fucking hot and feels incredible. I have made her cum in her pants so many times throughout the day, that she had to cool off in the shower.

Today is the New Year's Eve party, Julia volunteered to host the party as she is the newest member of the community. She wanted a chance to get to know everyone. I think it's amazing. She had her party planner and her editor, who is also one of her best friends, Violet, come down to help set everything up and enjoy themselves. The house looks amazing. There are silver balloons strung from the ceiling, streamers, strobe lighting, white curtains, a bar, a DJ station, and a dance floor. Even the deck is being utilized with high top tables. I ordered all the alcohol through my vendor, so we have all the top notch beverages.

The chef for the night is in the kitchen with his staff as they prep appetizers and finger food for the guests. Travis offered his help, but Julia insisted he take the night off and enjoy himself. I search the house finally locating Julia in the closet. I stand there in silence as I observe her. She must have just gotten out of the shower, as she is slipping into a sexy black lace thong that arches over her hips and grabs a matching bra. She attempts to clasp the bra, but I move in and grab each end from her hands. She pulls her blonde hair over her shoulder as she looks back at me.

“If the house wasn’t full of people right now, I would bend you over that bench and fuck you.” I whisper against her ear.

She inhales as she turns around and places her hands on my chest and pushes me down onto the bench. She bites her lip as she looks into my eyes.

“I don’t care who is in this house. If you want me, Caleb, take me.”

*Jesus fuck.*

I don’t think I will ever be used to the way she talks to me. It’s every man’s dream for his woman to talk nasty, beg to be fucked, crave it, need it, and love it more than anything. I grab her perfect blonde hair and pull her down on to my lap. She straddles my legs and I know she can feel how hard my cock is as she wiggles against me. She holds on to my neck as I pepper her with kisses, trailing down to her tits.

*She is so beautiful.*

“Be quiet Julia. I don’t need any man in this house hearing how you sound when you cum for me.”

I pull down her bra, releasing her beautiful tits from confinement and suck her nipple into my mouth. She moans out and my hand clasps over her mouth as I bite down on her pebbled nipple.

She mumbles under my hand, but I can’t understand her. I stand up, holding on to her as I turn her around. I push her shoulders down so her hands are resting on the bench cushion and her ass is up in the air. She spreads her legs on instinct.



“Such a good girl you are, huh Julia?” I smack her ass, watching it bounce from impact. Her fair skin instantly reddens. She moans quieter this time as she attempts to hold in her seductive voice. She nods as I smack her ass once more before I drop to my knees and pull her panties to the side.

“I’m going to eat my dessert before dinner. Don’t make a sound.”

She looks back at me, almost like she is protesting being quiet, but I pay her no mind. I’m hungry. My tongue dips out of my mouth and glides over her perfect sensitive clit and lips. Her taste is already mixing with my saliva, and I can’t help but groan as I wrap my lips around hers and dip into her delicious core.

I tongue fuck her before I glide my tongue back up her clit and trace circles around it causing her to tilt her back. Her blonde hair drapes over her spine. I get up and grab her arm, moving her out of the way. I take her spot on the bench and lay down. She pants as she watches me.

“Sit on my face Julia.”

Her eyes widen as she places her hands on her hips.

“Caleb, I don’t want to suffocate you.” She giggles.

I snap my finger and point to my face. She sighs as she lifts her leg over the bench and positions herself. Her dripping wet pussy glistens within inches of my face and my cock pulsates against my black slacks.

“Give me her, ride my tongue baby.” I command as I grab her waist and pull her down onto my tongue. She moans out and my fingers dig into her ass. *One warning.*

She looks down at me and mouths, *Sorry.* She begins to ride my tongue. I let her use me for her pleasure, as I drink up her arousal. She circles her hips and thrusts forward and backward as her breathing gets rapid. She grabs her tits, caressing and pinching and rolls her nipples through her fingers. Her pussy gets so wet I have to suck on it and swallow her sweet arousal. I moan as she grabs a hold of my cock over my pants.

“Caleb.”

She whispers as she is getting closer to orgasming. I quickly lift her off of me and bend her back over. I undo my pants and boxers, letting them fall to my ankles and pull out my cock. I grab the base and slide the tip through her folds before I slam it into her awaiting pussy. She jerks forward at the sudden fullness, but I grab ahold of her shoulders pulling her back into me.

“Take all of me, baby.”

I pound into her pussy, fast and hard as I am about to cum. I was so turned on with her riding my tongue that I almost came. Her pussy pulsates as her walls clamp down on my cock making me grunt and moan as I continue sliding in and out of her. I grab a fist full of her hair and pull her head back slightly, enough for me to lean forward and capture her lips with mine. She devours my tongue, sucking it and biting down as I fuck her pussy with every pulsating need I have had all week.

“Fuck.” She moans into her hand as she cums all over my cock.

Her walls strangle my cock as I thrust forward. Her warm arousal fills the walls around me, making it impossible for me to hold out any longer. I thrust deeper, grunting out my release as my cum fills her up so much it leaks out every time I slam back into her. My hand rubs down her spine causing her to shiver against me.

“Such a good girl. Let me see.” I pull out of her and spread her cheeks, watching my cum drip out of her pink pussy. I kiss her ass as I watch before I take two fingers, swipe up the cum that is trying to escape off her clit and shove it back into her pussy. She moans as I thrust my fingers deep inside her.

“I made that for you, keep it inside.”

She moans as I remove my fingers and place them in front of her. She opens her mouth, allowing me to stick my fingers inside, as she sucks them clean.

“You were made for me, Julia.”

I lean down to kiss those beautiful lips. I can't wait until I can get Julia pregnant. I have imagined her with a swollen round belly and that cute little waddle, and it makes my balls ache to fill her up every day when she isn't on birth control.

There is a knock at the bedroom door. We quickly get up and I pull up my boxers and pants, and fix my shirt. As I walk into the bedroom, I comb my hands through my hair and shut the bathroom door.

"Hey, sorry to bother. Is Julia in there? I am supposed to do her hair and makeup." Dia asks as she looks at me up and down. Her cheeks turn red as she dips her head keeping her eyes to the floor. I smile as I open the door all the way.

"Yeah, we are getting ready. I'll let her know you are ready for her."

"Okay, I'll be in the dining room." She quickly scurries away without another glance. I shut the door and laugh.

"I think Dia knows we weren't getting ready."

Julia opens the bathroom door, walking out with her long silver sequined dress, with a slit up the thigh. She is placing diamond earrings on as she walks up to me.

"I was getting ready. I can't help it that my fiancé needed dessert, can I?" She smiles as she clasps the backing of her earrings in place.

I shake my head, "Nope. And I will probably need seconds if you don't hurry your sexy ass out of this room." I step towards her, and she quickly grabs her shoes and high heels it out of the room laughing.

*God, I love this woman.*

Guests are arriving, the house smells amazing, and the music is playing. People are already gathered in the living room drinking wine, telling jokes, while some are picking at appetizers. Many people I recognize but others I have no clue who they are. There are people taking pictures

and videos of the event. Madison's idea for social media content.

“Caleb.”

Julia waves me over as she is talking to a couple of people. I make my way through the crowded living room. My hand instinctively rests against Julia's lower back as I lean in to kiss her cheek.

“Mom, Dad, this is Caleb.” She smiles as she looks into my eyes.

I try to look surprised, but I already knew they were going to be here tonight. I spoke with them early this morning at the bar. I didn't tell Julia as I wanted to ensure I had their blessing in marrying their daughter. Even though, if they said no, I would still marry her. But I want a good relationship with her parents. Her dad was a little hesitant but at the end of his interrogation he gave me his blessing.

Julia's mom smiles as she opens her arms, embracing me with a warm hug.

“Caleb, it is so nice to meet you. Julia has told us so much about you.”

She leans in closer as she whispers in my ear, “Tony will do the announcement.” She smiles as she pulls back and steps back alongside Julia's dad.

Tony holds out his hand, his facial expressions are neutral, no smile in sight. He is a very intimidating businessman so I would expect nothing less.

He holds his hand out, “Call me Tony. Mind if I steal Caleb for a drink?”

Julia smiles as she nods her head and walks off with her mother.

We walk up to the bar and the bartender pours some whiskey into two glasses. I lift mine and cheers against his.

“Alright Caleb, I will say this once because Marie isn't here, and she would kill me. If you hurt my daughter, I will kill you. And that isn't a threat. I have friends in high places. I

have ways to dispose of your body and have enough money to make it look like you never existed. Do you understand me son?" He places his heavy hand on my shoulder and squeezes tightly.

I damn near choke on my whiskey as I was not expecting his abrasiveness. I smile as I set down my glass and look Tony straight in the eye.

"Sir, if I ever hurt your daughter, I will personally hand myself over. But that's not going to happen. I love her too much to suffer without her."

I watch as he is taken back by my retort. He pats my shoulder.

"I like you, Caleb. Hahaha." His chuckle fills the air as he downs the rest of his whiskey and then grabs a flute of wine and fork. He strolls off to locate Marie and Julia. I rub my fingers through my hair and exhale.

For the past hour everyone has been having a great time dancing, and drinking. Connor and Madison are slow dancing, Travis is flirting with Dia, who is pretending not to be interested but also won't walk away, Julia is talking with guests, smiling and looking radiant. I watch the way her dress hugs her body, and I am jealous. I walk up behind her, placing my hands on her waist and pull her into me.

"Baby, Can I have this dance?"

She places her delicate hands in mine as I lead her to the dance floor, which is the living room. This house is huge so when the furniture is removed its perfect for entertaining. I look over at the clock displayed on the TV, we have one minute until the NYC ball drops. The Dj plays a slow song, and we sway to the music, lost in each others eyes. Her blue eyes captivate me every time I look into them. It feels as though whenever she is looking at me the whole world around us disappears, leaving us alone.

"10,9,8."

The crowd begins to count down as servers walk around handing out champagne. I wrap my arm around the small of her back as we stand there with friends and family.

“5,4,3.”

I look over at Julia who is fixated on the TV screen and smile. I turn to face her, and she turns her head to look at me.

“3,2,1. Happy New Year, baby.”

Our lips collide and everyone around us is cheering and ringing in the new year. Fireworks go off outside and fireworks go off in my heart. Her warm juicy lips on mine and her midnight seductive scent infiltrates my senses making me groan.

The tapping of glass breaks our kiss and pulls everyone's attention to the center of the room. Tony clears his throat as he holds out his champagne glass in front of him.

“Ladies and Gentlemen. Some of you know me, others have probably heard about me. Ali Harrington was my mother. May she rest in peace. My daughter Julia, your lovely host, has proven time and time again just how strong she is. She is the most loving human being I know, besides you, dear.”

He nudges Marie who laughs alongside the crowd.

“Julia, I am extremely happy that you have found love and light after a dark storm. Caleb, you seem to be a wonderful man and I am happy my daughter has a man like you in her life. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with our great pleasure to announce that Caleb has asked Julia to marry him, and she said yes.”

Tony holds up his glass and everyone cheers and claps. Julia's mouth drops open wide as she turns to me.

“How does...”

“I asked your parents for their blessing.” I smile as she places her hand against my cheek and pulls me in for a kiss.

“I fucking love you Caleb Taylor.”

Madison hustles over to us, “Oh my god, really?”

She searches Julia's hands and then looks up at me with a raised brow.

"Oh, it's right here."

Julia pulls her ring out of her bra and places it in its rightful spot for everyone to see. Madison and Marie gawk at her ring and hug her tight.

"Congratulations dude. This means I get to be your best man again, right?" Travis gives me a hug as he laughs.

"I wouldn't have it any other way."

Everyone continues to congratulate us as we make our way to the bar. I am thirsty, I don't know if I was nervous about telling everyone but my mouth is dry.

"Two whiskeys." Julia orders as she fiddles with her ring.

"I guess congratulations are in order, Mr. Taylor."

The voice I have been dreading to hear again sounds from behind me. Julia immediately turns around and her eyes go wide, but her stance straightens. I turn around and peer into Lucy's eyes as she walks up to us. The music suddenly stops as everyone is now paying attention to the woman who is supposed to be dead, walk through the crowd. The whole town knows who Lucy is, so you can hear the whisper's filling the air around us.

"Lucy, what are you doing here? This is a private party."

"But the whole town is here. Shouldn't I be too?" She grabs a champagne glass off a server's tray before chugging it down. I attempt to step forward, but Julia swings the back of her hand against my chest, making me halt in place. Julia steps forward as she looks at Lucy.

*Oh fuck.*

I am not sure if this is going to be good or bad. Madison must sense my apprehension as she too steps forward with Julia.

"Lucy. Hi, I am Julia. I have heard so much about you. Do you mind if we step outside for a quick chat?"

Julia sets down her drink and hikes up her dress as she walks out onto the patio. She doesn't even wait for Lucy to answer, but Lucy follows without question.

I begin to follow them, but Travis grabs my arm as he shakes his head.

“Let her do this.”

“Caleb, who was that?” Marie calls out as she observes her daughter's body language from the window. Julia is pissed for sure but me and a select few, including her mother, would know that.

I am not sure how I will explain this situation to my future mother-in-law, not yet anyway.



JULIA



I SEE RED BY EVERYBODY LOVES AN  
OUTLAW

*M*y hands are shaking as I walk outside on the patio. Lucy followed me out and it's just us standing outside. I can see everyone looking out the window, but I know they can't hear anything. That glass is thick, built to withstand storms. I exhale as I collect my thoughts.

“What the fuck do you want from Caleb? You already destroyed his heart. What more do you want to take from him?”

She rolls her eyes before she speaks, “You don't know anything about mine and Caleb's relationship.”

I hold out my finger to signal her to shut her mouth.

“Actually, I know quite a lot. Let me see, you couldn't get pregnant, until you did and then lost the baby, which I am sorry about. Then you were depressed, started using drugs, fell into debt with the wrong people. They wanted to kill you both, you got cancer and then tried to kill yourself but freaked out and then you let Caleb believe you died but you didn't die. No, instead you came back to life after five years to try and once again turn his life upside down. Because being mourned for five years wasn't good enough, no you had to make him see a ghost of the life he used to have.”

Her eyes tear up as she bites her lip and taps her foot against the wood panels. Its freezing out here so this conversation needs to hurry up.

“What do you want? I will not ask again.” I step forward looking her straight in the eye. I have never been the violent

type, but if she keeps coming after Caleb, I will resort to beating a bitch's ass.

“I just want him to know how sorry I am. I don't want any trouble Julia, truly. I am going back for surgery and treatment. My cancer is aggressive, and I am going to live with my parents until I get better, if I do. I just want to clear the air before I...go.”

She wipes the tears from her cheeks. All I see in her eyes is fear, regret and sadness. She shivers as she waits for me to say something. I grab her arms and pull her into me. Her body is tense at first but slowly she loosens up and holds on to me tightly as she cries. I never imagined I would be hugging his ex-wife, but here I am being the love bug I am and feeling sorry for her. Not everyone has the strength to survive this cruel world.

I look into the window and notice Caleb standing there confused as well. I nod my head signaling for him to come outside.

“Lucy.”

Caleb approaches with the same apprehension I had when I saw Lucy in his doorway. He doesn't know what to do.

“Talk to him.” I let her go and walk up to Caleb. I kiss his cheek before I head back inside. I can feel Caleb staring at me, but I keep walking.

“I need a drink.” I mutter to Madison who grabs my hand and leads me to the bar.

Caleb and Lucy talk for about thirty minutes. I know because I sat at my island and stared out the window the entire time. All the guests left except for Madison, Connor and Travis. They are in the living room trying not to be antsy, but they can't help but get up and check outside. Travis is dying to go outside to smoke but he doesn't dare leave the couch until Caleb comes back in.

The sliding door opens and Lucy walks in as Caleb follows behind her.

“Thank you for hearing me out, Caleb. Sorry for intruding on your night Julia. I won’t be a bother anymore.”

Lucy holds her hand out to me and I take it. Her brittle hands are freezing but she smiles anyways before she leaves. I watch her walk out the door and Connor shuts it after her. We all turn to face Caleb. He exhales a breath that seems to be long overdue.

“Alright you nosy fucks, she apologized for everything. She is going to get mental and physical help, but she won’t be coming around here anymore. If she does, I will be pressing charges for harassment and suing her for emotional abuse and faking her death. She agreed, so that’s that.”

I wrap my arms around Caleb and press my ear to his back. “Are you okay?”

“Baby I feel great, that was a huge relief and an overdue conversation. I just want to focus on us. Okay?”

I nod.

That’s exactly what I want us to do too.

“Now can you three leave? I would really like to make love to my fiancé now.”

Travis groans, Connor laughs, and Madison purrs like a cat as they all gather their belongings and head out.

“Mr. Taylor, you naughty boy.” Julia winks.

“Oh, you haven’t seen naughty Julia.”

He holds out his hand and I accept. He drags me into the bedroom before closing the door and locking it. I look at him, confused as to why he locked the door.

“I don’t want any interruptions. You’re mine.”

He clicks the button to close the window blinds and he reaches in the nightstand pulling out the blindfold. My legs instantly press together as heat is building between them as I remember the last time we used it.

“Are you ready to be fucked into oblivion baby?”

I lick my lips as my vision is taken from me as Caleb secures the blindfold.

“Yes.”

JULIA



LIKE I'M GONNA LOSE YOU BY MEGHAN  
TRAINOR

Two years Later.....

“Are you sure you will be okay seeing Connor?”

“Yeah, it’s fine. It just wasn’t meant to be. I’m fine, really. Today is about you. You’re getting married!” Madison squeals loudly.

I know she is down-playing her feelings but I won’t press her about it right now. I smile as I place my raincoat over my dress and place my hood over my freshly styled hair. I’ve been in my head all week. Getting married is a big deal, getting married for the second time is even bigger. Every doubt runs through your mind, every pain, every heartbreak you ever experienced just mixed together.

“Deep breath Julia. Caleb is your soulmate.”

“I know.”

I shake off the nerves with a shot of whiskey, which I’ve grown to like. The smooth warm liquid slides down my throat and I exhale a needed breath. We exit the cabin we rented for the night, it’s right by the waterfall so it will be about a three-minute walk. Caleb is already there keeping our guests occupied. We invited the town to attend our wedding, including Travis and Dia who are engaged, Sabrina and her now fiancé Luke, Connor, Sydney and many more. Caleb reconnected with his parents last year and invited them as well. It was amazing meeting his mother and sister. I was apprehensive speaking with his father again, but he apologized

for his actions. Caleb smiled so hard being with his family, it made me cry.

After the ceremony there will be a big town celebration. Main Street has been shut down and tables are aligned in the center with lights hanging over them. It will be a beautiful night. Our cake is three tiers, but we have a lot of cupcakes for those who don't get a piece of the cake.

As we approach the bend of the access point, we stop. My mother and father wait at the point with smiles as they take in my appearance. My hair is long with loose curls, pearls are scattered throughout, my makeup is neutral toned, really elevating my blue eyes, and my dress. This dress was custom made for me. It's off-white color, off the shoulder loosely almost as if it fell down, my cleavage is showing just enough, and the short tight bodice shows off my long legs and hugs my ass. It's elegant and simple, it's just me.

My mom holds out my babies breath bouquet and pats a tissue under her eye.

"No crying mom. This isn't my first rodeo." I joke as I hug her tightly against me.

"You never looked this happy and loved before Julia. You're my baby. I can cry if I want to." She pats my back before she steps back allowing my father his chance to embrace me.

"You look amazing kiddo. I love you so much." He kisses my cheek as he hooks my arm in his.

"I better go sit down. I'll see you out there."

My mom scurries around the bend and signals to the coordinator that we are ready. The music begins, Madison and Connor walk down the aisle together. They split up about two months ago, I pray they will get back together, they are both miserable without one another. Violet walks out next with Travis and that's when I know it's my turn. I exhale before I look up at my father. He winks and holds me tighter.

We walk slowly around the bend and the waterfall comes into view. I can't help but smile as the memories play through



my head of the first time we came here. The whole forest is green, the waterfall is crystal blue, but the thing that catches my undivided attention is Caleb. My eyes lock in on him and I smile, my whole body lights up and warmth washes over me.

He is dressed in a crisp black Tux, pure white button up, and glossy black dress shoes. He is wearing the Rolex I bought him for Christmas last year and he looks extremely handsome with his hair slicked to the side, he even has his black glasses on. His beard is groomed making his jaw line even more visible. Dirty thoughts automatically invade my mind as I approach him. I am pretty sure I am blushing, which Caleb notices and smiles harder as he reaches out his hand for me to take. I kiss my father on the cheek before I join Caleb on the platform.

“You look stunning baby.” He whispers as we hold hands in front of the ordained minister, who happens to be a reality Tv show host and good friend of mine, Mike Welch. I get lost in Caleb’s eyes, the whole world around me goes quiet, as I memorize this moment. The love in his eyes, the twinkle of happiness, his laugh when Mike makes a funny joke, the way his warm hands fit in mine, the way he subtly bites his lip when his eyes drift down my body, the squeeze he gives me when he knows I am thinking dirty thoughts. It’s all just perfect. He is perfect.

“Julia.” Mike mutters, forcing me out of my daydream.

“Huh?” My eyes shoot to Mike and then back to a laughing Caleb.

“Your Vows.” He whispers once more.

I scramble to get my vows which I tucked into my bra and pull them out, unfolding the crinkled-up paper I take a breath before I pour my heart out.

“Caleb Taylor. That is the name that stuck in my head from the moment I got to Everwood. Caleb Taylor, the hot restaurant and bar owner. Caleb Taylor the unavailable eligible bachelor. But I met a different Caleb Taylor. I met you, the one who makes me feel like the only woman in the world just by you simply looking at me. The one who has the biggest heart

and wouldn't let anyone near it just to protect yourself. But you let me get near it. You saw how broken I was, and you fixed me, and in the midst of that I fixed you too. We were two lost souls who found each other in a dark storm, pulled each other out and fixed the sinking boats of our hearts. Together we have accomplished so much. Caleb Taylor, I am so happy I ran away from life two years ago, because if I wouldn't have ran, I would have never planted my feet at your heart."

Caleb smiles as he clears his throat and pulls out his vows from his pocket.

"You men have it easy, our dresses do not have pockets." I laugh as I look into Caleb's eyes. He licks his lips and proceeds to speak.

"Two years Julia. You made me wait two years just to sign a paper, when in my heart I have been married to you since the moment I asked you to be mine."

Oh fuck, here come the tears swelling in my eyes.

*Pat, pat, don't smear Julia.*

"Two years, we built our foundation, our friendship, our home. I have loved you every day, but even more the next day. You have loved me unconditionally, even through rough times and for that I will forever be thankful. Thankful that fate brought you to our small town. Thankful that one man's screw up was my reward. Because having you in my life is a reward, a privilege, an honor that I will forever hold on to. You are stuck with me Julia. Forever. Because if not your dad will kill me, he has already made that clear. But like I told him, I would never hurt you, because losing you would make me suffer worse."

I cry, hard. He lifts his hand to my cheek as his thumb slides over my cheek bone wiping away the fallen tears. Once I collect myself and inhale. I shoot a mean glare at my father who just shrugs and smiles. Mike says his final words and we place our rings on each other's fingers.

"I do." Caleb shouts.

"I do, a million times." I squeeze his hand.

“I now pronounce you, Husband and Wife. Caleb you may kiss your bride.”

The crowd goes wild, hollering and hooting as Caleb grabs the back of my neck and pulls my lips to his. The heat from his mouth and mine collide as we part our lips. His tongue slides over mine and I let out a moan in his mouth. He grabs ahold of my lower back and lifts me up, still keeping his lips on mine before setting me back down. We pull away and smile at each other.

“I love you, Wife.” He smiles as he grabs ahold of my hand.

“I love you, Husband.” I wink at him as we turn to face our family and friends who are clapping.

We walk down the aisle and smile for the cameras that flash all around us. I look back down the aisle and toss my bouquet. The ladies all lift their hands up to catch it but the one who catches it was least expecting it. Madison’s eyes widen as she holds the bouquet. Connor turns to look at her and drops down to his knees.

“I love you Madison, I want everything with you. Please take me back and marry me?”

Madison shoots her eyes to me, I know she wanted Connor back, but she was never going to be the one to admit it to him.

“Fuck yes.” She squeals as she kisses him so hard, they almost fall backwards.

Caleb leans into my ear as I witness my best friend get engaged.

“Come on Mrs. Taylor, your husband would like to put his baby inside you right, fucking, now.” He growls and my whole body trembles as a pool of arousal soaks my panties.

“Yes Mr. Taylor.”

CALEB



## THANK GOD BY KANE BROWN

Ten Months Later (Christmas Eve)....

My baby's first cry rings through my ears as she is pulled out of my wife. My vision clears as I wipe the tears away. Julia pushed for one hour, just pure unmedicated strength. I look down as the doctor suction our daughter's tiny little mouth, ensuring her airways are clear before she lays our sweet girl on Julia's chest. The nurse rubs the towel over her tiny little body, clearing away any meconium and blood. Julia is crying as she looks into the tiny blue eyes that are staring at her.

"You did it baby. Look at her, she is perfect." I cry as I kiss the top of Julia's sweaty forehead. She wipes her tears as she holds Alison in her arms.

Alison Marie Taylor. Named after her great grandmother and grandmother, a perfect name for a perfect girl.

"Caleb."

Julia cries once more as she latches a hungry newborn to her nipple. The nurse smiles as she helps Julia get a proper latch. This was one of Julia's requests, to latch the baby right after birth ensuring her stomach was sealed by the colostrum. She only wants to breastfeed, so my job is to ensure no one forces formula. She wants to let her body do its job for as long as it can.

"Congratulations Mom and Dad. You have a beautiful, healthy baby girl. What a wonderful Christmas Eve miracle."

The doctor says while washing her hands in the sink next to the bed.

“Thank you. Merry Christmas Eve, Doc.”

I return my gaze back down to Julia and Alison.

My girls. My hearts. I can't help but think about how lucky I am to have such an amazing, strong, beautiful wife. Before Julia came into my life, I thought I would be miserable for the rest of my life. I thought my heart couldn't grow attached to another person, that I would forever be unable to connect. But I was wrong. Julia opened up my eyes, to love, to life, to happiness. I thank Ali and God every day for bringing her into my life.

Julia's mom is in the room with us. She has been taking photos and crying the whole time.

“Marie, do you want to hold her?”

She shakes her head while holding up her camera.

“No. You guys enjoy her. Giga will get her time with the little princess in a moment. Let me collect myself.”

She snaps one more photo before kissing Julia's cheek and smiling at Alison. She heads out of the room, and I walk over to the door. Tony is waiting in the hallway, when he sees Marie, he opens his arms, and she nestles herself right against his chest. He rubs her back to sooth her.

“She did so good, hunny. Alison is perfect.” She cries.

My heart feels incredibly full.

**T**wenty-four hours have passed. The doctor has checked Julia and discharged her and Alison from the hospital.

“Remember Mr. Taylor, no sexual activity for 6 weeks.”

I place my hand on my chest and gasp.

“I wouldn't go against the doctor's orders, Julia.”

She laughs as she bundles up Alison in her winter clothes. She slept against Julia's chest last night, so she was calm and relaxed. I guess when you spend your whole incubation listening to your mother's heart, being near it outside the womb would calm anyone.

"Let's go home."

I wheel Julia and our daughter out of the hospital and into the snowy day. The drive home is thirty minutes, luckily Julia fed Alison before we left so she is asleep in her carseat. I peer into the rearview mirror, Julia is staring down at Alison, the love and admiration twinkle in her eyes.

"I'm getting a little jealous, Julia. You are going to love her more than me, aren't you?" I joke as I focus back on the road.

Her hand presses against my shoulder as she leans forward.

"My love for you will always be different from the love I give our children Caleb. But I'll take a jealous fucking from my husband. In six weeks." She laughs as she sits back against the seat.

"I will be counting down the days, baby." I groan as I pull up to our home.

I quickly unbuckle my seat belt and open the door for Julia. I assist her out and then un-click the car seat. Alison is staring at me with wide eyes, her blue eyes look exactly like Julia.

"Welcome home baby girl." I coo at her in my dad voice that I apparently have.

The neighborhood is quiet, which is expected on Christmas Day, as everyone is home spending time with their families. I unlock the door and open it, waving Julia in but she stays planted in place as her hands cover her mouth. I turn to look inside the house to find our friends and family smiling at us. Balloons and gifts scattered across the living room. Our Christmas decorations are strung up and a large tree is nestled in the corner. Our home smells like warm apple pie.

“Surprise”, they all whisper as they walk forward to greet us.

Tony takes the bags from my shoulder. Marie grabs the car seat and begins to unbuckle the harness securing Alison. Madison embraces Julia as she cries tears of Joy.

“Everyone I would like you to meet, Alison Marie Taylor.” Julia voices.

We never told anyone her name except for Tony and Marie. So, everyone was surprised and delighted at the remembrance of Ali, including my parents who are grinning from ear to ear. Ali will always be a part of me. I know the secret she held was for my benefit because back then I would have went searching for the wrong woman in my life. Ali always mentioned Julia, but I was never listening.

*Well Ali, I listened to you, so thank you for being my guardian Angel and bringing her into my life.*

She is perfect.

They both are.

I wrap my arms around Julia and give her a big wet kiss. She pulls back and looks me in the eye.

“This is everything I’ve always wanted.”

She smiles as she looks at her friends and family, our family.

“Me too baby. Merry Christmas Mrs. Taylor.”



THE END

## FROM THE AUTHOR:

Thank you so much for reading. I truly appreciate honest feedback, so please show your support to us Indie authors by leaving a review and star rating.

By doing so you help me improve my writing and continue spreading these spicy reads with the world.

I do run a Facebook Book Club and would love for you to join us in reading books from many authors. If you would like to join the group, it is called SMUT ME BOOK CLUB.

Hope to see you there, good girls!

-Always

Liv Serda

## SPECIAL THANKS

I want to take this time to thank some wonderful ladies who have supported me along my journey.

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Sydney, don't you worry. The Sydney in this book will definitely get her own spin off. I got you! Thank you for being such an amazing friend in such a short amount of time. I can't wait to keep blowing your mind.

Also, I wanted to take the time to thank my amazing ARC readers who not only read the book but also provided me with some feedback. I will forever be grateful. Extra thank you to Sabrina A. & Kelly E. , such 'Good Girls' you are ;) .

*Good Girl,*

*Liv Serda*

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Liv Serda is a mother, wife, and new author. Living in the middle of nowhere as her son says. She has 4 wonderful children and aspires to be a successful author on her spare time. She enjoys nature, family, photography, and traveling. Writing was not something she thought she could do, but decided to give it a try as she has a vivid imagination and wanted to share her own stories with the world. She is inspired through her support to continue writing and provide spicy romance novels to anyone who is curious enough to read them. She takes pleasure in capturing emotions out of her audience whether positive or negative as feedback is always welcome. Liv wishes for you to enjoy her novels and share them with friends and family.

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