

IVY NELSON

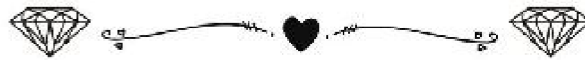


Forever

Treasured



Forever Treasured



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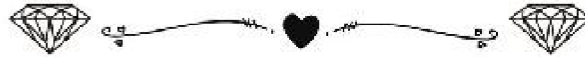
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A Note From The Author



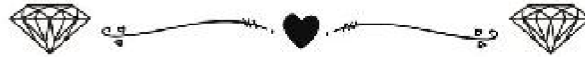
Forever Treasured contains depictions of BDSM. This book is the author's interpretation of BDSM fantasies and is not intended to be an educational tool. BDSM is different for everyone, and this is just one perspective. Everything in this book is fictitious and should be read as such. If you choose to participate in BDSM, please remember consent above all else and please do educate yourself with something that isn't a work of fiction. This book was originally published as Finally Home in the Love On The Slopes Holiday Anthology (No longer in print). It has been expanded but is largely the same story that appeared in the anthology.

I hope you enjoy this creation.

Ivy Nelson

P.S. The following page contains a non-exhaustive "shopping list" of kinks as well as any potential triggers that may be found in this. If you feel something has been left off, don't hesitate to reach out.

What's Inside?



You will find the following kinks and tropes in this book.

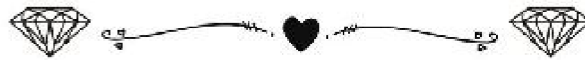
Power Exchange
Anal/Oral
Spanking (belt and hands)
Bondage
Fisting
Punishment
Dirty/Degrading Talk
Praise
Use of Honorifics
Vibrators
Nipple Clamps

You will find these potential triggers in the book

Pregnancy/trouble tonceiving
Child temporarily going missing
Mentions of adoption/foster care

This is a non-exhaustive list!

Chapter 1



Russell

“I swear to God, if you ever let anyone get that close to her again when I’m not present, you’re going to be looking for a new job. And you better believe I’ll make it impossible for you to find anything other than washing dishes somewhere.”

Russell Adler stood behind his desk in the home office he’d set up in the London flat he shared with Gemma when they were in the UK—which was all the time recently. A young bodyguard with just a few years of experience stood stock still, but Russell could see the slightest tremble in his hands as he dressed the man down for letting paparazzi get too close to his wife at a charity function.

Gemma and her very pregnant sister, Kendall, were nearly trampled by the idiots. The constant barrage of press coverage had been going on for weeks ever since their mother, a popular woman among British nobility, passed away.

“Yes, sir, Mr. Adler. We apologize. They were coming from all sides, so we’re going to double her detail, and Mr. Bruce wants his wife’s detail doubled as well.”

Russell glanced at his watch. Where the hell was Matthew, anyway? He was supposed to be here half an hour ago.

“That will be all,” he said, dismissing the guard. He gave a curt nod and turned on his heel to exit the room.

Russell sat behind his desk again and closed the screen with the tabloid pictures of his wife. He hated it when the press got too close. After everything they went through in the beginning of their relationship, he did his best to protect her from the cameras. But she was still a well-known figure among Great Britain's elite, and despite his desire to keep her naked in his bed twenty-four/seven, she still had responsibilities to see to.

Thankfully, they were getting ready to head back to the States for a few months after the holidays. They weren't as famous in the U.S. as they were in London, so he could relax there. Especially when they were at his compound in California.

He heard the door to the flat open, and he thought it was Gemma. Instead, his brother-in-law and Gemma's ex-husband, Matthew Bruce stepped into his office looking breathless.

"Everything alright?" There was always a tightness in his chest when Gemma was away from him. Even after five years that hadn't gone away.

Matthew grinned. "Everything is perfect. The third trimester agrees with Kendall. But I'll spare you the details."

Russell made a face and motioned for him to sit down.

"The press got entirely too close to them last night," he said when Matthew was settled.

"I saw that. Kendall is fine, though. Even pregnant, she was ready to kick someone's ass. It pisses her off that I sent as much security as I did."

Russell chuckled. Matthew's wife—Gemma's sister—was a former spy for the British government and had only recently fully retired to have a baby. He didn't like being envious of his family, but he and Gemma had been trying for two years to get pregnant, and so far, it hadn't happened. They did their best to not let it strain their relationship, and the connection they shared was strong, but he hated seeing the sadness in her eyes every month when she realized she wasn't pregnant. Not to mention the fact that he wasn't getting any younger. At fifty-four, it felt like he might be running out of time to be a father.

“Earth to Russell.” Matthew waved a hand in front of his face and Russell blinked.

“Sorry. Just daydreaming. What did you want to see me about?”

Matthew grinned and tapped his phone screen. “What do you think about this place for a vacation? Kendall has been asking for time with her sister that doesn't have to do with settling their mother's estate.”

Russell took the phone Matthew passed him and read about the exclusive winter resort in Switzerland. It boasted high end shops, every winter sport imaginable. The main lodge had dozens of cozy suites, and there were separate private cabins on the property as well. In some ways, it reminded him of Club Solitaire. He missed that place. Serendipity was a great BDSM club, but it catered to a very specific brand of kink, and they had to be in just the right mood to enjoy it.

He was ready to get back to his home away from home regularly after the new year. And now, the club was expanding and opening a new version of the club in New Orleans. Russell was excited to take Gemma on a vacation there sometime soon.

“I’ll talk to Gem about it. She asked if she could take Kendall away on a vacation just the two of them, but I told her no.”

Matthew chuckled. “Yeah, Kendall wanted the same thing. But she didn’t argue when I said no. It’s just too dangerous right now. They’ve been in the press more than ever since their mother died.”

The door slammed open in the main room and Russell jumped up, his hand automatically reaching for the weapon that wasn’t there. Gemma didn’t like it when he wore a gun in the house.

Then he heard the voice that could simultaneously soothe him and make his palm itch to hold her down and make her scream.

“Russell, what the bloody hell do you think you’re doing, doubling my security?”

Matthew cleared his throat as she stepped into the room, and Gemma stopped in her tracks. “Oh. I didn’t know you were here.”

“Nice to see you too, Gem. Kendall wants you to call her later.”

He stood and kissed his ex on the cheek. Their relationship was odd for sure, and in the beginning, it nearly kept Russell from pursuing her, but he'd come to his senses, thank God, and had spent the last five years in the best relationship he'd ever had.

“Sounds like the two of you have some things to talk about.” Matthew squeezed her shoulder.

To Russel, he said, “Let me know if you want me to make the arrangements.”

Russell gave him a curt nod without taking his eyes off the angry blond glaring up at him.

“You were nearly mobbed last night, Treasure. I will not play fast and loose with your safety. Especially not when you're somewhere I can't be.”

His tone or expression must have gotten through to her because she softened and slumped in the chair in front of him. “What did Matthew want?”

“To ask about going to Switzerland together for the holidays.”

That was apparently the wrong answer because she jumped up and headed for the door. But he moved like lightning and stopped her with a fistful of her hair and dragged her back.

“You know better than to stomp off when you're pissed. We talk these things through. Now before I haul you over my desk and take my belt to your ass, why don't you tell me what's wrong?”

She fought him for a second, but his grip was too strong, and she sagged against him.

“Kendall and I picked that place for the two of us. We just wanted to have some sister time. It’s been rough since mom died. And you’re being weird lately too. It just seemed like it might be a good idea for all of us to have some space.”

He shook his head and spun her to face him as he backed her into the wall. Her breaths came at a rapid but erratic pace, as she glared up at him.

“Are you trying to goad me into a reaction, Gemma? What do you mean I’ve been acting weird lately?”

She huffed and turned her face away from his, but he gripped her cheeks and forced her to meet his gaze.

“You’re not getting out of this conversation.”

“You hardly touch me anymore.”

His mouth twisted into a confused frown. “Of course I touch you, Treasure. Just because you broke the rules last week and don’t get to come for a few days doesn’t mean I don’t touch you.”

“It’s not that. I deserved that. I’m talking about in general. It feels like we’re always so focused on having sex at the right time that things aren’t spontaneous the way they used to be. And we hardly ever play rough anymore. I’m a masochist. You’re a sadist. Rough is kind of our thing.”

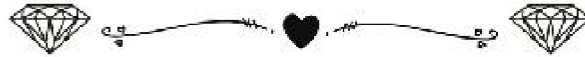
He chuckled quiet and dark in her ear before his hand found her throat and shoved a knee between her thighs to grind

against her pussy.

“I understand now, Treasure. It’s been too long since I’ve made you cry for me. We can fix that.”

“You can make me cry all you want if you let me go to Switzerland on my own with Kendall.”

Chapter 2



Gemma

“We both know I can make you cry anytime I want to. You would think after five years you would have learned that you can’t win when you’re a brat, Gemma. And a brat is exactly what you’re being.”

But Gemma *was* winning. Russell had his hand around her throat, and his knee pressed against her pussy, and she ground herself against him shamelessly. It had been months since he’d brought her to tears in a session. Hopefully, that was about to change.

“I just don’t understand why you won’t let me go have some fun with my sister. She’s former MI6, for fuck’s sake.”

Russell pulled his knee away from her overheated sex and cupped her through her panties with his thick palm. “I have no problem with you spending time with Kendall. But you’re not going on your own. The two of you have been in the press entirely too much lately. It’s not safe. Matthew is perfectly amenable to the four of us going on vacation. And Kendall already agreed when Matthew told her the same thing I’m telling you now. But is this really what you want to talk about right now? How long has it been since your last orgasm, Treasure?”

Gemma pulled her bottom lip between her teeth and fluttered her lashes at him.

“Since the last one you gave me, or the last one I had?”

He growled and released her throat so he could pinch her nipple hard. “They better fucking be the same, Gemma.”

They were, but she enjoyed pushing his buttons. Though lately, he hadn’t been as easy to get a reaction out of. And she suspected it was a combination of trying to get pregnant, and the rise in attention from the press.

“Six days, Sir,” she whimpered, when he twisted her other nipple.

“And how long did I tell you I would make you wait for your disobedience?”

Her pussy clenched at his wicked question. Six days ago, she’d purposely broken one of his rules and he’d made her come hard before he’d spanked her and then declared that she wouldn’t come again for a week for her bratty behavior. The spanking had dulled her craving but wasn’t as rough as they were used to playing, so she was hoping for a better result tonight.

“A week. But please, I’ve learned my lesson. Really, I have.”

“Drop the notion of you going off on your own with Kendall and I’ll make you come on my tongue right now.”

“You’re a bastard, Russell Adler.”

“So, is that a yes?”

“Will you at least let us have one day to ourselves?”

He tweaked her nipple again and dragged his hand down her abdomen until he cupped her pussy again. “That depends on how hard you come for me, Treasure.”

“Fine. We can all go. Because vacationing with my ex-husband is exactly how I’ve always wanted to spend Christmas.”

Russell chuckled. “That’s a good girl. We’ve spent three of the last five Christmas holidays with Kendall and Matthew.”

Gemma tried not to huff at his logical observation.

The truth was, after her mother died, she was stressed over dealing with the estate, and the press wasn’t making anything easier. Adding the pressure of not being able to get pregnant just made her grumpy and needy. Not to mention she was pretty sure Russell hated living in London half the year.

“We’ll have our own quarters far away from Matthew and Kendall, and I’ll make up for any neglect on my part.” He leaned in and scraped his trim beard against her bare neck.

“In fact, why don’t I start making up for it right now?”

He scooped her up and carried her the short distance to their bedroom, where he ordered her out of her clothes.

When she was naked, he spread her out on the bed and dragged his tongue along her slick pussy.

“God, you’re soaked. How long have you needed me to hurt you, Treasure?”

She whimpered when he hooked a finger in her pussy and dragged a thumb over her clit. He hadn't given her permission, so she knew she had to hold back her orgasm. Brat may have been her middle name, but Russell's word was law where her pleasure was concerned and had been from the beginning of their relationship. And she wouldn't have it any other way.

"Weeks," she whispered. "I've wanted you to just take the lead since mum's funeral."

He stretched over her so he could look her in the eyes and glared. "Since when is that how we do things, Gemma? If you need something, especially if it involves your needs in the bedroom, you tell me. You don't expect me to read your mind. So now you're going to tell me in explicit detail what you need."

He pulled his hand free of her needy pussy and folded his arms across his chest, waiting for her to comply.

She sat up on her elbows and stared up at her handsome silver fox. He may have been nearly twenty years older than her, but he was definitely in better shape than she was, and it made him a treat to look at.

"I'm waiting," he said a minute later.

"Sorry. You're fun to stare at, Sir."

His mouth barely lifted into a half smile before he schooled his expression and tapped his fingers on his elbow impatiently.

"I need you to hurt me, Russell."

He shook his head. “Not good enough. I can hurt you a dozen ways. How do you want it?”

Her pussy spasmed just from his stern tone, and she squeezed her legs shut. His movements were lightning quick, and he jerked them open again.

“No. You’ll tell me with your cunt on display.”

She shuddered and stared up at him, letting her submissive side take over. “Yes, Sir. I want your belt on my ass until I can’t take it anymore. And then I want your fist inside me. It’s been so long since we’ve done that.”

“The belt I’ll give you.”

“Why not the other?” she asked with a pout. “And please don’t tell me you’re worried about harming me. I promise it will not affect my chances of getting pregnant. Please, Russell. It’s the thing that truly made me yours in the beginning, and I need that feeling right now.”

His shoulders relaxed, and she knew she’d won him over. At least she hoped she had.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve fisted you. You’re right. We need to work up to it again, so I don’t injure you. I’ll make you a deal. Right now, you’re going to roll over and get your ass in the air for my belt. After I’m done with that, we’ll start warming your pussy up to take my fist again. And every night we’ll practice a little more. By the time we get to Switzerland, you’ll be ready again.”

Gemma shrugged. “I would be OK if you wanted to take it all the way tonight.”

Russell chuckled and sat down next to her. “Oh, Treasure. You must really be needy if you’re willing to agree to that. No. I may be a sadist, but I’m not going to injure you while I give you what you crave. Forgive me for being negligent with your needs recently. You have my word, I’ll do better. Starting right now. I believe you begged for my belt, so get ready to feel it, and don’t expect me to hold back or show mercy.”

Her pussy was flooded with moisture, and she fought the urge to dip a finger into her folds and find her clit. Touching herself without permission was strictly forbidden. Especially when he was about to dole out the pain that would bring her to her most heightened state of arousal and make the orgasm he would eventually give her ten times stronger.

“That’s a good girl,” he murmured when she rolled onto her stomach and repositioned herself so her ass was in the air. He dragged a hand down her ass and between her thighs, stopping just short of touching her where she needed it most.

“Get ready, Gemma. We’re going to test your endurance today. My belt doesn’t stop until you safeword or I’ve decided you’ve had enough.”

Some subs viewed using a safeword as a thing to avoid. But Gemma and Russell often pushed her limits to see just how far they could go. If she didn’t trust him implicitly, it would be a dangerous way to play, but sometimes pushing her to her

breaking point was the only thing that could get her out of a funk. And she had been in a serious funk lately.

The trust between them was such that she knew even if she didn't safeword, Russell would keep a close eye on her body and would stop if he deemed it unsafe to continue. He was mean as fuck when he was giving her the pain she craved, and there wasn't a tender bone in his body. He was all sadist in those moments, at least until their scene was over.

When the last strike of the belt landed, or they finally lost themselves in orgasmic bliss, he turned into a giant teddy bear who spoiled her rotten and made sure she was well taken care of.

The jingle of his belt buckle had her clenching her ass as she imagined it landing against her unmarked skin.

“Relax, Gem. I'm not going to start until you do.”

She blew out a slow breath and willed her muscles to loosen. His hand skimmed from the center of her shoulder blades down to the curve of her ass before he stepped back. A soft whoosh signaled that he'd pulled his belt free, and she let her mind drift back to the day she'd bought him that belt.

Not long after he'd placed his collar on her neck, she decided he needed a new belt. It was thick leather that packed a punch and left her ass a deep shade of red when he was done.

At first, he'd placed it in his toy bag, but she pulled it back out one morning when they were dressing and told him if she

was going to wear his collar all the time, she wanted him to wear that belt.

It turned her on to glance down at his waist and see the reminders of what he could do to her body.

It had become his daily belt from that point on.

The leather sliced through the air and landed with a loud crack against her skin.

She hissed and sucked in a deep breath. He wasn't kidding about not holding back.

Her only thought was, *it's about damn time.*

He struck her again, a little lower this time, and soon fell into a leisurely rhythm, painting her ass red from the top to the tender spot where her ass met her thighs.

Eventually, he would work his way halfway down her thighs, too. He might even force her to take a few swats to her pussy.

The thought of that made her whimper as her cheeks went from warm to smoldering.

“Red, Yellow, Green,” he murmured when he took a break to switch sides and swing with the other arm. He checked in often and expected complete honesty. There was no shame when she couldn't handle as much as she could other days.

“Green, Sir,” Gemma answered readily.

“Good girl.”

The belt landed again and this time his pace was faster, and he spoke as he struck her.

“Tell me again how long it’s been that you’ve needed this, Gemma.”

She cried out at a particularly vicious stroke and had to grip the bed sheets. “Weeks, Sir.” Her voice wavered with unshed tears, but she was determined to hold back. Even though tears were often the goal, she was stubborn and always held back as long as she could.

“If I find out you’re keeping your needs from me again, Gemma, you’ll be punished. And it won’t end with an orgasm. It will end with you kneeling in front of my desk on a bed of rice while you write out a thousand lines to remind you of the rules.”

He’d put her in the corner on rice once, early in their marriage, after she took her bratty side a bit too far. It was a special kind of torture because it did nothing for her lady bits.

But now his threats were accompanied by painful slices of his leather into her skin, and her pussy was soaked. Despite the arousal, she squirmed to get away from the stinging leather. She didn’t actually want it to stop. Not when she was hovering on the edges of subspace, but her body still tried to fight the pain.

“Legs wide. Now.”

His voice was hard and brooked no argument. She wiggled her thighs apart and pushed her head and elbows further into the mattress to raise her ass higher.

The belt licked her slick folds, and she fought to keep her legs apart. He would add more licks if she closed them.

“Who’s job is it to hurt you when you need it, Gemma?”

Another sting landed on her cunt, and she screamed her answer. “Yours, Sir.”

“And how can I do my job if you don’t tell me what you need?”

Another strike.

“I’m sorry,” she cried, no longer able to keep the tears at bay.

A hand tangled in her hair, and he lifted her up, so she knelt with her throbbing bottom resting on her heels.

He gripped her face hard and put his forehead against hers.

“Tell me why I shouldn’t keep you up all night screaming in pain for me.”

“I’m yours to hurt whenever you want, Sir,” she whispered.

“Good girl. But that’s not an answer. Why wouldn’t it be a good idea to keep you up all night?”

She struggled to form a coherent thought as he tightened his grip on her hair. Finally, it dawned on her.

“Because I have an early breakfast meeting.”

He let her hair go and pushed her back down into the mattress, raising her ass high.

“Good girl. And if I kept you up all night that wouldn’t be taking care of you, would it?”

She whimpered and squirmed away when the belt landed hard in the center of her ass.

“No, Sir.”

“I always take care of you, Gemma. Never forget that. Spread your legs. Take the pain I’m about to give your soaked little cunt and we’ll be done with the belt. Close your legs and I’ll paint your thighs as red as I’ve painted your ass, and you’ll go to sleep without that orgasm I promised you.”

The thought of not getting the release she so desperately needed had her begging him for something unexpected. “Tie my legs open, please, Sir.”

“I want you to do this on your own, love. You asked for this pain. Take it like a good girl. But if you really want me to tie you down, I will. But I’ll double the number of swats you were going to get.”

A gasp left her. She was a masochist, no question about it, but a belt to her pussy was excruciating and she didn’t relish the thought of having to endure double the amount he had in mind.

“Spread your legs. Now.”

He already knew she would choose to go without the restraints. He’d appealed to her competitive side.

“That’s a good girl. I’m going to give you three of my best.”

Three was manageable, she decided, lifting her ass higher, so he had a better view.

He swung the belt three times hard and fast, not giving her time to close her legs. Just another way he took care of her. Making it nearly impossible for her to fail him.

The belt clattered to the floor, and he was kneeling on the narrow bench in front of their bed. His hands spread her wider, and he licked her tender, swollen flesh, leaving a fiery trail of arousal along his path.

He stopped at her clit and swirled his tongue around it, driving her mad with need. It had been a long week, made even longer because she was already needy before he'd given her the punishment of no orgasms.

The pressure built in her core, and she pushed herself closer to his face while his hands dug into her well-punished ass.

She was nearly on the brink of release when she remembered to ask.

“Please, can I come?”

His answer was to smack her ass hard and suck her clit between his lips. No response was the same as a no when it came to her begging for an orgasm.

“Please, Sir. I need it,” she begged, fighting back the wave that was about to become unstoppable.

“See how easy it is to tell me what you need?” he said, his voice husky with lust and dominance. “Come.”

He plunged three fingers into her pussy and roughly finger-fucked her while his other hand stroked her clit in furious circles.

Soon she was squeezing his hand as he slipped his pinky in right as the orgasm hit her. He was right, they would need to work up to her being able to take his fist again. Her pussy was stretched to the max, and he barely had all four fingers halfway inside her. She was grateful for his insistence that they spend the week practicing.

The orgasm rolled through her, and she gripped the bedspread to keep from collapsing.

“On your back,” he commanded a few minutes later when he pulled his hand free. “I want to see your face while I fuck you.”

She rolled to her back, and lifted her knees almost to her chest, keeping her pussy open and waiting for him.

Instead of settling between her thighs, he leaned over to the nightstand and pulled a small paddle from the drawer.

“I want your tears when I take you,” he growled.

Inflicting pain immediately after an orgasm, made the pain ten times more intense. He was making extra sure he met her needs tonight. The paddle landed on her inner thigh twice on each side before he started smacking her exposed pussy.

She writhed as the sting made her see stars even though he was obviously tempering his strength and not hitting her at full force.

“God, you look so hot when you’re in agony. I’ve never met anyone who takes the pain as beautifully as you.”

He didn't stop spanking her while he spoke, and the combination of his words and the intense sensation brought her to the tears he was looking for. The paddle landed with a soft thunk on the mattress above her head, and he repositioned himself to slam his cock into her.

“That’s a good girl. Your cunt is so hot right now, wrapped around my cock. Take me, Treasure, and let your tears out.”

Gemma gripped her knees as he moved in and out of her. A second orgasm was building, and she pleaded for him to fuck her harder. He was more than happy to oblige her whimpered request.

“Let me feel you come on my cock, baby. Do it now,” he ordered through labored breath.

Her scream was strangled by his hand around her throat as the orgasm slammed into her.

Russell roared out his own orgasm, her head spinning as he squeezed her neck in just the right way.

When he released her, she took a deep breath and exhaled. Russell eased out of her and pulled her against his chest when he laid on his back, not caring about the mess.

“Hear me now, Gemma. I will always take care of you. Never go weeks without saying something when you need me. Understood?”

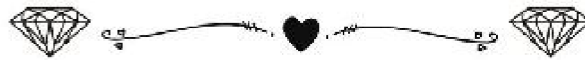
She kissed his sweat-slicked chest. “Yes, Sir. I’m sorry for keeping it in.”

“And I’m sorry for not recognizing the signals. I’ve been wrapped up in your safety, but I can keep you safe and keep you satisfied at the same time, if you’ll let me.”

She knew that all too well. He’d been doing it for five years. She’d just gotten a little lost for a little while.

But as he always did, Russell pulled her out of the darkness and gave her exactly what she needed to keep going forward.

Chapter 3



Russell

Russell couldn't help the smirk that tugged at his lips a few days later, as he trailed behind Gemma when they boarded the private jet that would take them to Switzerland. She walked with cautious, almost ginger steps, and there was something about knowing he'd caused her soreness that stoked the embers of his lust for her.

They'd done exactly as he promised and worked up to her being able to handle a full-blown fisting scene. He could have gone all the way last night. She was ready. Sore, but ready. But he was enjoying dragging it out, and insisted they wait until they arrived in Switzerland. As a precursor, he was going to tie her to the bed in the jet's bedroom and make her come at least a dozen times.

The flight was only an hour and a half, but she was exhausted from their intense play last night, so she wouldn't object to laying down. Even though he was unlikely to let her sleep. They were spending a full ten days at Les Émeraudes together, that would have them there through Christmas and back in London just in time for the New Year's Eve party she had to attend with her family, and he intended to make the most of it.

When she pointed out that he hadn't been giving her what she craved and accused him of being too delicate with her just because they were trying to have a baby, he'd wanted to

object. Tell her she was wrong. That he'd spanked her at least once a week for the entirety of their relationship.

But hearing himself even think that made him realize she was right. Their dynamic went so far beyond a simple spanking. Realizing that he hadn't been taking care of her because of his own misguided attempts to keep her safe had him plagued with guilt, and he intended to make sure she remembered just how much he cared for her during their vacation.

He would remind her (and himself) that she was his to fuck, hurt, and love however he wanted. That had been their agreement when she put on his collar all those years ago. Her body belonged to him. But that meant giving her what her body craved. And Gemma craved intense sensation, often in the form of pain that would make others run screaming.

It worked for Russell, because there was little that got him harder faster than a submissive crying from the pain he'd inflicted. As long as those tears were accompanied by a wet cunt begging for his cock.

"Where are Matthew and Kendall?" Gemma asked when they stepped onto the plane.

He wrapped his arms around her waist in the center of the aisle and sank his teeth into her neck. Her gasp turned to a satisfied moan, and he kissed the tender spot he'd just bitten.

"Forget about them. They're joining us tomorrow night. We're going to go to the bedroom in a little while and spend the next hour discussing the rules for this trip."

She rolled her eyes and earned a hard smack on her ass. An ass he was certain was still sore from the kiss of his leather belt the other night.

The pain his palm sent through her body made her shudder and sag against him, making him chuckle. “You’re so easy, love. Now be a good girl and have a seat while we take off. Once we’re in the air, we’ll go to the bedroom, and if you agree to my rules, I’ll make you come as many times as you want before we land.”

Her face took on a pretty blush when a flight attendant cleared his throat behind us. The man was one of Russell’s long-time employees and was aware his relationship with Gemma was unconventional. So, he was smart enough not to say anything. But they tried not to rub their kink in anyone’s faces, so he kissed her cheek and nudged her toward a seat then turned and greeted Ed.

“Drinks, Mr. Adler? The usual for both of you?” he asked, after a handshake.

Russell looked at Gemma. “Drink, love?”

“Gin and tonic, please.”

The attendant headed to the galley without another word. As he disappeared, Russell draped an arm around Gemma and kissed her temple. “You look lovely this morning, Treasure.”

She beamed at him and laid her head on his shoulder. “I’m glad we’re doing this. We needed the getaway. Hopefully,

you'll relax enough to be honest with me about not wanting to live in London anymore."

Her probing accusation made him lean back in surprise. She wasn't wrong, Russell much preferred the States. He'd done his best to conceal that, though. Gemma's family needed her in London at least half of the year, so they split their time. Even after she handed the family business to a board of trustees to run, things were still tumultuous following the collapse of Redstone Consolidated, and her mother hadn't handled the bad press very well.

"I'm sorry, love. You don't need the pressure of my desire to be back home. London is just fine. But I am looking forward to an extended trip back to the compound."

Gemma smiled. "Kendall and Matthew are moving back as soon as the baby is born. Holly and Elijah are having another one and so are Isabelle and Garrett. They want to raise the little one around their cousins. Even if they aren't blood."

Russell lifted an eyebrow. He hadn't heard this news yet.

"How do you feel about that?" he asked, trailing a finger up her arm.

She lifted one shoulder as she stared at him. "I'm not sure, to be honest. Deep down, I understand that it's good for them. But my sense of duty obligates me to be here a lot of the time."

He squeezed her hand. "I know, love. And it's fine. We agreed to stay here until we didn't need to anymore."

“I love you, Russell. Thank you for being here for me these last couple of months. I honestly didn’t think mom’s death was going to impact me as much as it has.”

Slipping an arm around her, he pressed a kiss to her temple. It took another twenty minutes to get to cruising altitude, but when they did, he stood and held his hand out to her.

“Leave the drink. Let’s go.”

She obediently followed him to the plane’s small bedroom and waited for his instructions.

Russell squeezed her shoulders and frowned when he found knots there.

“Why so tense?”

Gemma shook her head. “Life? Who knows.”

He kissed the back of her neck. “The first thing we’ll do is book you a massage when we get there.”

He nudged her toward the bed and told her to lie face down. When she was settled, he straddled her, resting most of his weight on his own legs, he dug deeper into the knots in her neck and shoulders. And since he knew her well, he used a lot of pressure, making her gasp as he loosened the knots.

“That’s better,” he said a few minutes later as he climbed off her and smacked her ass.

Her yelp made him smile, and he rolled up his shirt sleeves. “Turn over and look at me, Treasure.”

When she did, he sat next to her on the bed and picked up her hand.

“This resort is known for having celebrity visitors, so their security is supposed to be top-notch. But I need to hear that you’re going to be careful.”

She rolled her eyes, and he reached out and pinched one of her nipples through her shirt.

“Drop the attitude. I’m serious, Gemma. You’ve had too many run-ins with the press lately. If you don’t want me to lock you in our suite, you’ll give me the assurances I need.”

He didn’t let go of her nipple until she squealed and bobbed her head in agreement.

“Let me hear it, love.”

“I’ll be careful, Russell. I swear. But I’m not going to be smothered by you on our vacation. You said it yourself. Their security is top-notch.”

Russell laughed and shook his head. “I said it was supposed to be. We’ll find out when we get there. Until then, I expect you to behave and follow orders. Understood?”

“I get it, Russell. You’re going to be a hard ass, even though we’re on vacation. Thanks for the heads up.”

She huffed and rolled away from him.

With a flick of his tongue, he fisted a hand in her hair and pulled her to sitting.

“Want to try that again?”

She looked at him with a quivering lip, and he immediately loosened his grip. It took a lot to bring Gemma to the brink of tears. Something beyond her annoyance with him was going on.

“Talk to me,” he murmured, pulling her into his lap.

“It’s nothing. I’m being silly. Sorry for snapping at you.”

He shakes his head with a stern expression. “Not so fast, little one. Your feelings aren’t silly. We had this discussion recently. Tell me what’s wrong.”

She tucked her face into the crook of his neck, and he stroked her hair, letting her sit in silence for several minutes.

Finally, she raised her head and cupped his jaw. “You’re so good to me. I’m most myself when we’re in bed together or at the club. Everywhere else, I struggle to belong. Like I’m not quite doing what I’m meant to.”

He put his hand over hers against his face and closed his eyes. Her touch was his favorite thing and had been since the first time he felt her skin on his.

“Ahh, Treasure. How do I help? If I could, you know I would have you in bed all day, every day. But we both know you would get sick of me.”

She giggled and leaned up to kiss him. “I would definitely need a break now and then at least. And we both know you miss working at the security company. If you didn’t, you would have sold it already.”

“Perhaps I just haven’t found the right buyer.”

She gave him a mock glare and shifted to straddle his lap. “Hey. If I can’t lie to you, you can’t lie to me either. Admit it, Russell. You miss it.”

He kissed her nose and brushed her long blond hair out of her face. “You’re right. I do miss it. These last couple of months with the press hounding you, has made me realize that.”

“Oh really? I hadn’t noticed. You’ve only fired three bodyguards in three weeks.”

“They were incompetent. Why are we talking about me? I’m supposed to be taking care of you, and you’re supposed to be having an orgasm right now.”

She shook her head and leaned in for a kiss. “I want to take care of you as much as you take care of me, Sir.”

He shifted and stood with her legs wrapped around his waist then turned and dumped her on the bed, sending her into a fit of laughter that died and turned into a moan of pleasure when his hand skimmed up her thigh, beneath the hem of her skirt and came to rest between her legs.

“Enough talk, Treasure. I want you to come for me. If you’re going to take my fist later, you have to be relaxed.”

Since their encounter a week ago, he was an ass for neglecting her without realizing it. But he was mission oriented, and sometimes a time-sensitive mission like getting pregnant in the five- or six-day window a woman had each

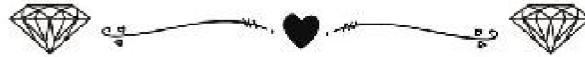
month, or keeping her safe from a throng of reporters, blinded him to the bigger long-term mission.

He'd vowed to make up for lost time on this trip, and somehow, they'd ended up talking about his unhappiness instead.

But no more. His new mission was to make her forget her own god damned name because of all the pleasure and pain he inflicted on her body over the next ten days.

She would get breaks to visit with her sister, and they would celebrate Christmas as a group. But otherwise, he intended to devote all his attention to making her scream.

Chapter 4



Gemma

A limo was waiting to take them to Les Émeraudes when they landed in Switzerland, and Gemma looked around at the scenery with excitement.

Her eyes were heavy though, and she ended up laying her head against Russell's shoulder for a cat nap.

When they arrived at the sprawling ski resort, Russell nudged her awake.

“Come on, love. Let's get checked in.”

She let him help her out of the limo, and they walked hand-in-hand into the lobby where they were greeted by staff.

Their bags would be unloaded and brought to their private chalet after they checked in.

“Mr. And Mrs. Adler, welcome to Les Émeraudes. Someone will drive you to the chalet momentarily,” the woman at the desk said after they handed over their IDs.

“And we've got a massage therapist available in an hour.”

Gemma looked at Russell in surprise. When had there been time to call in for a massage? The man was slick sometimes.

He just winked at her as he tucked his license back into his wallet.

“Thank you. An hour is perfect.”

A cozy sleigh with heavy blankets was waiting to take them to their private cottage, and Russell held her tight against him when they were settled.

The winter cold turned her nose bright red despite how bundled up she was, and she was ready to be inside by the fire by the time the sleigh pulled up in front of cottage number six a short while later.

“Enjoy your stay,” the driver said after he unloaded their bags from the back of the sleigh.

Gemma’s eyes grew wide as they stepped inside. The chalet was small, but was beautifully decorated for the Christmas holiday, and a fire was already burning in the living room fireplace.

A basket of fruit, high-end chocolate, and other snacks sat on the counter along with a note that a charcuterie tray was in the refrigerator.

She popped a grape into her mouth and made her way to the fireplace with a piece of chocolate in her hand.

A medium-sized Christmas tree sat in one corner of the living room near the picture window that provided a stunning view of the snow-covered hills around them.

Cable cars seemed to float up to the mountaintops, and she spotted several skiers rushing down a hill in the distance.

“When was the last time we took a vacation,” she asked when Russell came up behind her and kissed her neck.

“Too long, Treasure. I’m sorry I don’t get us out of town more often. We’ll make it a priority from now on.”

She turned in his arms and stared up at him. “You know the burden of caring for this relationship isn’t entirely on your shoulders, right?”

He gave her a half smile and slid his hand down to cup her still slightly tender ass.

“What do you mean, love?”

“I mean you spend a lot of time apologizing for not taking better care of me. But am I taking good enough care of you?”

He grinned. “I’ll never complain about having your mouth on my cock more often, but yes, love. You take excellent care of me.”

She laughed and shoved at his chest. “Leave it to you to turn this into a sex thing.”

He shrugged. “What can I say? You make it difficult to think of anything else sometimes.”

“Only sometimes?” she asked with a raised eyebrow.

He winked and kissed the tip of her nose. “There are at least ten minutes after I come inside one of your luscious little holes where I’m not thinking about fucking you.”

Her body ignited with lust despite the fact that he’d given her several orgasms on the plane, and she wrapped her arms around his neck and stood on her tiptoes to initiate a slow, tender kiss.

He pulled away before she was ready, and he shook his head when she stuck her bottom lip out in a pout.

“We need to rinse off the travel and sex before the massage therapist arrives. And you can take care of my cock with your hot little mouth while we’re in the shower.”

“I thought we were rinsing off the sex,” she teased as she brushed past him to find the bathroom.

He smacked her ass and yanked her back against him with a growl.

“What did I tell you on the plane, young lady?”

Her chest heaved as her breathing grew louder and her heart thrummed in her ears.

“That you were going to remind me you own me this week.” Her voice sounded needy—even to her own ears.

“And if I tell you I want my cock in your mouth, what do you say?”

She leaned her head back to look up at him with a sassy grin.

“Yummy?”

He shook his head and shoved her toward the bedroom door. “I can see you’re going to spend a lot of time with a sore behind this week. Perhaps instead of fucking your mouth I should fuck your ass instead.”

Her grin widened as she stepped into the bathroom and began stripping out of her clothes. It felt good to banter with him again. Things had been so tense these last few weeks

because he worried about her safety constantly. Not that she could blame him. The gossip magazines and news stories that were constantly splashed across the Internet about her and her sister led to some colorful characters trying to get to her.

In the shower, they rinsed off before she soaped up her hands and took his thick length in her palm and stroked him until he was fully erect. It didn't take long. His eyes were dark with lust as he nudged her to her knees. Using the detachable shower head, he made sure her hair was appropriately wet before he reached for the shampoo and worked it into her hair while she teased his cock with her tongue and hands.

Finally, he narrowed his gaze at her. "Suck my cock, love. Don't just play around. I want to feel the back of your throat." Then he thrust his hips forward and pushed past her parted lips.

He massaged her scalp and urged her to take him deeper as she swirled her tongue around him. When he hit the back of her throat, she relaxed her muscles there and took him deeper still, breathing through her nose to keep her gag reflex in check. At least until he thrust forward again, causing her to choke and splutter.

His hand rested on the back of her head and then he was fucking her mouth with little regard for her comfort. Just the way she liked it. Their sex life was filled with power exchange and a lot of trust. He owned every inch of her and took advantage of it whenever he wanted to.

Sometimes that meant fucking her throat with rough abandon in the shower, and other times he would lean back in a chair and let her do all the work. And she loved every minute, because he always took care of her and gave her exactly what she needed. She could trust him to read her body like his favorite book and know when to push her to tears and when to dote on her like a fucking princess.

Now, tears and mascara ran down her cheeks as she took everything he gave her. She gripped his backside, digging her fingernails into his ass as he thrust faster and harder. Bringing one hand around, she cupped his balls and fondled them, urging him to come down her throat with a pleading expression.

“That’s a good girl,” he murmured before smacking her face hard enough that she felt the sting, but not so hard it would leave a mark. “You take my cock so well. It’s like your holes were made with me in mind, weren’t they Treasure?”

She bobbed her head up and down as much as his cock would allow. Seconds later, he tensed and gripped her hair. “Swallow it all, Treasure.”

When the first salty stream hit her tongue, she opened her eyes and stared at him as she swallowed him down. It drove him wild when she did that.

“God, you’re fucking perfect,” he said as he hauled her up and pushed her under the shower spray. “Do you want to come for me now or wait until later when my fist is inside you?”

She grinned and kissed him tenderly. “We both know you want me to wait.”

He chuckled and smacked her ass. “I do. But you took my cock so well you deserve a reward.”

She reached over and turned the shower off then kissed his cheek. “Reward me later.”

They were quick to dry off, and she slipped on a robe instead of bothering to dress since the massage therapist would be there soon.

“I’m going to leave you to enjoy your massage,” he said, kissing the back of her neck. “I want to scope out our dinner spot.”

She rolled her eyes. “Don’t lie, Russell Adler. You know you’re going to introduce yourself to the head of security.”

He didn’t bother to deny it, just smacked her ass, and headed for the door, stopping to grab his jacket before he left.

“I love you!” she shouted as the door closed.

It opened back up, and he winked. “Love you too, Treasure. Behave while I’m gone.”

She sat on the plush couch to wait, enjoying the cozy fire.

As the fire warmed her, she went through the last few months in her mind. Starting with the death of her mother. Juliette Livingston was always a fragile woman. And it had gotten worse after everything came out about her family’s generations of involvement with a now defunct organization

called Redstone Consolidated. The group had been in the business of illegal weapons and diamonds, but they had more nefarious goals of “restoring order to the world” through traditional marriage and submissive wives.

It was all seriously fucked up, and it had nearly gotten her, her sister, and a number of their friends killed.

Thank goodness they had taken the organization down, and she was free to live her life with Russell. Mostly. There had been some messes to clean up in the family business to cut all ties with anything illegal and bring it back into the black.

So, the last five years had been spent between London and California so that she could take care of the things she needed to. Eight months ago, she thought they were going to move back to California full time. She much preferred the comfort of Russell’s compound in the middle of nowhere in California to the noisy neighborhood her London flat was in.

They could have bought a home, or even lived with her mother in the family mansion. But that sounded like pure hell, and neither of them wanted to be in London permanently, so they hadn’t wanted to buy property.

Around the time they started making plans to go back to California full-time, her mother’s mental health had taken a turn for the worse, and her physical health wasn’t far behind it.

So, she’d stayed and worked out a care schedule with her sister until the poor old woman had passed away in her sleep two months ago.

With that came everything involved with settling the estate, which had been a nightmare. And since Gemma was the oldest, it had all fallen to her. Kendall had taken some of the burden where she could, but legally, it was all Gemma's responsibility.

No wonder she was so tense and snapping at Russell all the time.

A knock sounded at the door, interrupting her thoughts. She stood and went to answer it, grateful to put it aside for a little while.

The massage therapist smiled when she opened the door. "You must be Mrs. Adler. I'm Katie. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Gemma stepped aside and let the woman in.

"I'm glad to have you here. I didn't realize until my husband pointed it out how tense I am."

She began setting her table up in front of the picture window in the living room and gave her a big grin.

"I'll fix you right up."

"American?" Gemma asked, surprised.

The girl grinned. "Yep. I was just heading home for the day when Mr. Adler offered me an extra five hundred. Couldn't turn it down."

Gemma narrowed her eyes. "How long ago was that?"

The girl frowned. “Maybe ten minutes? I came right over when he asked. Alexander was supposed to take care of you. I’m not sure what happened, but I won’t turn down the extra cash. I’m here on an exchange program and can use all the money I can get.”

Gemma smiled, though inside she was annoyed. Alexander was clearly some young, hunky male massage therapist, and when Russell found out, he’d quickly arranged for this woman to take care of her instead.

Sometimes his possessiveness was endearing and turned her on. Other times, like now, it annoyed her, and she wondered how she could get back at him for his little stunt.

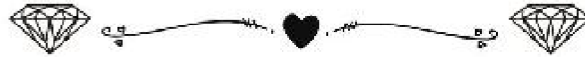
But the therapist was set up and waiting expectantly for her to lay face-down on the table, so she put revenge out of her mind for the next hour and when she was done, she handed her another large wad of bills just because Russell deserved to pay out the nose for this massage.

The woman gushed her thanks as she headed out the door with her table in hand.

“Merry Christmas,” she added as she headed down the short flight of stairs.

“Merry Christmas, indeed. Do you have plans right now?” She asked, as an idea formed.

Chapter 5



Russell

Russell stood in the lobby of the swanky winter resort and looked around at the various entrances and exits. In his opinion, the place didn't have nearly enough video surveillance, and the rounds the guards made to check on things at the cabins weren't frequent enough.

He was tempted to make a phone call and find some local security guys to provide extra coverage for him and his family, but not only would his wife balk, his sister-in-law—a former MI6 agent—would be offended despite the fact that she was seven months pregnant.

He glanced at his watch and made a beeline for the small gift shop where he found a trinket for Gemma to make up for his bad mood about the security in this place. It would eat at him until they were back home.

Then again, the security at home hadn't pleased him lately either. It didn't sit well with him that she was probably right about the fact that he wouldn't be satisfied unless it was him by her side protecting her. It was impractical to think they could be together twenty-four seven, but even after so many years, that's exactly what he wanted sometimes. It was healthy for them to have their own space, friends, and hobbies, but he still wanted to encroach on every aspect of her life, and it took work to keep that urge in check.

“Master Russell?”

A familiar voice made him turn, and he grinned when Holly Barrett came toward him, opening her arms for a hug. Master Russell is what she called him when they were at Club Solitaire together, but it made him smile that she'd used the moniker here.

"I didn't realize you were going to be here. Is Gemma with you?" she asked when she stepped away.

He nodded and kissed her cheek. "She's in our cabin getting a massage. I left her alone to relax a little since I think I'm getting on her nerves."

Holly chuckled. "I can't imagine that at all," she teased.

He gave her a mock glare but softened it with a smile. "And what about you, sweetheart. Is Elijah with you?"

She nodded toward the children's section of the shop. "He's trying to keep Melissa off of me. This pregnancy hasn't been as easy as the first one was, so he does his best to handle her for me. We thought a getaway before I'm waddling everywhere was a good idea for all of us, so we're spending Christmas here. They even have some children's activities, so we get some alone time. And our nanny is taking her home in a few days and we're flying to New Orleans to ring in the new year at the club that's opening there. It's the longest vacation we've had in years." She pressed a hand to her forehead. "Listen to me babbling. I apologize. When did you and Gemma get in?"

Russell waved at Elijah who had spotted him and headed their way with his little girl on his shoulders. "A couple of

hours ago, actually. And Kendall and Matthew will be here in a couple of days.”

“Oh wonderful. David and Emily will be here tomorrow, and they’re coming to New Orleans with us. It will be like a mini family reunion. Too bad we’re missing so many. I wish you and Gemma could come to the grand opening with us.”

“Russell,” Elijah said, offering his hand when he reached them. “Small world. Holly and I were talking yesterday about trying to get the entire gang back together again sometime soon. It’s been too long. Did she tell you that David and Emily are joining us tomorrow?”

Russell smiled and nodded. “She did. Why don’t we have dinner one night while we’re here to discuss the specifics? If Gemma didn’t have a function in London for New Year’s Eve, we would join you in New Orleans.”

“Daddy, I’m hungry.”

Elijah patted the little girl’s leg and tilted his head back to look up at her. “We’ll get you something soon, sweetheart. Say hi to Uncle Russell.”

The little girl gave him a shy wave and buried her face in her dad’s hair, making him chuckle. He yearned for a little one of his own, and Gemma did, too. But sometimes he wondered if he put too much pressure on her.

“Hey, Melissa. Are you excited about Christmas?” he asked.

She lifted her head enough to look at him with one eye and nodded. “Mama says I get to help other little kids decorate a

Christmas tree. I'm weally excited!"

Russell laughed. "What's your favorite part about the tree? The star? The lights? Candy canes?"

She sat up straighter and her eyes got big. "I wanna put the star on the tree. And I loooove candy canes. Daddy says they're bad for my teeth, though." Her little mouth turned down in the cutest pout he'd ever seen.

Russell grinned. "Come see me and auntie Gem while you're here. We'll share a candy cane, and it will be our little secret," he whispered with a wink.

Elijah and Holly pretended not to hear, and Melissa giggled and put a hand over her mouth.

Holly put a hand on his arm. "Let's grab that dinner when the others arrive. You said Matthew and Kendall get here in two days?"

Russell nodded, and they agreed to make plans when everyone was settled, and he left the Barretts to go have some fun with Gemma.

But the cabin was quiet when he arrived, and he knew it was empty. Where the hell did she go?

"Gemma?" he called, even though he didn't expect an answer.

Her phone and purse and jacket were gone, so it looked like she'd left of her own accord, but his heart rate increased as he pulled his own phone out to call her.

She didn't answer, so he pulled up the tracking app he used to keep tabs on her when they were apart.

She was still on the property. Knowing Gemma, she decided she was hungry or wanted to explore. He followed the dot on his phone until he came back to the main lodge. Inside, it got harder to pinpoint exactly where she was, so he stopped at the front desk.

“Can I help you, Mr. Adler?”

“Have you seen my wife?”

“I directed her to the bar upstairs a few minutes ago.”

Russell frowned but thanked the woman behind the desk and headed for the stairs instead of the elevator.

When he entered the bar, he spotted her right away, and his shoulders relaxed. The brat.

He approached her with a tender smile and slid an arm around her waist, standing next to her barstool. “Treasure, I see you liked your massage so much you offered to buy your therapist a drink?”

Gemma shrugged. “It seemed like that's what you must have wanted. Because I'm sure you didn't pay Katie an extra five-hundred dollars just to keep a male from giving me my massage. I assumed it was because you met her and thought we would be friends. And you were so right. Tomorrow is her day off. I thought she could hang out with us. You didn't have plans, did you?”

Gemma's voice was sugary sweet, and she winked at Katie before tipping her glass to her lips.

He smiled at the woman and pulled Gemma from her stool. "We can talk about that later, love. Right now, we do have plans, so you should say good night."

Then he leaned in close and whispered. "Nice try, Treasure. You're in big trouble."

Her face flushed a pretty pink as she stepped forward to hug Katie. "It was so nice to meet you. Thanks for helping me get so relaxed to start my vacation."

"You did not seriously invite a random stranger to hang out with us on our day alone before your sister arrives," he said when they were out of earshot.

Gemma giggled. "Technically, yes, but she was in on the joke. She's got plans tomorrow, so you're in luck. And I don't understand why I'm the one in trouble. You're the ninny who went all caveman when you found out my masseuse was a man."

"Ninny? Did you just call me a ninny? You must really want me to make you scream when we get back to the cabin. Or perhaps I should strip you naked and fuck you in the snow. That would hurt, wouldn't it, love?"

She shuddered next to him, and he knew he had her attention. But having her attention didn't change the fact that she was angry, so she kept talking.

“I’m serious, Russell. That was uncalled for. You could have been present for the massage. But you trotted off to do someone else’s job for them. How many suggestions did you offer about their security protocols? Have you hired your own people yet?”

She stalked away from him toward their cabin, and he had to jog to catch up with her.

“What the hell has gotten into you, woman? This isn’t how we disagree.”

She kept walking and didn’t say anything until they were back at their cabin.

“I’m tired, Russell. Tired of the stress over getting pregnant. Tired of your constant worry about my safety. I just want to live my life with you and actually enjoy it. But we can’t even take a damn vacation without you bringing the worry with you.”

She opened the front door and headed straight for the bedroom, slamming it in his face.

He wasn’t sure if he should push his way in and make her submit, or if she really needed space. Gemma could have a temper when he’d really pissed her off, but they always worked things out.

He just had to figure out how to get through to her. And he probably had to compromise. Something he’d never been very good at. Though marriage had certainly improved those skills over the years.

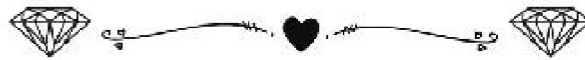
He left her alone long enough to process what she said and check on Matthew and Kendall before he knocked on the door.

When she didn't answer, he eased the door open and found her sleeping in the center of the mattress. He'd hoped she would take a nap before they had their fun tonight, but not because she was pissed at him. So far, this vacation wasn't quite turning out how he wanted it to.

He moved quietly and stripped out of his dress clothes and put on a pair of gray lounge pants and a black T-shirt before he laid on the bed next to her and pulled her close.

She sighed and curled in next to him, but didn't wake up, so he just watched her and contemplated the best way to win her back and put this trip back on the right track.

Chapter 6



Gemma

Gemma's stomach growled as her eyes fluttered open. The room was dimly lit, and the curtains were drawn, but sunlight filtered through the slit in the drapery.

A room service cart sat at the foot of the bed, and something smelled delicious.

The door from the living room opened, and Russell stepped in, looking perfect even in his lounge clothes.

It always amused and annoyed her that he never needed to work very hard to look like a God. Meanwhile, her skin-care routine required a small fortune in products. Russell assured her often that she didn't need any of it, but the tabloids that caught her without makeup strongly disagreed.

Russell stuck his hand in his pocket and soft holiday music filtered through the state-of-the-art sound system the cabin was wired with.

"You slept so long I had time to plan our first day of Christmas," he murmured as he leaned over the bed to kiss her forehead.

"I like the sound of that. But I'm still mad at you."

He shrugged. "That's OK. It doesn't change anything about the fact that you're mine."

She shook her head as he moved with cocky grace toward the room service cart and began uncovering dishes.

“Did you enjoy your nap, love?” he asked as he brought her a plate of food.

She speared scrambled eggs with her fork and nodded. “I definitely needed it. Who knew a massage could wear me out so much?”

He chuckled. “Are you sure it wasn’t the orgasms on the plane, or the blow job in the shower that did it?”

She grinned. “I guess that could have something to do with it. How long did I sleep anyway?”

He glanced at the smartwatch on his wrist and counted on his fingers. “About sixteen hours.”

Her mouth fell open. “It’s morning? Why did you let me sleep so long?”

He came to sit next to her on the bed and pressed a kiss to her cheek before digging into his own plate of food. “After a couple of hours, I dozed off too, and we both slept all night. These last few weeks have been more exhausting for both of us than we realized.”

She scooted closer to him, and together they enjoyed breakfast while the soft music filled the silence between them.

When she’d eaten her fill, she set the plate on the nightstand and laid her head on his shoulder. “Thank you for this,” she murmured a few minutes later. “I’m sorry for being a brat about this trip.”

Russell kissed her hair and wrapped an arm around her, sliding them both down until she was lying flat against his

chest. "It's alright, love. You've been under a lot of pressure."

His phone vibrated on the dresser across the room, but he didn't move. "I should turn that thing off."

"Not until Matthew and Kendall get here. You should make sure that wasn't them."

She sat up to reach for her own phone when Russell's went off again. Her heart hammered in her chest as she checked for missed calls but saw none.

"This is Russell."

He immediately shoved his lounge pants off his hips and stepped out of them while he held the phone between his shoulder and ear. "I can be there in five minutes. When did you see her last?"

Gemma sat up straighter and frowned. What was going on?

"Just stay calm, Elijah. We'll find her."

"Elijah?" Gemma mouthed when he glanced her way as he tugged on a pair of dark jeans.

He set the phone down and pulled a pair of socks out of his bag. "I didn't get to tell you yesterday that Elijah and Holly are here with their little girl. She's missing."

Gemma's stomach twisted, and she jumped out of bed to throw on clothes of her own. "I can come sit with Holly while you and Elijah search. She's pregnant again. This can't be good for the baby."

Russell put a hand on her shoulder as she passed him to head for the closet where she'd unpacked her stuff yesterday. "You don't have to do this."

"Nonsense. She's my friend. Of course I have to do this."

He stared at her for a moment then nodded before he pulled on his heavy black boots.

Gemma was dressed in jeans and a sweater with a heavy jacket and boots in minutes, and she was pulling her hair into a messy bun on top of her head as they ran out the door and headed for the resort.

When they got to the lobby, security was with Elijah and a very pale Holly.

Gemma immediately went to her and wrapped an arm around her. "Why don't we sit down, honey? You look like you're going to be sick. Tell me what happened."

Holly gave her a blank stare, but let Gemma lead her to a nearby seating area in front of a fireplace.

At first, she just sat and trembled, then she cried. "I only had my back turned for a second. We were going to get breakfast at the restaurant, and Melissa wanted to see the giant snowman someone built. I dropped my phone because pregnancy turns me into a giant klutz. When I stood up from picking it up, she was just... gone. What could have happened to her?"

Gemma wrapped her arms around her and held her tight. "We'll find her. How long has it been?"

Holly sniffed and looked at her phone. “A little over an hour. It’s so cold out there. What if she ran off and got stuck in the snow somewhere? Security has been helping us search for the last hour, but so far nothing. Elijah finally called Russell. I’m so glad we ran into him yesterday and knew he was here.”

“If she just wandered off, we’ll find her in no time. Try not to stress too much. It’s not good for the baby.”

Out of the corner of her eye, she watched as Russell took charge of the situation, despite hotel security being on site. Maybe it was rude, but at that moment, Gemma didn’t care. Russell was the most qualified person in the room, and she appreciated his willingness to break protocol for people they considered family. Especially if they already searched and came up empty.

Elijah, who was usually stoic and calm, looked like he was shaking, and Gemma was torn between pulling him away from the other men to sit with his wife and staying with Holly to comfort her.

When Elijah’s gaze met hers, she jerked her head, motioning for him to come to them.

He looked at Russell and back to his wife then walked the short distance to sit next to her.

“Thank you, Gemma. Holly, baby, why don’t you go back to our suite with Gemma and try to rest? You were sick all morning. We’ll find her.”

“I want to stay with you,” she whispered.

Elijah started to argue, but Gemma reached out and took his hand. “Why don’t you take Holly back to the room? Text me the number and I’ll meet you up there in a bit, and you can come back down to search with Russell. It sounds like he’s taken over.”

Elijah stared at her blankly for a minute as if her words hadn’t processed, but then he squeezed her hand and helped his wife stand. “He said something about organizing a grid search. That sounds so sinister. It’s something you see on CSI.”

Holly choked on a sob, and Elijah schooled his features and tucked her close to him. “Come on, baby. You don’t need to be down here right now, and you don’t need to be in the cold. The best place for you is warm in the room, so you can take care of Melissa when we find her.”

“But I want to help.”

“I know, baby. But rest is what you need right now.”

He was being strong for Holly, but it was clear the man was terrified. And Gemma didn’t blame him. The little girl hadn’t been gone long, but there were dozens of places she could have gotten trapped in a place like this.

Gemma put a hand on Holly’s shoulder. “I’ll make you a deal. You go upstairs and drink a cup of tea while I find out what the plan is. If there’s something Russell needs us to do, I’ll come get you, OK?”

She nodded, and Elijah flashed her a grateful smile before he nudged his wife toward the elevator.

When Gemma approached Russell, he put a hand on her shoulder. “You’re just in time. Can I give you a job?”

She gave him a solemn nod. “Of course. Whatever you need. If you’ve got something Holly can do that would be good, too.”

“We’re going to get the entire staff to do a grid search and put out the word that guests are welcome to join, too. I’ve got a map of the entire place on its way. You’re going to sit here, and mark grids off as they get called clear and assign new people to a section if they come to join the search.”

She rolled her shoulders to clear the tension and squeezed his hand. “Got it. Elijah wanted me to come get him and sit with Holly.”

“Let her assist you. We’ll set you up in the conference room together. Having something to stay busy and feel like she’s helping will be a good thing. Elijah can come out with me. I won’t let him out of my sight.”

The resort manager approached with several printouts, and the key to a nearby conference room. They quickly sectioned the maps of the various areas into grids and labeled them, then sent out word for the staff to gather as security passed out radios.

They could have called the police, and could end up needing to, but Russell was concerned about the press and had assured

Elijah that the police would end up doing a grid search but would take significantly longer to get it going.

When Elijah brought Holly back down twenty minutes later, her eyes were red from crying, but her shoulders were square, and she was ready to help Gemma.

“David and Emily are on their way from the airport, and they already know what’s going on. They’ll jump into the search with us,” Elijah said before he followed Russell outside to their assigned location.

Gemma’s insides were twisted in pain for her friends, and part of her wondered whether having kids was worth it. Russell would become ten times as anal about security and protection once they had a little one of their own. And with good reason. This was proving to her it was so easy for anything to happen. Holly and Elijah had come to the resort in Switzerland for the same reason she and Russell had—to escape life in the public eye for just a little while and now they were on the verge of making international news again if they couldn’t find little Melissa soon.

Emily Eastman burst into the room and pulled Holly into a hug a half hour later, and Holly cried into her friend’s shoulder.

“David is with Elijah already. They’re making good progress. We’ll find her, sweetheart.”

“It makes me wish I had let Elijah put the GPS trackers into her shoes like he wanted.”

Emily snorted. “I’m surprised he didn’t want to implant one in her skin.”

Holly wiped at her eyes and reached for the box of tissue. “Honestly, me too. In the end, he didn’t fit any of her clothes with anything because there wasn’t enough evidence that the technology couldn’t be hacked, and it wouldn’t be used against us to kidnap her for ransom.”

Gemma shuddered. The world was terrifying sometimes. The radio crackled as another section of the grid was cleared, and she marked it off on her map.

Ten minutes later, someone called out that they’d found the little girl’s scarf in a pile of snow near one the cabins, and Holly started sobbing again.

“It’s a good sign, honey. It means we can send more people to the sections close to that part of the grid.”

She rattled off numbers on the radio, directing people to the new focus area of the search.

Her phone buzzed with a text from Russell.

You’re doing great, Treasure. Thank you.

A thick lump formed her throat as she held back tears of her own. It was important to be strong for Holly.

Emily stood and offered to go ask about having a snack brought in. “Anything working to settle your stomach these days?” she asked Holly.

Holly shook her head. “Just some plain bread or some broth will be fine. And maybe a cup of coffee.”

Emily smiled. “I won’t tell Elijah.”

Elijah was... extremely health conscious when Holly was pregnant, and insisted she follow all the medical guidelines and then some, which meant she had to occasionally sneak a cup of coffee to keep from murdering him.

A small tray of finger foods arrived along with coffee service and a bowl of chicken soup a few minutes later, and everyone tried to snack as twenty minutes of silence dragged on.

The radio crackled to life and an out of breath voice came through garbled at first.

“Repeat that please?” Gemma asked.

“We found her. Tell Holly we’re on our way back.”

Holly—who had been standing in front of the coffee cart—crumpled to the floor, and Emily got to her just in time to break her fall.

“Is she OK?” Gemma asked, doing her best to sound calm.

“Freezing but awake and crying. We’ll have a doctor look her over, but she’s OK.”

“You hear that,” Emily crooned in Holly’s ear. “She’s fine, sweetheart. They’ll be here any minute.”

Gemma slipped out with the radio and headed for the manager’s office. “Do we have a doctor on site?” she asked the woman.

She held up her own radio and nodded. “Already being dispatched to the Barrett’s suite. I heard she was found on the radio.”

Gemma nodded her thanks and jogged back to the conference room. “Let’s get upstairs. The doctor is on his way there and the men will bring Melissa to us.”

Emily helped Holly up, and the threesome got into the elevator.

Holly had quelled her tears by the time they reached her suite, and she paced until the doctor arrived with Elijah, Russell, and David in tow.

Russell looked almost as pale as Elijah as they laid the tiny girl on the bed and began removing her clothes to warm her up and let the doctor look her over.

Gemma locked eyes with her husband, and they met each other in the middle of the room. It took all her strength not to fall apart in his arms when he wrapped her in one of his tight hugs. Now wasn’t the time for that. It was an occasion for celebration. Melissa was safe. But Gemma felt like she was going to shatter into a million pieces from the stress of the day.

“Your little girl was smart to climb under that porch when she got too cold and disoriented. And you had her bundled up good, so her fingers, feet, and other extremities stayed relatively warm. It saved her life,” the doctor said. “We’ll treat her hypothermia by bringing her body temperature back to normal. I would recommend sticking to indoor activities for

the next couple of days, and we'll keep a close eye on her for any other injuries.”

Elijah sat next to his wife and tucked little Melissa into an electric blanket someone had brought in. She was awake and crying, and Holly did her best to soothe her.

Russell stepped away from Gemma, and she didn't take her eyes off him while he made a hushed phone call.

A few minutes later, a knock sounded at the door and Russell opened it wide enough to take a thermos and cup from whoever was in the hallway and pass them a large tip. He twisted the cap off the thermos and poured the liquid into the cup.

Gemma watched with curiosity as he crossed the room to the giant bed and sat next to the little girl.

“Do you like hot chocolate, Melissa?” he asked, holding the cup out to her.

She stopped whimpering and looked at Elijah and then back at Russell. “Daddy said I couldn't have any if I didn't eat my breakfast.”

“That's the cool thing about having Uncle Russell here,” he said with a wink at Holly and Elijah. “Mom and Daddy can't tell me no, and Uncle Russell says you get to have all the hot chocolate you want.”

She eyed him warily and looked at her parents for permission. They shrugged and gave her an exaggerated sigh.

“If Uncle Russell says then I guess you get to have it, baby,” Elijah said with a wink.

Her smile was weak because she was still cold, but she took the cup and gulped it down.

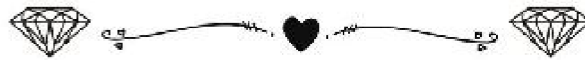
Russell handed the thermos to Holly and leaned in to kiss Melissa’s cheek. “I’m glad you’re safe, sweetie. Enjoy your treat and get some rest.”

“Thank you, Russell,” Elijah said, standing and pulling him into a bear hug.

Seeing the emotion on Elijah’s face was the last straw, and tears streamed down Gemma’s face. Russell was going to make a brilliant father someday. Even if he was anal about safety. His little girl or boy would be spoiled rotten and loved without condition just like she was.

She had to get out of the room before she started sobbing like a blubbering idiot, so she slipped out and found the gorgeous library the resort boasted, where she curled up on the couch and waited for Russell to find her.

Chapter 7



Russell

When Gemma slipped out, he fought the urge to go after her. The expression on her face said she needed to be alone for a minute, and he would respect that for as long as he could before he found her and took her back to their cabin to take care of her.

He stood near the door and watched as Emily Eastman fussed over Holly and Melissa. Her husband and Russell's good friend, David, came to stand next to him. "You did a good thing today," he said, clapping him on the shoulder.

"Thanks," Russell said, trying to keep the emotion out of his voice. "You and Emily ever consider having one?" he asked, nodding toward the little girl.

David nodded. "We've talked about it. There are some questions about my ability after cancer treatment, but we're looking into adopting first. You know I was part of the foster system, and it's an issue that's dear to me."

It hadn't occurred to Russell to consider adoption. There was so much pressure put on couples to reproduce that he'd put all of his effort there to build the family he wanted with his wife. He would have to test the waters and see if adoption was a solution that would work for her.

"Mind if I pick your brain about that?" he asked.

David nodded. “Of course. We can grab a drink and talk whenever you’re ready. Did I hear that you’re coming back to California for a few months?”

Russell’s lips twitched up. “Yeah. Gemma is nearly done with everything she has to take care of in London for a while, and we both prefer the compound.”

Russell’s property was known among his friends as the compound because that’s exactly what it was. It was an impenetrable fortress, but it was also state of the art and had every comfort a person needed or wanted.

“It’s a magnificent home. I understand why you prefer it there.”

Elijah stood and cleared his throat to get everyone’s attention. His voice was gruff with suppressed emotion as he spoke.

“Thank you, everyone, for what you did for us today. We couldn’t be more appreciative, and we’d love to have dinner together before everyone leaves, but right now, it’s time for us to be alone as a family and get some much-needed rest.”

David motioned for Emily to join him, and he wrapped an arm around her waist. “Let’s go get settled, baby.”

Emily gave her husband a tender smile and turned to Russell. “It will be good to catch up with you again, Sir.”

They stepped into the hallway, and after saying goodbye and agreeing to meet up for drinks later, David and Emily headed for their suite, which was on the same floor, and Russell went

in search of his wife. He had a feeling she didn't leave the building, and instead of using the phone to track her, he looked at the map next to the elevators and tried to imagine where she would go.

He grinned when he spotted the library. It was supposed to be one of the most impressive rooms in the whole place. That's exactly where she would go.

Sure enough, he found her curled up on a sofa with a book lying next to her as she slept.

He dropped to the floor next to her and picked up her hand, stroking it softly as he contemplated whether to wake her or scoop her up and carry her back to their cabin.

Sometime later—he wasn't sure how much time had passed—Gemma's eyes fluttered open, and she smiled at him. "You're here. How is everyone?"

Russell leaned in and kissed her, unable to resist after watching her sleep for so long.

"About as good as expected after a day like today. How are you doing, love?"

She squeezed his hand as she shifted to sit up and put the book on the end table. "I'm emotional. Today was hard. And at first, I was ready to tell you I didn't want kids anymore. Not if something like this could happen so easily in a place as safe as this. I fear you'll never sleep again if we bring a child into this world. But then I watched you with her, giving her the hot chocolate, and I nearly burst with emotion. You're going to

make such a damn good father, Russell. And I feel terrible that it hasn't happened yet.”

He pushed himself up enough to sit on the couch next to her and pulled her close to him. “It’s not your fault. We’ve got a dozen experts who tell us nothing is wrong with either of our reproductive systems. The timing just hasn’t been there. And I think you were right last week when you said we were focused so much on the right time to have sex that we’d lost sight of our needs. So, I say we stop trying and just let things happen when they happen. And I think if we really want a baby and it still isn’t happening, we can always adopt. David and Emily are thinking about it.”

She chewed her lip and picked at imaginary fuzz on her jeans. “And you wouldn’t be upset if I never got pregnant?”

He tucked a hand under her chin and forced her to look at him. “No, love. Not even a little. Would you be upset?”

Gemma laughed. “I’ve seen what Kendall and Holly have gone through with their pregnancies. The entire process seems like a pain in the ass.”

He couldn’t help his laughter as he leaned in to kiss her. “I love you so much. What do you say we get back to our cabin and finish the day I had planned for us? These decisions will keep for another day.”

Her head bobbed eagerly, and he stood, extending his hand to her. When they reached the cabin a few minutes later, he scooped her up and carried her over the threshold, kicking the

door shut before making his way through the bedroom and into the bathroom where he sat her on the edge of the tub.

“I want to make a quick phone call. Why don’t you go get into a nice warm bath and try to relax? I’ll get everything ready in the bedroom and then come get you.”

She let him peel her sweater off of her, and she stood and shimmied out of her jeans after pulling her boots and socks off. Meanwhile, he turned the water on to fill the tub and poured in a generous portion of bath oil.

As he was walking out to make his phone call, she spoke in a quiet voice. “Russell?”

“Yeah, little one?” He turned and faced her again, and she stepped into the halfway full tub.

“Thanks for always protecting me. Even when it annoys me, I appreciate it and see how much you love me.”

He leaned against the door frame and soaked in the sight of her laying naked in the bathtub for a minute before he responded.

“Anything for you, Treasure. I’m grateful for all the trust you give me, even when I annoy you.”

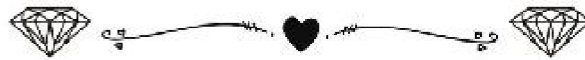
Her eyes had fluttered closed when she sank down into the water, but they flickered open, and she blew him a kiss. “Go make your phone call. I love you and I know you love me, but I’m kind of ready for you to fuck me like you don’t.”

Russell’s pulse quickened, and he had to stop himself from hauling her out of the tub right then. He had a plan, and it

involved his entire fist inside her later, which meant she needed to be as relaxed as possible.

When he'd made his phone call to arrange a little Christmas surprise, he stood at the trashcan in the kitchen and trimmed his fingernails before he washed his hands and moved to the bedroom to get things ready to give his wife an evening she wouldn't soon forget.

Chapter 8



Gemma

Gemma's entire body hummed as she brought herself to a slow orgasm while Trans-Siberian Orchestra played softly in the bedroom. When she came out of the bathroom, candles littered various surfaces of the room, and the bed had been covered with a thick blanket and some towels.

A vibrator—her favorite one—was lying on the bed along with a bottle of lube and a few other toys that promised an excellent time.

Now, Russell had her on the bed playing with the vibrator, while he pulled a glove on and coaxed her through the orgasm with gentle praise. “You come so pretty for me,” he murmured when the last shudder rolled through her. “Do you remember the rules of what we’re about to do?” he asked, trailing his bare hand down her thigh.

She blinked up at him and nodded. “I think so.”

“Tell me,” he urged.

She bit her lip and forced herself to keep looking at him, since he would just bring her head back to face him anyway.

“I’m not allowed to come again until you’re all the way inside.”

He drizzled lube on two of his fingers and slipped them inside her already wet pussy.

“What else?”

She struggled to focus when his thumb grazed her clit, and she bit her lip hard to bring her back to the present.

“If it becomes the wrong kind of painful, I have to let you know so we can make sure it’s safe to keep going.”

He slipped a third finger in. “Good girl. Tell me what you like about having my fist inside of you?”

Her pussy spasmed around his fingers as he slowly pumped them in and out of her, occasionally stopping to add more lube.

“Fuck, that feels good. I like that it’s not something everyone does. Not even something every kinky couple does. But more than that, every time we do it, I’m taken back to our first time when you so boldly told me that once your fist was inside me, you owned every inch of me because you had touched all of me.” She sucked in a deep breath when he circled her clit with his other hand. “It makes me wet every time I remember that night. And repeating it just keeps me reminded of how much I belong to you.”

“Such an excellent answer. For that, maybe you should come again one more time before I continue.”

He picked up the toy and held it against her clit while he continued to pump his fingers in and out of her. “That’s a good girl. Come all over my fingers. I want to feel it. Show me how desperate you are for this.”

Her whimpers grew louder as the orgasm built.

“Please let me come,” she cried when the sensation was so intense, she was certain she might explode.

“Come.”

When she squeezed his fingers, he pushed forward again and worked his pinky inside her. Then he tossed her the bottle of lube, and she knew they were getting to the hard part.

Getting past his knuckles was painful, but it was also the part that pushed so much sensation against her clitoral nerves from the inside, that she was positive her clit would explode any second as he pumped in and out of her until he finally pushed in, sending a sharp twinge of pain rolling through her.

She used the bottle to add more lube for him, and he continued until the last joint of his thumb had breached her tender entrance. Fisting was one of those kinks that often led to kink shaming. Sometimes people even questioned the mental health of those who enjoyed it, but there was nothing wrong with either of them, and they did it because it fed their most basic desires.

The music changed just as he formed a fist inside her, and she gasped as he rotated his wrist in time to the frantic orchestra music.

“Russell, please. I need to come again,” she cried out.

“Tell me what you’re experiencing. How badly do you need it?”

She twisted her face and gripped the towel beneath her as she did her best to focus on his question instead of the fact that

her clit seemed like it was a balloon being over-inflated. That was such an appropriate description, she went with it and told him exactly that.

He chuckled and leaned forward, blowing cool air over the swollen nub. She jerked, and he stilled her with a hand on her shoulder. “Careful, baby. You must need it pretty bad.”

“Please, Sir,” she whimpered.

“You can come. Squeeze my fist, baby.” As he spoke, he dragged one finger of his other hand over her clit and that was all it took. She convulsed around him, and he continued turning his wrist to drag out the orgasm.

Once he was inside, he never stayed long because she would get too worked up and risk injury from all her moving as the orgasms became more and more intense.

But he worked four more orgasms out of her with dirty talk and gentle external stimulation.

“That’s a good girl. Are you going to remember who you belong to from now on?” he asked when the fourth one crashed into her, and she screamed out his name.

“Yes, Sir. I’ve never forgotten. But the reminders are so... so fucking good.” She was breathless as the last tremors of the orgasm left her.

“They are so good. I love how perfectly your cunt wraps around my hand.”

He picked up the vibrator and handed it to her.

“Last one, baby. I’m going to pull out now. My cock needs to be inside you soon.”

Exiting could sometimes hurt worse than entering, but if she used the toy on her clit while he eased out, it made it easier to tolerate.

“You’re fucking amazing, Gemma. Never forget that.”

She turned the toy on and nodded for him to begin the process of pulling his hand free.

The final orgasm crashed into her right as he got to the hardest part, and the pleasure and pain combined to send her off a cliff so intense she wasn’t sure she was coming back from it.

But soon he was pulling the toy away from her and stretching his body over hers. When had he removed his clothes? She barely remembered him moving after he’d pulled his fist out of her.

“Do you want me in your sore little pussy or your tight little ass?” he asked, tweaking one nipple as he kissed her softly.

“Take my ass, Sir,” she begged.

“Good choice, love. I was planning to have all of your holes before this trip was over.”

He helped her roll over, and he tugged the first two layers of towels off the bed, so they weren’t rolling around in a puddle of lube while he fucked her ass.

He traced a finger over her tight back entrance, and she tried to push against it, desperate for his cock.

“How long have you been mine?” he asked as cold lube trickled over her.

“Five years, Sir,” she said with a smile, knowing exactly where this question was going.

“And how long will you continue to be mine?”

His thick cock pressed against her now, and he grabbed her hips.

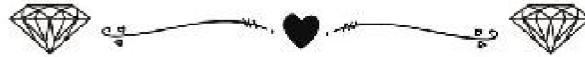
“Forever, Sir. I’m yours forever.”

When he had his answer, he shoved into her, and he fucked her hard.

“That’s right, love.” His words were mixed with grunts as he slammed in and out her, and she cried out, begging him to come inside her.

Her pleading sent him over the edge, and his fingers sank deeper into her skin, as he tensed up and came with a loud roar.

Chapter 9



Gemma

Gemma sank into the hot tub in Kendall's suite, while her sister sat on the edge with a flute of sparkling cider.

"You're looking happier than the last time I saw you," Kendall said.

They'd been together for a couple of days now, and Matthew and Russell were out skiing with David and Emily, leaving the two sisters alone for a few hours.

"I really am. Russell and I talked about adoption briefly after everything that happened with Melissa."

Kendall rested her hand on her rounded belly. "I was beside myself that we weren't here to help. But I'm glad Holly had you. Adoption sounds like a great idea. Let me tell you, I would kill to have a proper drink right now."

Gemma was drinking cider in solidarity with her sister but could have used a drink herself. And possibly a cigarette after the way Russell woke her this morning. She was sore enough that the hot tub was almost a necessity if she was going to survive another week of Russell's undivided attention in the bedroom.

Kendall grinned. "I recognize that look. You and Russell are being freaky again."

Gemma blushed and splashed hot water at her sister. "Like you and Matthew aren't?"

Kendall blushed. “I can’t help it. Pregnancy makes me super horny. I can’t tell if it’s the hormones or the fact that me being pregnant has turned Matthew into this super strict Dom. He’s always been demanding, but holy shit. His possessiveness grew to a whole new level when he found out he knocked me up.”

Gemma put her hands over her ears. “I am not listening to your nasty talk about my ex-husband.”

Kendall snorted, but before she could respond with a sassy retort, her phone rang, and she swung her legs out of the hot tub and ran to answer it.

Her face turned red, but she grinned at Kendall and said, “Yes, Sir. We’ll be ready.”

“Matthew says we should put on something festive and meet him and Russell in the library at exactly four-thirty.”

Gemma’s brow wrinkled, and she reached for her phone which sat on the side of the jacuzzi. It was almost two now, and she had no instructions of her own from Russell.

“What the hell is festive supposed to mean?” she asked.

Kendall shrugged. “Festive can be anything.”

She smirked and sent Russell a dirty text as payback for him not calling her himself.

My sister says anything can be festive. Does that include me wrapped around your fist?

His response came quicker than she expected since he was supposed to be skiing, but it made her face turn bright red and she had to climb out of the hot tub.

I don't know. We made fisting pretty festive the other day. I even played Christmas music and lit holiday scented candles. Perhaps next time I'll use peppermint lube.

Peppermint anything would make everything ten times more intense down there.

“Want to get dressed now and go sit in that cute little bar downstairs? I'll try not to enjoy my alcohol too much.”

Kendall flipped her off but grinned. “Sounds good. Has to be more exciting than Matthew hovering and telling me to keep my feet up.”

Gemma dreaded what Russell would be like if and when she ever got pregnant, but after their conversations over the past couple of days, she was feeling more relaxed about the entire subject. They would have a child one way or another, and that knowledge relieved so much stress.

When they were dressed, they headed for the bar where they sat at a small table and let a server wait on them. Gemma ordered a gin and tonic, and Kendall asked for sparkling water and fondue.

“If I can't have alcohol, I'll just eat my weight in cheese,” she quipped.

“That’s the spirit. See, Nora, we should definitely get the fondue with our drinks.”

“That’s not fair,” Kendall said when she spied the stranger behind her. “You get to have both.”

The man in the navy ski jacket grinned. “I’m Jude. Allow me to pay for the fondue and we can share it as my way of saying congratulations and apologies at the same time.”

Kendall chuckled and held up her ring finger.

The man held up his hands. “I wasn’t flirting. I was simply suggesting that the four of us share some fondue since we’re all on vacation in the same place.”

Kendall introduced herself, and the two launched into a lively conversation about where they were from, why they were here, and whether or not one pot of fondue was enough for the four of them.

Gemma was watching the redheaded woman in the beige puffy jacket that was at least one size too big. The one he’d called Nora. She looked like she wanted to crawl into a hole or clobber Jude over the head for striking up a conversation with a stranger.

Gemma felt the same way. Russell befriended random strangers at any event they attended, and Kendall had been talking to strangers for as long as she could remember. She often thought it was her sister’s ability to talk to anyone and make them feel like they belonged was what made her such an excellent spy.

“Do you ever contemplate chaining him to the bed in the morning so he can’t embarrass you by talking to every stranger he meets?” Gemma asked the mortified redhead. “Because I think about it with my husband all the time.”

The woman laughed. “Oh, we’re not... Jude isn’t... we’re just friends.”

Gemma pursed her lips and raised an eyebrow. Nora clearly had feelings for Jude despite her protestations, but she would not put the poor girl on the spot and call her out.

Instead, she patted the empty seat at the table. “I can already tell you that Kendall is going to take him up on his offer to share the fondue. Because despite her threats to eat the entire thing on her own, she’ll have a few bites and be done. So, you might as well get comfortable, darling.”

Nora cracked a small smile and sat down.

Gemma glanced at her watch. “The good news is, my sister and I have to be at a function in the library at four-thirty, so there’s a built-in cutoff time for this awkward encounter. I’m Gemma Adler.”

Jude—who had pulled out the fourth chair and made himself comfortable—leaned forward. “I’m sorry, did you say Adler? Any relation to Russell?”

Gemma wrinkled her forehead and nodded. “Husband. How did you know?”

“I joined the search for that poor little girl. I’m so glad they found her. He was great at keeping everyone organized and

calm.”

Gemma smiled with pride. “He’s a security specialist.”

“Jude, we really shouldn’t bother these poor women.”

“Relax, Nora. We’re here to have fun. What’s more fun than making friends?”

Nora rolled her eyes. “I tried to make friends yesterday, and you got all irritated. I knew I should have just stayed upstairs with my book.”

“That guy was an asshole.”

Gemma tried to keep the peace. There was no need for a lover’s quarrel—even if they denied being lovers right now. She put a hand on Nora’s shoulder to pull her attention from Jude. “You like to read? My husband and I are both huge readers. Have you seen the library here?”

Nora nodded. “It’s gorgeous. I’m a librarian back home and I definitely wish public libraries were that cozy.”

The foursome somehow fell into a comfortable conversation that flowed until they finished the fondue and their drinks.

Jude insisted on covering everything by telling the server to put it all on his room, and Gemma gave Nora her phone number even though Russell would claim it wasn’t safe. It was obvious these two had zero idea who she and Kendall were.

When they all stood to leave, Gemma hugged Nora.

“Take it from me and don’t fight the attraction if it’s there. You’ll be so much happier when you finally give in.”

Nora spluttered and tried to protest again, but Gemma just winked. “Send me an invitation to the wedding.”

Kendall laughed and looped her arm through Gemma’s as they headed for the elevator. “You’re ridiculous, you know that?”

“Me? I’m not the one agreeing to share fondue with complete strangers.”

They were still bantering back and forth when they reached the library to find both their spouses waiting on them.

“What’s going on?” Gemma asked when Russell held his hand out for hers and used his shoulder to push open the library door.

“Shhh. We’re waiting on Holly and Elijah so we can surprise them.”

“Surprise them with...” her voice trailed off when she saw what her husband had done.

The library was filled with familiar faces from Club Solitaire. Austin and Patrick, Hunter and Trinity, Samuel, and Erin. Even Jax and Dakota had showed up and lately they rarely left Dakota’s ranch in Texas.

Lance and Marissa were snuggled on one couch, and Isabelle and Garrett were on another.

“David and Emily are bringing Holly and Elijah. We’re going to have a little family reunion.”

Gemma shook her head and threw her arms around her husband. “This was the phone call you made the other night, wasn’t it?”

Russell laughed and kissed her tenderly. “It took a few more calls than just one, but yes. Elijah mentioned it had been too long since we were all in the same room, so I made a few calls to see when everyone could get in.”

She wanted to run around the room hugging everyone, but Russell kept her by his side. “We can visit with everyone after the others get here,” he assured her.

His phone buzzed, and he pulled it out of his shirt pocket to check it.

He gave Matthew a thumbs up, and he turned out the lights.

Somewhere in the dark, a woman giggled, followed by a loud shushing sound.

“I’m jet lagged and need a martini, Russell. Let’s get this show on the road.”

Dakota’s voice was recognizable, and Gemma stifled a laugh.

The door opened, and Elijah stepped in first with Melissa holding his hand.

“It’s dark in here, Daddy,” she whispered.

The lights came up and for a few seconds, chaos erupted as Holly squealed and everyone jumped up for hugs. It took a solid ten minutes for everyone to settle down enough for

Russell to thank everyone for dropping everything to get on a plane at the last minute.

“Gemma and I have been talking a lot about starting a family, but it wasn’t until we were out searching for Melissa the other day that I remembered we already have the best family anyone could hope for, and a reunion was long overdue.”

Gemma’s eyes were brimming with unshed tears when she went to him and wrapped her arms around him.

“This is the best Christmas we’ve had so far.”

He kissed the tip of her nose, but before he could go any farther, Melissa came running up to him.

“Uncle Russell, look! I got to put the star on the Christmas tree yesterday.”

She held up a Polaroid print of Elijah lifting her to the top of a tree, while she placed a shiny Christmas star on top.

Russell bent down and scooped her up just as Holly came running after her.

“Sorry about that. She got away. Is she showing off her picture? She’s very proud of that. It was so sweet of the other little kids to let her put the star on top of the tree.”

Russell winked at Melissa and reached into his pants pocket. “She should be proud.”

To Melissa he said, “Got you something, sweetie.” He withdrew a colorful candy cane and handed it to her, making

her squeal with delight.

Holly came to hug Gemma and together they looked on as Russell opened the candy and gave it to Melissa.

“Is there anything about him that isn’t perfect?” Holly asked.

Gemma grinned. “You tell me? Is there anything about Elijah that isn’t perfect?”

Holly chuckled. “I see your point. We love them despite their quirks sometimes. Thank you so much for everything, Gemma. This is not the vacation I set out to have, but it has been exactly what I needed, aside from the terror of the other day. We all have our own lives, but Russell is right, we’re a family and we should spend more time together. I’m sorry I wasn’t in touch more when your mother died.”

Gemma hugged her again; afraid the poor woman was going to burst into tears at any moment.

“Don’t think anything of it, darling. You’ve got a lot on your plate. We love each other even when we don’t talk or see each other. That’s how a real family is.”

“I wish you were joining us in New Orleans. Kit has done something really special with this new place.”

Gemma smiled. “We’ll be visiting soon. New Orleans is a great city. I’m sure we can all find a reason to be there sometime soon.”

Melissa started squirming out of Russell’s arms, and Holly squeezed her one more time before going to get her daughter.

“What are you thinking right now, love?” Russell asked when he stood next to her a few minutes later.

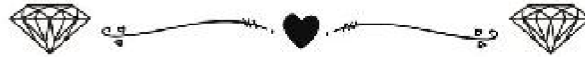
She leaned against him and looked out over the room at all the people who meant the most to her.

“I’m thinking we’re blessed, and I can’t wait to get back to the States where we can see everyone regularly again. What are you thinking?”

He pulled her in front of him, so her back was against his chest and wrapped his arms around her. “I’m thinking I can’t wait until it’s polite for us to slip out of here so I can take you back to bed.” He bent his head and kissed her neck, sending a shudder through her.

“How long until it’s polite to slip out?”

Chapter 10



Russell

The next couple of days passed by in a blur of fun with their chosen family, and before they knew it, it was Christmas morning. Most of the couples from Club Solitaire had left the previous morning to get back to their own Christmas plans, but a few were sticking around for Christmas dinner at the main resort restaurant later that day.

Now, though, Russell leaned against the door frame of the bedroom and watched Gemma sleep while he enjoyed his first cup of coffee. After a day of visiting with friends, they'd spent last night in front of the fire just enjoying each other's company. Eventually, he'd spread her out on the thick rug where he took his time bringing her to orgasm and driving her wild before taking her to bed where they fell asleep tangled up.

Gemma stirred and rolled onto her side. When she raised one eyelid, she turned her face into the pillow. "How can you possibly be awake after yesterday?"

He pushed off the doorway and set his coffee on the nightstand to crawl into bed with her again, pulling her close. "I didn't have four martinis with Dakota last night," he murmured before nipping her ear and kissing a trail down her neck to her bare shoulder.

"I'm glad someone was keeping track," she teased.

“It’s not my fault that you’re fun to look at. Merry Christmas, Treasure.” His hand slid from around her waist to cup her already wet pussy, and he let his fingers explore until she sighed and relaxed into him.

“Merry Christmas, Sir.”

They made slow, sleepy love for the next hour, with Russell exploring her body and Gemma giving him exactly what he wanted with her little sounds of pleasure. When he finally pushed into her, she was wide awake and begging him to fuck her.

He lost himself in her moments later, and when his pulse slowed and they were both breathing evenly again, he scooped her up and carried her to the shower.

By the time they were dressed, it was almost time for their breakfast to arrive.

“Can I give you one of your gifts now?” Gemma asked as she tied the belt on her silk robe.

Russell smiled and reached for her hand. “Only if you want to.”

She grinned and went to the narrow table by the door and picked up her purse. From it, she pulled an envelope. “It’s really more of a present for both of us,” she said before she handed it to him.

“What’s this?” he asked as turned it over in his hands.

“Why would I tell you that before you open it?”

Russell tore the corner off the envelope to create an opening so he could slip his thumb in and open it at one end.

A single page on Gemma's personal letterhead slid out and he unfolded it to read. It was a simple letter, but Russell scanned it three times before he looked up at her.

"Are you sure about this?"

"One hundred percent. The day we agreed to come here, I realized how much we need out of London. We'll still have to make trips back, but right now it's easier to stay longer than I really need to because we have a permanent residence."

The letter, addressed to her landlord, was a notice of intent to vacate in sixty days and was dated the first of January.

She came to him and wrapped her arms around his waist, laying her head against his chest. "Let's go home."

He stepped back and tilted her chin upward.

"I'm more than happy to move back to California. But anywhere you are is home for me, Treasure."

She beamed. "I know. And I feel the same about you. But we need this, and I'm ready."

They ate breakfast together before heading to the main lodge where they exchanged gifts with Matthew and Kendall and then spent the day reading together in the library until it was time for dinner with those who hadn't left yet. Namely, Holly, Elijah, David, Emily, Jax, Dakota, and Hunter and Trinity.

Russell kept a hand on his wife through most of the meal and looked around the large table in awe of the blessings in his life.

“What’s everyone doing to ring in the New Year?” Hunter asked.

“We’re going to the Solitaire Mansion opening,” Elijah answered.

Jax and Dakota were also making their way to New Orleans.

Matthew and Kendall had planned to stay at the lodge, but Kendall leaned over to Holly. “Do you want us to join you so you’re not the only pregnant woman not drinking there?”

Holly grinned. “I don’t want to ruin your plans, but it would make it that much more special to have you there. A bunch of the others are traveling in. It’s going to be so much fun.”

Kendall looked at Matthew who smiled. “If that’s what you want, Precious. Let’s do it.”

Gemma squeezed Russell’s hand. “I’m sorry I have this function. I wish I’d said no.”

Russell smiled at her. “Don’t worry about it, love. We’re going to have plenty of opportunities.”

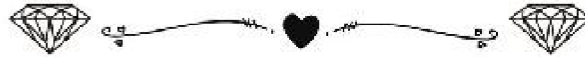
But she seemed down as she went back to her plate, and he considered the ways he might cheer her up. As they ate and laughed with their friends, he got an idea, and he couldn’t wait to get back to his phone to put things in motion.

That night as they walked back to their cabin, she snuggled close.

“Thank you so much for insisting we do this trip together.”

He kissed the top of her head. “My pleasure, love. Now let’s get inside. I want to make you scream for me, and then we need to get some sleep. I have one more surprise for you tomorrow.”

Chapter 11



Gemma

“God damn it, Russell. It’s Christmas. Let me come.”

Russell let out a sinister little chuckle as he pulled his fingers away from her aching pussy and smacked her inner thigh again.

“Not if that’s how you’re going to talk to me, love. You were doing so well.”

After they got back into their cabin, he stripped her and made her kneel in front of the tree with her hands clasped behind her head while he “took care of a few things” in the other room.

But he’d strapped a vibrator to her clit and put it on a low random pattern that would never get her off. Then he put nipple clamps on her nipples with red and green weights that stretched her nipples.

Then the bastard stayed in the bedroom for what had to have been an hour. She didn’t really know how long it had been, but that’s what it felt like.

“Damn, I should have had you like this the entire week. You make such a pretty addition to the decorations,” he said when he returned, looking pleased with himself.

“How is your cunt?”

“Needy,” she whispered, trying her best to sound submissive, even though she was annoyed.

“Good.”

He bent and flicked the weights on the nipple clamps, making her hiss.

“Stand up, love.”

She stood, and he helped her lower her arms, gently rubbing the soreness out of them. Then he cupped her pussy, pressing the toy harder against her clit while his fingers probed her entrance.

“Would you say that you’re remembering our dynamic better now?” He asked as he trailed kisses down her neck.

“Yes, Sir. Very much so. Thank you for reminding me.”

He captured her mouth in a deep kiss, taking his time as he explored. She squirmed against him, growing more and more desperate for release as the seconds ticked by.

“Please let me come,” she begged when he broke away from her now swollen lips.

He tilted his head to one side and smiled. “Soon, love. I have another present for you.”

She raised an eyebrow. “I thought you said your last surprise was tomorrow.”

He winked. “It is. This is something different.”

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small box.

She took it and opened it.

“What’s this?” she asked, staring at the small charm.

“A charm for your collar. I thought it was time to add a little something to it.”

It was a delicate silver charm that would link into the chain on her collar set with black diamonds. She lifted it from its velvet lining and looked at it closer.

Tears pricked her eyes as she read the inscription.

“Forever Treasured.” She read it aloud and looked at him with shining eyes.

“It’s gorgeous, Russell. Thank you.”

He kissed her deeply and took the piece from her. She tilted her head back to give him better access to her throat.

When the charm was in place, she couldn’t stop touching it until he ordered her back to the floor where he spread her out and was now torturing her pussy with hand slaps and edging until her outburst.

His hand landed on the inside of her other thigh, and she cried out.

“Please, I’m desperate.”

He reached up and pulled both clamps off her nipples.

Tears fell as he pulled one nipple into his mouth and sucked gently.

“I like you desperate,” he murmured against her ear as his fingers found her entrance again.

He brought her to the brink again and again until she was crying with frustration and need. And that was exactly where

he wanted her. Begging him for all of her pleasure. It was her favorite place to be, even if it was infuriating in the moment.

“Please, Sir,” she whispered, her voice hoarse from begging. “I’m so desperate to come for you.”

That seemed to do the trick because he let her fall.

And then he didn’t stop, forcing a half a dozen orgasms from her before he finally ditched his own clothing and slid into her, fucking her hard and fast, not drawing it out. When he found his release, he roared as he filled her, pinning her down as he trembled through the last of his orgasm.

That night, they fell asleep exhausted but so much closer than they were when they arrived. Gemma fell asleep excited about getting back to London to clean out the apartment and move home to the place where Russell first claimed her as his. They would raise their family there, whatever that family ended up looking like.

The next morning, she woke to find Russell zipping up a suitcase, and she sat up, rubbing her eyes.

“Is everything OK?”

He looked at her with a heated expression as his gaze traveled her naked form.

“Everything is perfect, Treasure. But you need to get up and get dressed. It’s time for your next surprise.”

She rolled out of bed and headed for the bathroom, not bothering with a robe. He clearly had a plan, so she would not question him.

In the bathroom, he'd set an outfit and the toiletries she would need for the morning on the counter. Russell was always thoughtful, and always prepared. Even when she felt like they weren't connecting, he was doing his best to anticipate her needs, and as soon as she spoke up, he addressed her concerns head on. She really was the luckiest woman alive.

She took a quick shower and brushed her teeth, then styled her hair wrapped in a towel. When she came out of the bathroom dressed, he had a jacket for her, and their suitcases were by the door.

“Are we leaving early?”

He winked. “Something like that.”

A car was waiting for them outside, and he opened the back door for her to slide in. When the bags were in the car, he slid in beside her and wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

“You're looking well fucked, and well rested, Mrs. Adler,” he murmured in her ear.

She flushed and smiled at him. “Thank you. My husband is very talented.”

He nipped at her ear, and her desire roared to life. “Hope he doesn't mind that I want to finger fuck you in the back of this car,” he teased.

She lifted one shoulder. “I won't tell if you don't.”

He growled and sank his teeth into her neck as the car pulled away from the cabin.

When they pulled up to the jet a few minutes later, she was horny as fuck and ready to ride him right there in the back seat. But there wasn't a privacy panel. Thankfully, the jet had a bedroom.

He still wasn't telling her where they were going as they boarded the plane, though.

Her mouth dropped open as she stepped into the main cabin and found Matthew and Kendall waiting for her.

"What's going on?" She asked, temporarily forgetting her need for an orgasm.

Russell put a finger to his lips, and Kendall pressed her lips together.

So, they weren't going to tell her either.

She huffed but sat in the seat Russell indicated for her.

The attendant poured them all coffee and presented an assortment of pastries for them to enjoy.

"We also need a round of mimosas—one virgin," Russell said.

The attendant disappeared into the galley and returned in a blink with a tray of drinks, which he carefully handed out.

As the plane sped down the runway a few minutes later, the pilot came over the speaker.

"Everything along our path looks clear, and we'll be touching down in New Orleans in just under fourteen hours."

Gemma's eyes widened, and she stared at her husband.
“What's happening, Russell?”

He grinned. “We're going to spend the New Year in New Orleans.”

“But what about the charity?”

He kissed her cheek. “I made some calls and found another speaker to take your place. You need a break from all of that. I want us to start the new year in the States. It will help us set the tone for our future going forward. Let's be with the people we love.”

She picked up his hand and brought it to her lips.

“I love you so fucking much.”

“I love you, too, Treasure.”

Then he raised his glass, and the others followed suit.

“To family,” Russell said.

They clinked their glasses and took a sip.

Gemma lifted her glass again. “To reconnecting.”

Russell smiled at her over the rim of his flute.

“To new additions and new traditions,” Matthew said, glancing at his wife's pregnant belly as he raised his glass.

Everyone looked at Kendall and she thought for a moment before she raised her glass.

“To ringing in the new year at Solitaire Mansion.”



Thank you so much for reading *Forever Treasured*. Are you curious about *Solitaire Mansion*?

I'm excited to announce that the new series will be here before you know it! In fact, I have a top-secret New Year's Eve surprise planned and if you signed up for a Holiday card from me, you'll be one of the first to get access to it. Unfortunately, sign-ups for that are already closed. But it will be available to my newsletter on New Year's Eve! If you want to get access to it, make sure you're signed up for my newsletter. You can also pre-order the first *Solitaire Mansion* book [here](#).

If you're new to the Ivy Nelson universe, you may be curious about how Gemma and Russell got together. You can find out in *Forever*, the final book in the *Diamond Doms* series. However, I really recommend you start at the beginning with Book one, *Blood*.

Thank you again for reading, and I can't wait to hear what you think! Reviews are an indie author's best tool for getting the word out about our books, so if you loved it, I would love a review on Amazon or wherever you review books.

ALSO BY IVY NELSON

Diamonds of Club Solitaire

**Blood
Heist
Bling
Pressure
Ice
Mine
Rough
Flawless
Forever**

ALSO BY IVY NELSON

Club Exposure

Hidden

Protected

Secret

Shadow

Masked

Hushed

Sin City Suits

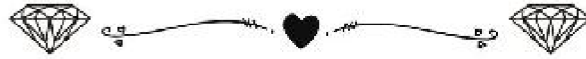
High Bar

High Class

High Stakes

High Roller

About the Author



Ivy Nelson writes delicious contemporary romance with kinky alpha heroes and sassy heroines you wish could be your best friend. Club Solitaire is her favorite fictional place to hang out in, and she spends most of her free time spinning tales set there.

Ivy is an active member of the kink community and strives to write authentic kink while still catering to reader fantasies and requests. Above all else, Ivy writes characters she loves and puts them into worlds she would want to live in. That means sassy kick-ass women, and protective men who know when to step in and when to step back.

Ivy currently lives in Las Vegas with her husband of five years and their son. She loves walking the Vegas strip with a margarita, binge watching Criminal Minds for glimpses of Shemar Moore's bare chest, and getting emails from her readers. When she isn't writing, she's probably reading something dirty or drinking wine with her readers on Facebook.

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