

THE PETROV FAMILY



NIKOLAI
PETROV

M.A. Cobb

Nikolai Petrov

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Preface

This book contains very dark themes.

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Dedication

For everyone who glances twice at a silver fox

Grinds a little too hard on Santa's lap

Likes to be face first in a pillow while getting spanked

This is for you

Chapter One

NIKOLAI



I stare so intensely at him, small beads of sweat pearl on his temples and slide down his quivering jaw.

“You are testing my patience, Mr. Dawson. Will the permits be ready in time, or not?” Pushing my leather seat back from the ornate confines of my desk, my steps are slow as I circle to stand directly in front of him.

The snap of the lid of my cigar box is the only sound in the room besides his uncomfortable panting.

“I’m sorry, sir. The last of the environmental assessment studies haven’t been completed yet.” His bloodshot eyes bounce between me and the door.

“Hmm.” The sound carries from deep within my chest as I fight to hide my frustrations. “It is too bad that your little girl, what was her name? Ah, yes. Your little girl Stacy—”

His Adam's apple bobs in his fervent swallowing and his fingers dig into the stiff arms of his chair.

“—she will be so disappointed to learn that her daddy was the reason she misses school.”

The flame of my lighter dances in his tear-filled eyes.

Smoke plumes from my nostrils in a charade of how heated my ire burns within me.

“I-I, um, I'll do my best, sir.” He shifts on his seat in a poor attempt to hide the small stain of urine darkening his trousers. It seems my reputation precedes me.

“I, too, am a father. I know I would do *anything* to keep my children safe. That is why these permits need to be finished so I can add the guest houses for their visit.”

My cigar becomes a pointer which I push near his trembling chin for emphasis. “Would you do anything to keep your children safe? Stacy and little Liam?”

Naming his family hurries the dampening mark and the smell of his fear forms a puddle near his shoe.

“Y-yes. I would.” A flash of red forms on the inside of his lips when he speaks. The pussy has bitten through his own lip.

“Then do it. I'm sure there are many places that children run off to hide that are never discovered. It would be a shame if yours found one of those places.” My desk creaks as I lean back against it. My suit jacket tightens over my arms as I cross them. I take a languid draw on the expensive cigar before pursing my lips as if in thought. “Maybe it's that beautiful

wife of yours that would like to play hide and seek instead, Mr. Dawson? Do you think a woman of that caliber would stay with a man who cannot protect his own?"

I reach behind me and flip through a small stack of papers before finding the one that had caught my eye earlier today. A photograph of a blue eyed brunette hugging two young children as they play in the park.

His face pales as I hand it to him. "They are quite lovely, are they not? Take it. I have more. A memento of our conversation."

The paper wilts in his grasp.

"Now go. Call my secretary once everything is ready."

The thin man scrambles to get up without touching me. His hand slips on the door in his rush to leave.

"Tell Vicky to send the cleaning crew."

The fucking dog. Pissing on my floor like a whipped pup.

Sitting back in my chair, I bite the cigar between my teeth to help fight the smell he left behind.

Perhaps next time, I'll wipe his face in it.

My schedule app pops up on my cell phone. Ah, yes. Meeting with the committee tonight. We will have it in my study instead of the conference room. Nearly half the members are out of town. My boys. My sons are out of town.

It seems so empty without them here. They're off in each corner of the country keeping the family business running.

Each in their specialty, building our reputation and reach.

I'm proud of them. And, I can't wait to see them again this Christmas.

Which is why that vermin Dawson better get his shit together. I want this year to be perfect.

The ten year anniversary of their mother's death seemed a fitting time to gather them again.

Glancing at her photo, surrounded by our sons in their youth, I never expected that the very next summer she would be gone.

My knuckles pop as my fist squeezes tight. The years that followed were a blur as I chased power and revenge.

I passed that fervor to my sons.

"Mr. Petrov? Is now a good time for the housekeeper?" Vicki's aged voice crackles through the speaker of the intercom.

Shaken from my memories, the worn button gives easily as I push it. "Yes, thank you."



Smoke hangs heavily over the dimly lit room. The smell of scotch and expensive cologne linger in circular swaths around each of the six men in the overstuffed chairs.

The room reeks of corruption and wealth. They all know their roles, and are well compensated for it.

“Chekov, what is the status of the docks?” My home desk is even more impressive than the one in my office. The elevated platform it sits on adds to the intimidation.

The portly man with a birthmark on his face reminds me of Gorbachev. My parents often said he was the reason they left the Motherland to settle here in Chicago.

“Two more containers are missing. Cops busted one shipment last week. But seem to have settled on the front man. No connections, boss.” His brow is always sweaty and his eyes dart through his fattened cheeks.

“O’Conner?” The lean redhead sits up in his chair. A glint off of his Rolex betrays the humble police chief exterior he tries to portray.

“Yes, boss?” A subtle Irish accent tinges his words.

“Make sure it stays on the front man.” He nods as my gaze shifts to the man on his right and fixes on one of my oldest associates. “And Ivanov? See that the front man is compensated and released early.”

His graying head dips, but he doesn’t talk. He rarely does after he remarried a few years ago. But, his marriage to Svetlana Koskovich ended the bloodshed after years of chasing the demons who killed my precious wife.

I’ll be forever in his debt. I’ve heard rumors Svetlana is a fucking bitch.

His turmoil is built into the lines around his eyes as he squints at me. He's aged thirty years in the last four.

He's also one of the best at moving product in our organization. The new ties to his wife's family are helping immensely.

"Will you be able to move the next six thousand kilos coming in next week? Mikhal has a shipment of pistols due to arrive in three days. Let us make sure they arrive safely and that there's enough distributed to ease the pressure of moving the coke."

Mikhail is my oldest son. He's also my most dependable.

"I'll make sure it goes smoothly, boss. And, we'll be ready for the increase in product movement next month." Peter Ivanov's words are deep and measured. "When did you say he is returning?" Gray eyebrows barely move with his words.

"They're all coming home for Christmas this year. So I'm planning a grand reception in the new wing once it's built." I press the cinder from my cigar into an ebony ashtray to mask my excitement over the thought.

"Is that why you're sporting that Santa Clause beard?" Ivanov's eyes light up and his mustache twitches in a teasing smile.

The other men laugh carefully. They know Ivanov is the only one who can give me a jab without recourse. He's earned that right.

My thick fingers dig through my lengthened beard. It's just long enough I can just grab it between my fingers and tug. But, it's a far sight from the length of St. Nick.

“Fucking Santa. My beard isn't white. Salt and pepper maybe.” My boys bring home babies, it may turn white. I can't fight the flutter of yearning in my gut. I'd love to be a grandpa. Our world is a dark one, children are one of the few lights in it.

Leaning forward, I let a lecherous grin twist my lips. “Maybe I'll find me a hot little elf to sit on my lap.”

The laughter that fills the room is genuine this time.

Chekov raises a snifter of vodka in my direction before wincing the swallow down. “It will be a very good Christmas then, boss.” He smiles past the gaps in his teeth.

Chapter Two

NATALIA



She pinches the two small red pills between her manicured nails as she gestures impatiently at me.

“Don’t be an entitled little bitch. Just take the fucking things so I don’t have to call security to hold you down again.” Svetlana cocks her bony hip under her flowing white slacks and waves her hand again.

“No, please don’t make them do that!” I can’t hide the tremble in my voice at the memory. Heavy handed men pinning my arms while she covered my nose and mouth until I swallowed.

She didn’t take them away until after I passed out.

A shiver runs through me, hurrying my reach to take the horrid drugs from her outstretched claw.

I fucking hate her.

She's made me an addict. The shaking doesn't stop in my limbs as I swallow the meds dry with practiced ease.

It's the same dance we've been doing for years. I almost welcome the fog now. Knowing that I'm destined to marry her monster of a brother soon nearly has me begging for the entire bottle at once.

"Now, go get cleaned up for dinner. Do something with that disgusting red mop of hair. Your father should be ashamed of himself having that red headed whore of a wife passing down her weak genes to you." She turns on her high heel and slams the door shut behind her.

Tears threaten to spill down my cheeks. Mother has been dead for almost six years, and Svetlana's derogatory remarks still hurt as if she passed yesterday.

Cancer doesn't mean she was weak. She was the strongest woman I knew.

A knot forms in my throat and I glance at the clock. Only a few more minutes to feel the pain of her loss raging through me until the numbness sets in.

My stepmother is right. I do look like my mother. Watching the brush work down my long copper colored hair, I meet my own green eyes in the mirror. My mother's eyes.

I see the recognition in Father's face sometimes. The pain he feels when he looks at me.

If only I could save the daily doses of poison. It would take away my heartache and his.

Dinner is the same every night. Svetlana sits at one end of our long table, Father at the other and I'm in between.

No one talks.

She occasionally will scoff at my clumsy movements, but I don't care. It's her fault I am this way.

I'm slumped in my chair and pushing peas through mashed potatoes when his phone rings, breaking the oppressive silence.

"Nikolai. Yes. Yes. I understand, I will see you soon." I miss the deep timbre of his voice. How long has it been since Father has talked to me?

Not long after I was forced into betrothal with his wife's brother. He had no say, and now seems to have abandoned me to my fate.

That's just how it's done in our families. No one weds for love, only power.

The peas form a frowning face on my plate. They mimic my mood.

"—Natalia!" My name from his lips sounds foreign. It takes a moment to register through my stupor that he's talking to me.

Exhausting effort drags my eyes to him. His neck is red. That always means he's angry when the blotchy color creeps out of his collar.

“Yes?” I can barely talk. It’s hard to roll the words over my swollen tongue when I’m high as a lost balloon.

Rich tones of his voice pour over me. It feels so good to hear him talk. My gaze fixes on his hand, waving in my direction.

The fingers tighten into a fist that bounces the cutlery when it strikes the table.

“Do you understand what I told you?” A vein pops from his temple and his dark eyes flash as he glares at me.

“I-I’m sorry. What did you say?” Did he ask me a question? I don’t remember.

Svetlana’s voice makes soothing sounds toward him before she slides away from the table.

I know I should care. I just don’t.

The peas form a smiley face now. If only each little green orb was one of those red pills. I’d dish them by the spoonful and wash them down with the red wine adorning my father’s glass.

A warm hand tightens around my wrist and wrenches my arm back until my elbow cries out.

“Natalia!” My father’s eyes are inches from mine. When did he move?

“You are twenty two years old! Stop playing with your food and leave this room. Nikolai will be here any—” His face freezes as a heavy knock echoes through the house.

Father releases my hand. “Don’t say a word,” he hisses before he disappears.

I don’t know if I could talk if I wanted to. Red lines garnish my arm where his fingers had gripped me. The edges soften into purple lines as fresh bruises form.

He hurt me.

Father has never done that before. Even as a child when I may have deserved a spanking, he wouldn’t raise his hand.

What is wrong with me?

Deep voices rock me like a skiff on a gentle wave. I hear my name again and I struggle against the foggy current to pay attention to his words.

“Do you remember my boss, Nikolai Petrov?” His voice is gentle. Maybe I just imagined his anger.

I need to really concentrate. This feels important.

The blurry outline of the strange man sitting across from me clears. He’s bigger than my father, but lean like him. A dark mustache over a graying beard gives him a sophisticated look.

It’s the pierce of his caramel eyes that goes through me. They don’t carry hatred for me, but soften as I meet them.

Too bad it’s likely pity.

“Very nice to meet you Mr. Petrov.” I surprise myself at the cohesion of my words.

“Natalia.” The syllables roll from his tongue like warm liquor, a stinging heat that bites me with the realization he’s

the first person to see me outside of the household in months.

He turns back to my father while idly stroking his beard. The tattoos that peek from his crisp white cuffs seem to dance and intertwine beneath the large watch and heavy ring on his hand. His voice fades into a hypnotic croon as I watch his fingers work up and down through the short hairs on his jaw.

The tone he uses conveys an overwhelming sense of power and authority. He's used to being obeyed. "Do not worry Ivanov. Just because that piece of shit rolled, it does not mean it will come back to you. Getting that larger contract you negotiated for next month is important. I will keep you safe." His gaze shifts to me. I'm lost in the color of his eyes. Almost golden, like a lion's. "I will keep all of you safe," he says as he flattens his palms on the table to rise.

"Thank you, boss." Father sounds almost humble.

Nikolia adjusts his dark suit jacket and I catch a glimpse of his snug dress shirt beneath it moving over his chest. Another array of tattoos disappear into the 'v' of his collar.

He looks like a man no one would mess with.

Maybe he really can protect us.



I'm having the same dream every night. Mr. Petrov stops Svetlana from giving me the pills and throws her out of the room.

“I will keep you safe.” His words echo over and over, even in my thickest haze.

But, she stands here as she always does. Fingers extending and brushing back a perfectly styled dark curl from her shoulder.

I don't hesitate. Their familiar shape goes down easily.

“You're staying in your room for dinner tonight. Mr. Petrov is coming back, and you will not disgrace your father again with your presence.” Her already upturned nose pokes higher to the ceiling in her disdain.

All I can do is nod. She doesn't want me to speak, just accept.

The door has barely slammed marking her departure before I'm running to the bathroom. Shoving my fingers down my throat, I try to summon every disgusting thing I've ever witnessed to spasm my stomach.

Two red dots swirl in the water when I flush.

I need to move quickly.

Chapter Three

NIKOLAI



“It is fine, Peter. The louse has been removed. Chekov had one of his men inside eradicate the bug.” I roll the glass with the last of the vodka over the smooth top of Ivanov’s table. “The good news is if any of this escapes, it won’t go to you, but to your in-laws.” The acrid burn of the fiery liquor burns a sweet path as I swallow the rest.

His body slumps in the chair. “That would be almost as bad, boss. They already hold me in ill-regard. Svetlana’s brother is being released next month. I worry about the impending rampage in his quest to rebuild their family’s power.” Ivanov’s bushy gray eyebrows hide the worry in his face as he stares down at his own glass. The hard set of his jaw tells me everything. Thirty years of working by his side, I’ve learned to read him.

“My boys are working at removing the threats around the country. Soon, Koskovich and his family will be too weak to be a threat.” Pride rests in the bloodbath my sons have laid in every corner. They honor our legacy well.

A tickle of anticipation twitches my stomach. Only a few months and all of my sons will be home.

Ivanov sighs and sits back into his chair. “It may be too late for me. I’m too entrenched in their fucked up family.” His dark eyes meet mine, sorrow etching the edges.

“No, no. It’s a good day.” I clap him on the shoulder as I step away from the table. “This fire is out. Let us bask in the ashes of another coward fallen.”

“Yes, boss. I thank you for your help and for protecting me.” His accent is thicker as the alcohol grips him. The drink he shared with me must not have been his first.

“Sleep well friend.”

The cool air of the night feels good on my flushed face. I don’t often imbibe in the drink of our Motherland as often, preferring the smoother texture of bourbon.

But, tonight was a night to celebrate.

Dark leather embraces me as I relax into the driver’s seat of my Lincoln. There was no need for my driver tonight, Ivanov doesn’t live far from my own estate.

A curt nod to the guard at my gate and I pull into the sweeping driveway to the sprawling home. Over twenty

thousand square feet after my latest addition was built, and yet still not large enough for my family.

Five new foundations are arranged on either side, guest houses for my sons. It's irritating that the work has been halted, I am hoping to have it be a surprise for their visit this winter.

A safe respite should they ever have families. Privacy to ensure a lengthy visit.

I cannot wait until the halls of the main house ring with the laughter of children again. It has been far too long since the youngest has grown and moved out.

The bay door of the garage has just begun its downward journey when the glaring lights of the garage pop on.

One foot hits the polished concrete when a small voice startles my thoughts.

“Mr. Petrov?”

Jerking myself from the seat, I throw open the rear door and pull the small dark form free from the backseat.

Pinning it against the side of my sedan, one hand holds the throat while my other digs for the knife that is always hidden in my belt.

Action ingrained in instinct has me nearly slicing the neck of the intruder before tear filled green eyes catch my gaze.

Natalia Ivanov.

“What the fuck are you doing in my car? Does your father know you are here?” My fingers loosen, but I still hold her pushed into the fender.

The pink of her lower lip trembles. “You said you would keep us safe.” Her hands rest on my wrist gripping her neck, but she makes no move to pull my arm away.

I can feel my eyes tighten as I stare at her. The last time I saw her, I didn’t look too closely. Now, I take in the copper ringlet falling over her brow, the soft peak of her lips as she chews nervously on them. Flushed cheeks bely the heat that burns into my palm.

If she wasn’t the daughter of my closest friend, I would call her beautiful.

But, tonight, I call her intruder.

“You didn’t answer my question. Explain why I shouldn’t just throw your decapitated corpse in the river for sneaking into my car?” The adrenaline of the surprise is turning into anger at her deception.

“Mr. Petrov. Please. I’m begging you to keep me safe!” I can feel the trembling of her jaw against my thumb.

“Safe from what? That is your father’s job. It is not mine.” Pulling my hand from her, I try to wipe the warmth of her skin across my chest before sliding the knife back into its sheath.

She is no threat. A petite girl with fear in her eyes hiding within a dark hooded sweatshirt.

“From the Koskovich’s!” she yells after I turn away.

That gives me pause. Even with the truce, it is still their family that caused so much of my own pain and suffering.

I raise my hand, still facing away from her. Beckoning with a single finger for her to follow.

“Tell me more.”

The car door slams and her light footsteps follow me from the garage through the foyer to the main kitchen. “Svetlana has been keeping me drugged since she married my father.” The heaviness of the soft lilt of her words still my feet.

Tension flares my shoulders as I look at her. “She what?” Four years they’ve been married. She’s been on drugs this entire time?

The timid arch of her neck and the narrow sweep of her brows scream the truthfulness of her claim. “Since I was eighteen and I rebelled. She wished to keep me quiet and complacent. Please, Mr. Petrov. You are the only one I know that is more powerful than her. Is it true what you said? That you would keep me safe?”

Her pale fingers touch my wrist that feels like a silent plea. The tip of her thumb skiffs the bare skin above my own with a scalding brush.

Fuck.

With a groan I pull my arm away and try to wipe the frustration from my face.

A decanter of bourbon sits on the large island with a glass. My chef always keeps one in the same spot for me. Tonight,

I'm especially grateful.

The liquor burns a comfortable path to blend with the vodka in my stomach. A warm knot forms as I contemplate my words.

“You have fled your gilded cage into the lion’s den, little bird. I will gladly kill the enemies of our families, but your father is like a brother to me. Have you tried to talk to him?” Spreading my hands over the cool granite of the counter, the thought of pressing my forehead against it flickers through me.

Her lithe form slips into one of the bar stools as she drops her bag and she crosses the heavy sleeves of the sweatshirt in front of her. “My father has been fed the lie that I struck Svetlana and that I’m a petulant brat.”

A smile tugs the corner of my lips. “Did you?” Perhaps she’s feistier than she appears.

Her lips flatten into her teeth. “I tried. But, I missed. So, she called her goons to hold me down and knocked me out. It’s been that way ever since. If I don’t swallow her pills, they hold me down.” Her shiver creaks the chair.

Holy shit, Ivanov. What have you been dealing with?

Looking around the darkened room, I see a spill of moonlight breaking through one of the far windows. It’s too late to deal with this tonight.

“Fine. You may stay here tonight. But I’m not lying to your father if he calls looking for you.” I fill my glass to the brim and start walking towards the west hall.

Her footsteps are overshadowed by mine echoing from the slate floors.

“You can stay in one of the guest rooms. Here.” I stop in front of an ornate gilded door. The dark wood looks nearly black in the dim light of the sconces.

“Thank you, Mr. Petrov.” Her lips purse delicately as they form my name.

My lecherous mind holds to the fact I haven’t had a woman sleep in this wing since my wife died all those many years ago.

A guttural grunt works its way from my chest. “If there’s an emergency, my room is at the end of the hall. The servant’s quarters are at the end of the west hall.” I gesture back the way we came.

With a nod, she turns and pushes against the heavy door. The soft light reflects from her hair like a burning ember in the night.

I have a brief urge to touch it to see if it scorches my fingers, but manage to keep my hands to myself and head down to the master suite.

My life is going to be much more complicated, I can just feel it.

Chapter Four

NATALIA



My hands shake and my stomach rolls. But, the relief of being able to stay the night is immeasurable.

This room is a little larger and more lavish than my own, but it's comfortable. A large bathroom adjoins it where I slide my bag off my shoulder onto the floor.

I made it away.

Even if it's for just tonight, I'm safe from her and the brutes she keeps.

Sadness creeps in thinking about Father, but he has lost all his love for me a long time ago.

Maybe Mr. Petrov can help me to escape. The spicy scent of his cologne still lingers in the air. For being the same age as my father, he certainly looks younger and in better health.

Seeing him with clear eyes, I'd have never guessed he was in his fifties without the gray in his beard.

A tremor in my hands catches my eye in the mirror as I sweep my hair back from my face. Why am I so anxious? I should feel relieved.

But, my heart feels like it's beating out of my chest and my limbs feel as if ants are crawling on them.

Nerves, I'm sure.

Finishing in the bathroom doesn't take long, then I slide the heavy dark hoodie onto the chair near the bed. The black khaki pants hit the floor before I crawl in bed with just my panties and a light tank top.

Cool silk sheets rub against my fevered skin and for a moment I'm comfortable.

Sweat soon soaks them. Kicking the cloying fabric from my legs, the darkness becomes suffocating.

A bedside lamp floods the room in a soft light that begins to burn into my eyes.

Panting to fight the dizzying spinning of the room, I try to cover my face with my elbow.

I get a brief respite from the rallying sensations and I think I doze off for a while.

Until, a binding pain rips through my stomach and curls me into a ball. Tight, stabbing pain turns to rolling nausea.

On teetering, unstable feet, I manage to make it to the bathroom before I'm vomiting nothing into the toilet.

Twice today I've hovered over a porcelain bowl. No little pills this time though.

For the first time in forever, I have a night without the drugged slumber.

No wonder I feel awful. Brushing my teeth to get rid of the awful taste, I struggle not to gag into the sink.

My legs are so weak, they give out on me and I crumple to the floor near the edge of the bed. Cold sweat sticks the cloth of my shirt to my back and it bunches awkwardly across my ribs.

Clawing at the slick sheets, I manage to pull myself back onto the mattress.

Exhausted, sleep comforts me until searing pain throughout my body jerks me straight up. Barely knowing where I am, I fling myself from the bed and throw open the door.

I'm not sure which way to go.

The hall to the left seems to go on forever. To the right is only a few yards to the large double doors where I know Mr. Petrov's room sits.

Clinging to the smooth wall for support, my right foot isn't wanting to work correctly.

Step after step, I make my way slowly to his suite. Fire rips through my limbs. It takes everything within me to not tear the

sticky shirt from my body.

Soundlessly, the door pushes open into the dark room.

“Mr. Petrov?” I can’t tell how loud my words are. They feel like an orchestra playing within my head.

The room opens into a dark void, but as my eyes adjust, the pale light through the window illuminates a huge four poster bed.

Leaning from the safety of the wall, stabbing pain doubles me over as I lurch toward the soft sounds of his breathing.

A small cry escapes my lips before I fall over the edge of the bed onto him.

With a grunt, his hand again finds my throat and he flips me over until he’s straddling me, pinning me with his weight against the soft mattress.

I can’t breathe.

“What the fuck?” His bare chest presses against my belly. Hot breath whispers over me as his nose nearly brushes mine. “Why are you here?”

Clawing at his fingers, I fight the blackening of my vision. My hips buck against him as I struggle to get a gasp of air through his vice-like grip.

He moves his thumb and a surge of cool air rushes into my lungs.

“You did not have to sneak into my room if you wanted to grind against me, little bird. All you have to do is ask.” He

shifts his leg and something hard and long presses against my thigh.

He's naked.

Is that his—?

“You have me excited. Is it my cock you're here for? If you don't use your words quickly, I'm going to think this is all you want.” He pulls away before driving his hard length up, pressing against my panties.

“There's something wrong,” I mumble.

“Hmm, yes there is. You're making it very difficult to not fuck my best friend's daughter.” His muscular body frames me as his thumb drags slowly over my chin.

Heat burns through me at the sensation. Feeling him pressing between my legs distracts me with the pleasant lances of lightning it sends through me.

But, then a stab of pain pinches through my stomach and I wince involuntarily. “There's something wrong with me. I feel sick, weak. I don't know what's going on.” My fingers still wrap around his wrist, but I don't tug on his hand. There's something oddly comforting having his hand encircling my throat, having him covering me, having him...want me.

I've been wanted, but never taken.

It's why Svetlana has been drugging me, to make sure I'm pure for her brother to claim.

He grumbles under his breath and the heat of his body disappears. Cold sweat and another bite of agony rips through me as I curl into a ball on the crumpled duvet.

A light from his bathroom reveals him now wrapped in a dark robe standing next to a minibar in the corner of the huge room.

Two glasses sit on the counter of dark wood. He fills one with an amber liquid and the other with clear.

When he strides back barefoot, his broad chest is bare, showing a heavy canvas of tattoos and dark curls flecked with gray. I can't help but glance at the way the black velvet of his covering bulges at the waist. If I didn't feel like such crap, I might have been more curious to see what was hidden beneath.

"Here. Drink." Pushing the clear fluid toward me, he bottoms the other glass in a single swallow.

The acrid smell of vodka hits my nose and it makes my stomach turn.

"I can't drink this, I'll be sick again." I try to hand it back to him, but he narrows his eyes.

"No, drink. You're withdrawing from the drugs. This will help. You can wean yourself off the alcohol once you're done." The soft fabric of his robe drifts over my foot and it sends a shiver up my back.

"How do you know this will work?" I really don't want to get sick again, but I slowly sit up and drape my feet over the edge of the bed.

I didn't really need to, but there's a piece of me drawn to his warmth.

"I've dealt in drugs my entire life." The bed dips as he leans over me, his face just inches from mine.

Small lines at the edges of his caramel colored eyes deepen as his cheeks tighten in his scrutiny. "Do not make me spank you for being naughty and questioning me."

I can't tell if he's being serious or not. Either way, it sends a strange thrill through me.

Wide eyed, I throw back the burning liquor. I can't recall ever having vodka, despite my father's Russian roots.

Now I know why. It burns like acid going down my throat.

He stands back and laughs, a deep, throaty baritone. "You take the cum of the Motherland well, little bird. There is hope for you yet." He gestures for the glass and puts them on the bedside table.

Fire works its way across my cheeks. No one has ever talked like that to me.

My stomach knots and drags me back groaning into a ball on his bed. Chills wrack spasms through me, jerking my knees against my chest.

Falling into the pain, I nearly forget where I am.

Chapter Five

NIKOLAI



She's huddled into a ball, mewling in pain, and all I can focus on is the soft curve of her ass and the tease of her pussy just inches from my aching cock.

Every little gasping moan makes my nuts twitch.

Having her under me is burned into my skin. Her hips digging into me, the delicate pulse beneath my fingers, it is a brutal reminder of how long it's been since I've had a woman here in my bed.

I'm torn if I should stroke myself off, or slip the pink panties out of my way and sink into her.

Ivanov, what hell have you pushed to my home?

Fucking shit.

I stalk to my dresser and dig out a pair of boxer briefs. I rarely wear them, but tonight I'll pretend to have couth.

Curling into a ball on my bed, she looks so vulnerable. The fiery wave of her hair falls in sweaty tendrils around her shoulders. A beautiful contrast to the pale skin of her arms.

She's making resisting her nearly impossible, even as another pained moan crests from her swollen lips and a shiver rips through her petite frame.

"Come, little bird, let us get you warm." The chill of her body still scorches my chest as I pull her to me. She melts into me, nuzzling her nose into the hollow of my throat, her fingers pressing under my ear as she wraps them around my neck.

Laying her down next to me, she burrows even closer and I pull the blankets over us both.

I have to readjust my cock to tuck it into my waistband. It's reaching out on its own seeking to impale her.

Leaving the light of my side table on is a logical choice. If left to the senses of the darkness, I'll roll her over and have her warm my aching dick between her supple thighs.

Ivanov's daughter.

But, when I wrap my arms around her and she lengthens her body to intertwine her legs with mine, this is the last face going through my mind.

Every time she whimpers, I can't help but run my hand up and down her back. With each stroke I somehow resist the urge to pull her against me.

The tickle of her breath on my chest, the smell of her lavender shampoo and her petulant moans keep me on the

edge of a precipice all night. One which my wandering fingers and twitching hips pushes me ever close to jumping off of.

Forcing myself to relax, I finally doze off for a few hours.

Her movement awakens me and I find myself spooning her with my cock lodged firmly between me and the round orbs of her ass. Her head rests on my arm, while my other palms her smooth stomach.

I let my little finger brush the hem of her dainty panties and the quick inhale she takes sends a new surge of raging fiery blood to my dick.

“Mr. Petrov?” Her voice is timid, but she makes no attempt to move away from me.

“I think you can call me Nikolai now, little bird. How do you like landing in the fox’s den?” I can’t stop my hips from rolling and grinding myself against her.

Oh, the naughty girl pushes back.

“Thank you for helping me.” Her words are breathless as her hand covers mine on her belly. With a whisper of a touch, she traces my fingers burning into her skin.

Fire runs up my arm and ignites in my chest.

“My pleasure, Natalia. How much better shall we make you feel? Hmm?” Pushing my hand farther down, the tips of my fingers explore the secrets of her skimpy underwear. Soft curls greet me and I tease my way towards the heat at the apex of her thighs.

She sucks in a breath and holds it. “Mr. — Nikolai. I, um. I’m not sure.” A gasp and a small cry flutters from her lips when I touch her clit lightly.

“I’m sure you’re wet for me, aren’t you, Natalia?” My mouth finds the curve of her neck where I take my first taste of her.

She arches, exposing more of her long throat to my tongue.

I let my beard tickle over her as I work my way up to the lobe of her ear. Goosebumps erupt across her chest as a testament to my attentions. As my mouth moves higher, my fingers move lower. Long gentle strokes of her pussy spreads her sultry juices until my hand is nearly dripping. Tiny flicks over her clit makes her hips jerk and grind against my engorged cock wedged between us.

“Oh! Oh, that feels good...I had no idea it could feel good.” It’s almost as if she’s talking to herself, but I hear every word. Crisply.

“What does that mean?” I growl, anger pushing through the lust. My movements pause with her silence. “Did someone hurt you? Who?”

I should have never allowed her in my house. The sudden protectiveness I feel over her takes me by surprise. Maybe it’s because she is an Ivanov and I swore I’d keep them safe.

Or, perhaps it’s because she is in my bed letting me pet her soaked cunt. And it has been almost ten years since I have had a wet pussy in my hands.

Too long.

“No one hurt me.” She covers her face with her hand. A flush of red works its way up her cheeks. “No one has ever, well, touched me before.” Her head turns and her bright green eyes meet mine. “It’s why *she* kept me drugged. To save me for her brother, Tosya.”

Rage completely fills me and I pull my hand from the alluring confines of her panties.

“That fucking dog is not part of the arrangement. Who promised you to him?” I already know the answer.

But, when she whispers “My father.” My blood begins to boil.

The promises of a bigger haul, more connections, larger reach. It was all to culminate next month. Now I know why.

Family should be everything. Fuck the rest of the world. Protect your circle with your life. Ivanov is willing to sacrifice his only daughter to the pursuit of money, who else will he sacrifice?

A groan escapes as I roll onto my back. Wiping my face does little to remove the burgeoning doubt threading through me. Has Ivanov turned? What dealings is he making that is worth her?

“Mr., um, Nikolai?” She rolls towards me, her fingers touch my chest and I swear electricity courses through me.

“Nikolai. Sir. Daddy. I don’t give a fuck. Just not mister anymore, that’s saved for employees.”

Her breasts rub against my side as she giggles. “Daddy?”

My cock twitches and my anger fades as she traces the patterns of my tattoos. Following the hard lines and delicate swirls, she moves ever closer to the bulge of my boxer briefs.

“Little bird, you keep doing that, you can call me anything you want.”

She’s beautiful. Her head propped up on her shoulder, the red cascade of her hair tickling my arm, her soft pink lip trapped between her teeth as she stares at my throbbing dick.

I want to knot my hand in her long locks and ram myself into that tantalizing mouth until she chokes.

“Can I—” She chews on the corner of her cheek as her eyes meet mine. “—can I call you my first? I don’t want Tosya to be my first.” A swell of tears form in the corners of her eyes before she closes them and takes a shaky breath. “Then I’ll leave, so Father won’t be mad at you. He will come looking for me.” Her fingers tremble where they rest on my stomach.

Taking her delicate hand in mine, I bring it to my mouth and gently kiss her palm. “How can I deny a gorgeous woman when she is in my bed begging me to fuck her? And, to make it memorable no less?” I roll her over onto her back and let my lips find hers for the first time. She freezes, her mouth stiff and firm as I explore her tasty morsels.

With a sigh, she relaxes and I push my tongue into her timid recesses. Her nails dig into my hair and I can feel her tentatively taste me, then pull me tighter. A moan escapes between us as our fervor grows, nipping and sucking as I coax her to let me deeper.

Her knee runs up my thigh and I grasp it, pulling her open so I can bury my hand into her damp panties again.

With a frustrated growl, I tear myself from her glorious mouth and tug on the thin fabric clinging to her waist. “These have to go. And your shirt. I cannot worship you if you hide yourself from me.”

Impatiently, I bare the soft red curls of her pussy to the morning sun. She hesitates with the hem of her tank top before pulling it over her head.

“Good girl. Look at you listening to your daddy.”

Her pale breasts peaked with tight pink nipples are beacons, begging me to touch them. They’re perfect. I love the contrast of my darkly tattooed hands as they work my way over her milky smooth body.

She’s mine to ruin.

“My pure little bird, lie back and enjoy.” My fingers work their way to her soaking cunt as I suck the tip of one of her succulent breasts into my mouth. Her cries are a melody when she throws her head back and claws at my shoulder. Making rapid circles around her hard clit, her hips buck in rhythm to each stroke.

“Oh fuck!” she exhales as I plunge a finger into her virgin entrance.

“You’re so goddamn tight, Natalia. I would destroy your little pussy if I fucked you right away.” The thought of

shoving myself into her makes me rub my length against her quivering thigh and leak into my shorts.

My cell phone rings and breaks my focus. Unsheathing my finger from her clenching cunt, I roll backwards to fetch it from the end table.

Ivanov. Of course it is.

“Look who it is, my dear. Your illustrious father. Shall we see what he says?”

Her eyes fly open and her brows raise with a worried look. “Are you going to tell him I’m here?” She bites on her puffy lips which draws me for another quick taste.

“No, but we shall see how long you can remain quiet while I talk.” I slide the accept button and bump the call to speaker phone.

“Ivanov?” I drop the phone on her stomach and pull her nipple back into my mouth, rolling the hard bud between my teeth.

Her mouth opens into a perfect ‘O’ as her head falls back against the pillow.

“Boss. Good morning. I have a situation.” The tinny speaker lets the worry in his gruff voice echo into the room.

“I told you, everything is taken care of.” Carrying on the subject of my visit last night seems like a safe route. My finger chases its own path back to find her wet clit.

She gasps and throws her wrist over her mouth.

“No, boss. It’s, well, it’s Natalia. She’s gone.” Ivanov’s voice has a whine I’ve not heard.

“Natalia? Your daughter?”

His daughter has her hips hovering in the air as I slip a second finger into her clenching pussy. Goddamn I can’t wait to have her squeezing my cock this tightly.

“Yes. She disappeared last night. I was wondering if you’ve seen her?” He sounds frazzled. If only I believed his worry was genuinely about her safety.

“Why would I have seen your daughter, Ivanov?” My tongue and teeth work my way down her stomach. She takes a sharp inhale with every nip as I leave a trail of light marks down her belly.

“I don’t know, boss. It’s just not like her to disappear. I was hoping maybe you saw her or maybe a car or something. I asked my guys, but no one saw her leave.” His voice sounds far away.

Or, maybe it’s because I have her thighs hugging my ears.

“Perhaps she went to the club, Ivanov. Is there anything else?” Burying my nose in the red fuzz framing her sweet pussy, I glance up to see her squeezing her eyes shut with a pink flush working its way up her arched neck.

A man could die here happily.

“No. Nothing else. Thanks.”

When I hear the click of the disconnect, I suck her clit between my teeth and savor her flavor for the first time. Two fingers still buried within her, pounding in harmony with my tongue, I can feel her body tightening around them. Her walls quiver as she draws close to the brink.

That's it, come for me baby girl. I beckon her with a curl of my fingers and a fast flick of her engorged clit.

She screams, hands churning in the sheets, her body writhing suspended on nothing but her heels and shoulders. Her body seizes my hand and clamps down so violently, I'm sure she's cut off the circulation to them.

Magnificent.

Peppering soft kisses on the inside of her thighs, I let her bask in the afterglow of such an amazing orgasm.

"Did you like that, little bird? Coming all over my face? Now, I want you to be a good girl and do that on my cock." The thought of her cunt squeezing my aching dick until it explodes has me groaning against her soaked pussy.

"Oh...I don't know if I can...that was so...incredible!" Her eyes flutter open and meet mine as her breasts heave in a long, shaky breath.

"You will. I'm going to fuck you and make you scream my name. Then, we're getting breakfast, and I'm going to make you come over and over again. All day. You snuck into the lion's den, now prepare to be eaten." My mouth dives eagerly

back to suck on her sensitive clit and she gasps, her fingers threading over my buried head.

I glance up in time to see my phone sliding off of her slick belly. A sheen of sweat covers her as her head thrashes against the pillows. A copper halo of ecstasy.

Pushing one of her thighs to her chest spreads her open so I can roll my hand more freely within her. I want her stretched and ready so my girth won't be the source of her pain, only the moment I pierce her virginity.

Fuck, I'm going to spurt into the sheets at the thought. I can't wait any longer. The moans of her growing pleasure are a siren's call that is impossible to resist.

Freeing my fingers, I work my tongue a different path up her body as I slide my restrictive underwear down my legs. When I'm fully over her, my lips find hers and she opens herself to let me share her sweet juices that still cover my mouth.

I may never wash my beard again, to keep her nectar scent forever. Her knees frame my hips and the tip of my raging cock presses against her soaking entrance.

“What about, um—” Her eyes squint while her fingers trace fire over my back. “—a condom? Aren't we supposed to use one?”

“I hope you get pregnant, little one. You'll have my eyes staring at you for the rest of your life.” My teeth nip on her soft neck as I push into her. She's so fucking tight it takes my breath.

My abs are shaking in restraint. Small thrusts are all I allow myself as she moans into the hollow of my throat. Her legs wrap behind my thighs, her heels dig in, driving me deeper with every push until I feel the membrane of resistance within her.

“This will hurt, but just for a moment. Bite into my shoulder and cry as I claim you.” Her mouth closes over me just as I pull back and sink into her in one long drive. The head of my cock tears through her as her teeth break into my skin. Only the pinch of her bite keeps me from exploding as I bury myself within her painfully tight pussy.

My territory. No one else will ever own this moment for her.

I don't pause, but draw back and drive into her again. And again. “That's such a good girl. Letting me make you a woman.”

The initial gasp she first loosed turns to a deep moan. I can feel her body begin to quiver around me. Her cunt tightens, pulling me deeper within her as her nails dig furrows into my ribs.

Faster I pump, the pressure in my own belly warns me I'm close. My beard trails up her neck as I take the lobe of her ear between my lips. “Come for me, baby. Let loose and rip my cock from my body.” She arches her neck, her body fighting to match the shape as she locks me within her, a vice crushing my length until I lose control. Her scream deafens my ears as wave after wave of her body's contractions work their way over me.

Lightning flashes behind my eyes as I climax scalding ribbons of cum within her. My hips jerk beyond my control as she milks every drop with her greedy little cunt.

Spent, I slide free, knowing she will be sore. Cradling her beneath me, my lips land soft kisses on her cheeks, her chin and down her neck. I lick up a droplet of blood that still clings to the corner of her swollen pink mouth. “That was a very nice gift you gave me. I think I shall add a new tattoo where your teeth sank into my shoulder. A memento.” Her body burns under me, yet I hesitate to move.

It’s been too long since I’ve held someone. Fury and revenge fueled my nights for years after my wife was murdered by the Koskovich family.

Now, this delicate flower is threatened by the same animals that ruined my life. There is a part of me that wants to keep her here, pinned beneath me, but safe.

From one cage to the next.

With a final nibble of her neck, I peel myself away. The pink tinge on my softening cock a stark reminder of what she’s lost. “Stay here, I’ll get a warm cloth.”

The cool tile livens my steps to the master bath. Long abandoned, the empty second sink is a stark reminder of the loneliness I’ve lived with for the last ten years.

Scalding water feels like it’s burning my dick off as I wipe the memory of her virginity from my skin, framed by dark

curls and the occasional gray hair. I catch my reflection in the mirror. Silver in the temples and more in my beard.

I'm too old for happiness again. But, I shouldn't wait so long to dip my cock in wet waters. Maybe I wouldn't feel so protective about her if I had a litany of women in the last few years.

She hasn't moved much since I left. Curling her hands under her serene looking face, she gives me a small smile when she sees me.

“Open up for me, little bird. Are you sore?” Pushing her knees apart, I watch her face for any glimmer of pain.

“No, I feel really, really good.” She stretches languidly, arching her back and rolling her waist to allow me better access.

Blood tinges the little bit of cum dripping from her. A ravenous part of me demands I give her another long, slow lick before cleaning her up. I taste her, myself and the metallic flavors of her beautiful gift to me.

It's better than any breakfast my chef could make. But, the rumble in my stomach tells me that I cannot live on sex alone.

“Come. Let us eat and spend the rest of the day in bed. I will do my best to fill you with loads of new memories.”

Chapter Six

NATALIA



He's so different from the image my father has painted of him. Nikolai treats me almost with reverence while contorting my body into every possible position.

Nearly a week has passed. I don't need the vodka anymore to counteract the pill withdrawals. And now, I feel more like myself than I have in years.

"I have a friend that owns a restaurant south of Chicago. She's agreed to give you a job for a while there since you insist on wanting to get one." His large hands scoop warm water over my breasts and he teases my nipples with each slow pour.

Nestling against his chest, the jets in the jacuzzi tub send pleasant vibrations over my skin. Enhanced by the burning heat of his body cradling me.

Why do I feel a twinge of jealousy over this mystery woman?

“What if I don’t want to work?” His dick twitches when I squirm my butt against him. It’s only been a little while since our last wild sex-apade, and I’m already craving him again.

As he hardens against my back, I’d say he wants me again, too.

“Mmm, more time to let me continue to feast on you.” His lips find my sweaty neck and he nips the sensitive spot below my ear. “If I have my way, you’d never leave. I’d keep you here filled with cum and a trail of babies following us down the halls.” He cups my breasts sending rivulets of electricity running through my body.

He makes me feel more wanted than anyone ever has. When we’ve talked, the stories he tells me about his family; his eyes light up with such emotion it hurts my chest.

I don’t want to leave the safety of his home, but the ability to have a choice is alluring. “I’ve never done anything for myself before. Isn’t it important that I try it, even for a little while?” His beard tickling over my shoulder pulls a giggle from me. “Although, it is tempting to stay here all day, naked and in bed.”

His laughter is deep and shakes me as it fills the room. “Have I fostered a new addiction? A sex crazed vixen, now?” A glimpse of his darkly tattooed hand sneaks past my vision before his hand closes on my neck and he pulls me back so his lips touch my ear. “Don’t you worry, I’ll be happy to give you

a fix whenever you desire. I want to take care of you, little bird.” His thighs squeeze my hips as he pushes closer and then lifts me out of the water.

“Come,” he growls. “There is something I wish to give you before I forget and lose myself in the heat of your thighs.” He steps deftly from the large tub and pulls a soft white towel from the shelf to wrap me within his arms.

He cinches a matching one around his waist and I can’t help but stare at the bulge of his dick beneath the knot as he saunters towards his dresser.

“You don’t have to do all of this, Nikolai. I’ll be forever grateful just for helping me to escape.” A waitressing job won’t be so bad. I’ll get to meet so many new people. It will be wonderful to be in the public and not cloistered in my bedroom.

He waves his hand in an idle gesture and carries a small rectangular box in his other. “For my little stowaway, who I’ll be thankful to for reminding me I’m still a man beneath the monster.”

My stomach does a little flip flop as he opens the velvet lid and reveals a silver chain. “Oh, Nikolai, you didn’t—”

“Hush. I wanted to.” He lifts it from the box to show a small charm weighting the loop. “A bird cage to remind you of what you escaped from.” The gold amulet has a purple gem in the center that gives a sparkling gleam in the low light. It’s hard to focus on it when it swings directly in front of his defined abs and slipping towel.

The tips of my long hair are damp from the bath, but I sweep them over my shoulder in a bunch as he clasps it around my neck. His fingers work their way to replace mine as he tugs my head back so he can nibble on my lips.

“It sits where I wish my lips could live.” He drops to kiss where it sits at the top of my cleavage. “Tomorrow I’ll take you to meet Celeste. She was briefly married to my oldest son and owes me a very large favor. She’s also outside of the sight of the heavy hitters, so you should be able to stay under the radar so-to-speak.”

“Laying low is a good idea. How about you show me what you’re hiding?” I can feel the smile tug at my lips as I pull his loose towel from his hips.

He flashes me a grin as he rips mine away. “Seems someone is being naughty. Time for a spanking, little girl.”



The world looks so different when I’m not drugged to near unconsciousness. I can’t remember the last time I was out in public and not completely wasted on the pills Svetlana forced down my throat.

Nikolai has done much more than just find me a job. He’s also given me a debit card that I don’t dare ask the balance on and a phone.

I'm not sure how sneaking into his car became the best decision I've ever made.

“Celeste is a bitch, but she will take care of you. She owes me a great debt after the bullshit she put my son through.” Nikolai's broad hand covers my thigh as he navigates the highway leading south out of Chicago. The designs of his tattoos blend with the lines and patterns of my leggings like they belong together.

“What did she do?” I focus my gaze on his lips, trying to memorize every feature of him. Anxiety is gripping my stomach at the thought of this new change and watching him calms me.

“That is Mikhail's story to tell, not mine.” The soft brown of his eyes turn to me and small crinkles form on the corners as he smiles. “Don't worry, she will take care of you.” A gentle squeeze of my thigh sends a warm shiver through me before he shifts the car into park. “We're here.” The Lincoln rocks as his door shuts. I've barely unsnapped my seat belt when he pulls mine open and holds his hand out for me.

I feel like a movie star as I straighten next to him and take in the sleek dark glass of the steakhouse. His suit has to be expensive, it hugs his chiseled physique in tailored perfection. It's like we're a power couple going in to eat.

Except, this still feels like a masquerade. I worry he's pretending to care. That one day he will grow bored and send me away.

It scares me how much I can feel, well, anything. Like a veil has been lifted and my goals in life have become clear with laser precision.

I want him so badly it hurts. There's a longing in me to do anything to make him happy, to have him claim me and keep me.

He isn't mine. Neither is his money. Which is why I'll soon be begging for an entry level job.

But, in a strange way, it makes me feel a little better knowing I'm moving towards taking care of myself. Independence has been the forbidden fruit for the last few years and the lure is irresistible.

The cool air conditioning is a nice reprieve from the oppressive Illinois humidity.

"Good afternoon. Table for two?" A lean maitre d gathers menus before Nikolai interrupts him.

"We are here to talk to Celeste. Tell her Nikolai is here." His calm confidence seeps into my fingers where they rest in his palm.

"Very good, sir." The man's dark eyes sweep over us, lingering on our hands, as he turns and disappears into the back of the cavernous building.

It isn't long before he returns, visibly paler and with shaking hands. "Please, Mr. Petrov, follow me."

Nikolai gives a small smirk and leads me through the myriad of heavy tables to a curtained off area in the farthest corner.

“You should be safe here, my dear.” His words are low, intended only for me. “It seems my reputation will give you a level of protection. Feel free to threaten him with my temper if he tries anything with you.” His hand tightens over mine before guiding me into the leather bound seat opposite of him in the clandestine booth.

“Thank you, daddy.” I can’t resist tossing him a wink.

A deep rumble emanates from his chest. “You call me that here, I’ll bend you over this table for everyone to see.”

The thrill of the threat sends a shiver of heat deep into my belly.

It shifts with the presence of a tall thin brunette that appears at the edge of the table. Her pinched blue eyes are boring into me, even as she smiles at Nikolai with the flat affect of someone who looks used to pretending.

“Nikolai. I was so happy to get your call regarding my new employee.” Her sarcasm is palpable.

This doesn’t bode well.

“Ah, yes. Don’t worry, it doesn’t need to be permanent. Just a chance for my friend—” He gestures toward me.

Why does it make my teeth grit when he calls me just ‘friend’?

“—to get back on her feet.” His eyes are soft when he looks at me.

A direct contradiction to hers.

“How long?” Celeste’s words are curt as she looks me up and down and taps her darkly manicured fingernails on the table.

I want to shrink into a ball under her scrutiny.

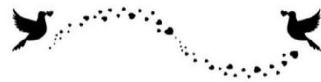
“As long as she wishes.” He doesn’t move as he watches her.

I can see the tension in his jaw, the tightness across his shoulders. He looks like a leopard ready to leap.

The low cut dark dress over her small chest heaves with a sigh. “Fine. I have to do inventory anyways. I hope you can count.” With a final roll of her eyes, she leans over the table towards me. “Show up tomorrow at eight. Don’t be late. I’m not your mother and am not responsible for you outside of work.”

Turning on her high heel, they click against the marbled floor as she walks briskly away.

Nikolai relaxes and sits back into the leather embrace of the high backed seat. A smile teases the corner of his mustache. “That went well.”



It’s taken me a couple of weeks, but I finally made Celeste smile.

I thought her face was going to break.

She let me graduate up to bussing tables, so I wasn’t trapped in the basement anymore counting bottles.

“Nancy?” Celeste calls me by the name I gave her. I’m supposed to be in hiding.

“I need a clean up on table twenty-two.” Her tone is lighter than it used to be. I’ve been trying to do the best that I can and must be slowly winning her over.

“Yes, ma’am.” Grabbing the dish tub and a clean rag, I dodge one of the servers on the way to the far wall.

I’ve barely started stacking the plates when a deep voice from the other booth breaks my concentration.

“You’re very beautiful. It’s a shame you’re cleaning tables.” There’s a subtle accent to the words, not unlike how Nikolai sounds.

Glancing to the adjoining seats, two men dressed in dark suits are watching me. It’s the younger one who speaks.

His blonde spiked hair doesn’t move as he nods his head with a polished smile. “You should be a model. Have you considered it?” He gestures with his drink. “Or do you enjoy wiping up after pigs like us?” A silver gleam on his tooth catches my eye hidden in his wide grin.

The dark haired companion turns his phone to the talkative one and says something too quietly for me to hear.

“No. I haven’t. Thank you.” I can feel heat work up my cheeks, but turn back to the used cutlery still scattered over the table. I’m starting to get used to random comments from customers, but the flattering ones are still hard to accept.

“It’s a shame. You would look amazing walking down the aisle, er, runway.” His chuckle is aimed at his partner who laughs as if they’re sharing some sort of inside joke. “That fiery hair can light up a room.”

I think my face is on fire. The attention makes me uncomfortable. Hurrying, I swipe the table and grab the tub of dirty dishes.

When I turn to leave, he has his cell raised in my direction and I hear the click of the photograph sound. “To remember you.” He gives me a wink and turns back to his companion.

That was weird.

I’m not sure how I feel about some random guy taking my picture, but I soon forget about it in the hustle of the dinner rush.

As my shift comes to a close, Celeste stops me just outside the kitchen by placing her hand on my arm. “I just wanted to tell you, Nancy, you’re doing better than I thought you would. Would you be interested in trying out as a server next week? Better pay and you’d get tips.”

“Oh, wow. Yes, that would be amazing. I don’t know all of the menu and stuff though. Or the right words to use.”

She flips her hand through the air. “Don’t worry, I think you’ll get it pretty quick. You seem to learn fast.” With a pat on my shoulder she steps back into the swinging doors and disappears.

Giddy with pride, I dig my phone out of my purse as I push out into the humid summer evening.

Nikolai: I'm sorry I won't be there to pick you up right away. Meet me at the bookstore on 3rd at 6:30. Call me when you get off.

He picks up on the first ring and I'm so glad. I think I may burst with anticipation.

"Natalia, my dear. How was your day today?" Nikolai's soothing voice is like a balm on my nerves.

"Excellent! Celeste is promoting me again!" My voice cracks in excitement.

"I knew you had it in you. What will she have you doing?" He sounds genuinely happy for me.

"I'll be moving to server, so waiting tables. I'm nervous about it. It means more talking to people." I turn onto the side street heading towards my apartment. It makes it easier with less traffic noise to hear him.

"You'll do wonderfully. I'm proud of you." The deep rumble of his approval makes my knees weaken enough I almost stumble. "And, a beautiful girl like you will get lots of good tips."

"I had someone say I should model today. He even took my picture." The memory brings a little bit of a sour feeling into my stomach. Those guys didn't look like photographers.

"What?" Nikolai's tone sharpens. "Tell me about him."

Does he sound...jealous?

“It was two guys, one blonde with a silver tooth. The other was taller and dark, but he didn’t really talk to me.” Turning the last corner before the bookstore, I can see the lights from the windows illuminating the path.

“Natalia, I want you to tell me—”

“Natalia.” A deep voice behind me calls my real name. Not my false one. A flutter of fear races through me as I turn around.

The tall dark man from the restaurant steps from the lengthening shadows.

“Why are you following me?” My words crack as I yell them.

Nikolai’s tinny cries echo from my phone. “Tell me what is happening!” I can hear the static of movement coming through the line.

“I think you know why I’m here.” The tall man steps closer as I back away.

Turning, I begin to run toward the steps of the building. A rough pair of hands grab me when I pass the corner.

“You’re coming with me.” The shorter blonde man holds me firmly.

Fear paralyzes me as he jerks my hands behind my back.

I hear my phone clatter to the ground as something black is draped over my head.

Chapter Seven

NIKOLAI



“**F**uck!” I nearly throw my phone against the wall as I hear the sounds of her struggle fade into the distance.

I’ve hated every second of not having her by my side where I can keep her safe. The hours she is gone every day is agony. But, my selfish infatuation should not keep such a young and beautiful woman trapped within my walls when all she wants is to learn a sliver of independence.

Now, my doubts have manifested. And I blame only myself.

If only I had been there tonight.

“Ivanov,” I bark into my phone. “Cancel my meeting.” I’m certainly not sharing any details with him.

Rage bursts out of me as I grab my black leather bag of tools from the garage. Boxes fly as my fists lash out in fury upon my frantic path to my car.

I need to find her.

“Call Chekov.” The ringing through my car speakers is blaring, but the blood pumping through my ears drowns it out.

“Yes, boss.” His accent carries through the deep bass sound system.

“Gather a cleaning crew. I’ll get back to you with details. Let O’Connor know to keep his beat cops away from Tinley Park until I call him.” I end the connection without waiting for his reply. We’ve worked together for too many years to worry about pleasantries.

Like Ivanov. Shit. I bet he’s behind this. I wonder if she’s there already.

Speeding through the dark streets of Chicago, it’s nearly a blur as I impatiently scroll through my phone to find the GPS app so I can track the necklace I gave her.

There she is.

Leaving the car in a nondescript lot, I change clothes from my black bag with practiced ease.

You don’t get to my position without learning tricks of the trade. And I’m planning on using my full repertoire tonight.

No one touches my girl. She’s mine.

Something snaps in my gut as the realization hits.

The late night conversations. Her laugh. The way her legs wrap around me when she screams.

I want to keep her. Forever.

The dark hood of my jacket shadows my face as I hurry through a narrow alley. A quick check of my phone assures me I'm on the right path.

A card access door under a flickering bulb stands between me and her. O'Connor's gift last year comes in handy as I slide the universal key through the reader.

With only a small push, I'm inside the derelict motel. The carpet is so stained the pattern is lost. It smells vaguely of mold and bleach. I think the lights are purposefully kept low to hide the grime that lines the walls.

Besides the low hum of the sporadically placed vending machines, the hall is silent.

The little red dot on my phone indicates a turn at the next hall.

Stealing a furtive look around the corner, there's a large man in a dark suit standing outside the room at the end of the narrow hall. He leans against the paneled end, scrolling on his phone.

This has to be one of them.

Slinging my bag over my shoulder, I saunter down the hall, peering at each room number as I walk.

His eyes raise as he watches me, but his phone doesn't move. True to his purpose, he does shift his weight to stand fully as I grow closer.

"Ah, here we are," I profess with gusto, facing the room opposite of him. Using the universal card, I hear the click of

the lock disengage and the door swings open.

It's empty.

Luck is with me. Dropping my bag, I unsheath my knife as I watch him through the peephole.

Relax, fucker.

Within three breaths, he leans back against the wall, his legs kicked out in an easy pose.

Flinging the door open, it's two steps before I grab his phone and jerk my hand forward. The blade slides smoothly into his windpipe below his jaw, interrupting his cry before it starts.

“That's it, motherfucker,” I whisper as his knees give out. Blood spills down his chest and covers my hand. His eyes bulge over a soundlessly gaping mouth, gasping at air that can no longer fill his lungs. Clawing hands dig at my arm weakly as he slips closer to the floor.

I use his momentum and pull him into the empty room, dropping him onto the matted carpet.

His eyes cloud and unfocus when I tear my knife from his neck.

“You took what is mine, asshole.” Sourness fills my mouth at his flaccid features and I spit the dank flavor onto his glazed stare.

It gathers on one milky orb to rest in a cooling puddle against his nose.

Peering closely, I don't recognize him. It either means Ivanov is hiding his men from me, or he works for someone else. Tosya most likely. If it was Ivanov, Natalia would already be at his estate.

The acrid smell of urine and shit begin to emanate from him.

Me: Wayward hotel. Room 179

I send the quick text to Chekov and wipe my other hand on a dry portion of the jacket. Digging a rag and a length of rope from my bag, I stuff them into my pocket and stand.

Quietly, I pull the door closed behind me and move to the next room down the hall.

It's empty too.

I'm glad to see this hellhole isn't very busy tonight. Every room at this end is at my disposal.

When I press my ear against the door I know Natalia is in, I hear muffled sounds and a man's voice.

And her whimper.

Anger boils in my chest as I silently open the door.

Three slow steps inside, there's a man in a white tank top facing away from me. His blonde head is facing down as he leans over something in front of him with his pants sagging to his knees.

"I told you to suck on it. Just because you have to stay a virgin, doesn't mean your mouth can't be a whore." His arm jerks and I see his hand knotted in a swath of long red hair.

“Please don’t do this!” The fear I can hear in her voice raises my fury to where the edges of my vision darken and all I can see is him.

He bends over again, his lean body making the vertebrae of his back show beneath the snug fabric of his shirt.

I line up the tip of my blade with the gap between the knots on his spine and slam it deep with a solid hit of my fist.

He screams and drops as his legs give out beneath him. I manage to grab the back of his shirt and keep him from falling onto Natalia.

Her large, teary green eyes look up at me over his writhing body. “Nikolai?” She struggles to try and stand, but her hands are bound behind her.

“Shh, baby. I’m here.” My hands seek the warmth of her and wrap around her waist. I pick her up easily and move her from the thrashing man on the floor between us.

“I’m, I’m gonna kill you!” the blonde squeaks out as his useless legs anchor him by the bed. Blood runs in small rivulets down his back, staining the white shirt and soaking into the floor.

“Natalia. Are you okay?” Cutting the zip ties that held her wrists, I find myself running my hands over her, both checking for wounds and to sate the driving need I’ve been fighting for weeks to touch her.

She flings her arms around my neck and squeezes her body tightly against me. Sobbing into my neck, I can feel her lips

pressing hotly against the hollow of my throat.

“I was so scared!” She pulls her face back just enough to meet my mouth with hers.

Ignoring the groans of the man behind me, I thread my fingers into her hair and pull her against me so I can possess her, ravage her soft lips and assault her tongue with my own.

Breathless, I pull away. “I need to find out where they came from. Did they tell you anything?”

“No, they just kept talking about how I’m supposed to be a virgin, but they were keeping me until payment came through.” Her arms wrap around my waist and she snugs herself into me.

My cock hardens in my pants and presses against her belly. “You need to wait across the hall. Room one seventy-seven.” I pull back and cup her cheek with my bloody hand. “Do not go into room one seventy-nine, okay?”

Her lashes flutter as she blinks away tears. “Yes, okay.” My eyes fix on her teeth clasp her pink lower lip between them. “Thank you.”

I press my lips against her temple, then gently urge her from the room with a small push on her lower back. “I’ll be there soon. Do not open the door for anyone, I will open it when I’m done.”

When I hear the soft click of the latch, I can feel my face harden and shoulders set.

“Now, you son of a bitch. Who hired you?”

His legs sit at odd angles beneath his writhing body. The scent of his urine mixes with his fouled cologne and the musty smell of the bed. “Fuck you!” Snot and tears smear his red face.

I squat on my heels next to him, kicking his useless foot away from me. “You are going to die tonight. I will leave it up to you if it is fast, or slow.”

He claws at the bed, a futile attempt to pull his paralyzed lower body from the floor. “They know we’re here. They’re coming for her.”

“You don’t know who I am, do you?” My fingers dig into the hollows of his damp cheeks propping his jaws open as I squeeze his face to look at me. One of his hands untangles from the thin blanket to claw at my grip, but I slap it away.

“My name is, Nikolai Petrov.”

There it is. Paling cheeks, frantic rolling of his eyes, heaving breaths as he tries to pull himself away.

“No! Please! I’ll talk!” The high pitch cracking of his voice could be a teenager’s.

“Yes, you will.” I’m tired of being hunched to his level. My knees aren’t as cooperative as they used to be, despite my regular gym workouts. “Come, let’s get you comfortable.”

Grasping the back of his shirt, I hoist him onto the lumpy bed. Blood streaks across the vomit colored comforter as I pull him so he’s centered.

“P-Please! I don’t know the name! Carlos knows, he was outside. Did you kill him? Of course you killed him. Please! I swear, I don’t know!” His hands flatten on the stained blanket and he manages to move himself an inch closer to the headboard.

“You do a lot of talking without saying anything. Let’s start with what you would know. Who are you?” I slide the tip of my knife beneath his red soaked shirt until it makes a peak over his stomach before it slits away.

“J-Johnny Mitchell.” His eyes are wide as he watches the tip of my knife.

This gutless puke was trying to face fuck my woman.

Mine.

Anger surges through me into a long slice across his quivering belly just above the waistband of his pants. Boiling red purges from the wound as his scream pierces my ears. The rag makes an effective mute as I stuff it into his open mouth. He slumps back onto the flat pillows, his hands trying to stop the pink rolls of his intestines from spilling through the growing hole beneath his belly button.

“Tell me, Johnny Mitchell. Who do you work for?” The thin nylon cord slips easily from my pocket and I draw it out so I can find the center. A jerk of my blade shears it into two equal lengths.

His chin touches his chest as his bloody hand reaches up and pulls the cloth from between his teeth. “I told you, Carlos

knew. He's always the one who talked to him."

"Hmm. Johnny. I don't think you are being very truthful with me. A flashy guy like yourself? Taking a back seat?" I step to the side of the bed and loop one end of one of the lengths of rope snugly around the metal brace near the floor.

Let's see. It seems to be about three feet.

A quick slipknot and I pull his slick right hand into it so it tightens around his wrist, stretching his abdomen and letting more of the bulbous mass of his organs push their way free from the confines of his fileted flesh.

"No, no, no..." His head thrashes as he struggles to hold his bowels within his body with his left hand. "Please! He talked to Carlos!"

The rag goes back into his mouth as his pitch climbs. A congealing pool of blood gathers around him on the mattress, rippling with his frantic panting.

With a measured pace, I wrap his free wrist with the second tie and pull it towards the top corner of the bed so he is splayed and restrained.

Stretching him out opens the gash of his belly letting more of the oozing coils of his guts spread across the bed in a glistening mound.

"I'm going to give you one more chance." With a quick flick, I cut a section of the cord from the fetid gray curtains and tie it to the end of the string that's fixed to the stagnant ceiling fan.

The hot wetness of his intestines pulse across my palm as I loosen a length of it from the separating mass. Freeing it from the translucent membrane that is stretching in its struggle to contain his entrails, I pull enough to loop over one of the blades of the fan above us.

I pluck the rag from his mouth. “Do you have anything to say?”

“No! Please! Fuck! No!” His head turns side to side. Sweat smears into his tearful eyes.

“Very well.” When I pull on the string from the ceiling fan, I can feel it click to engage. “All I need to do is let go, and the blades start turning with you attached.”

His eyes open wide. “You’re a fucking monster! Yuri! Yuri is who hired us! He said if he just had the girl, then Tosya wouldn’t have to make a deal with Peter.”

Yuri Koskovich. Svetlana and Tosya’s father. Of course he’s playing a part. With most of the Motherland already in his grip, it makes sense he would want to try and muscle in on the Americas.

“Well, you’ve saved yourself from me killing you. Open your mouth.” I don’t wait for his compliance, but grab his jaw forcing my fingers into his cheeks to pry his teeth apart. Threading the string from the fan into his mouth, I keep it taut enough he has to keep his head off the pillow.

“Now, it will be suicide when you give up. My cleaners will be here soon.”

His sliced belly quivers as he struggles to keep his neck raised. Whimpers escape around the string he clings to.

I wipe the sticky blood from my hands and dig my phone from my pocket.

Chekov: We are outside when you're ready boss

Me: Good. Room 180 also

He sends me a thumbs up emoji. I fucking hate emojis unless it's Natalia sending them to me.

Just before I reach the door, I hear the click and low buzzing sound of the fan starting.

I should consider finding out who built this hotel. Their rooms are so well insulated, I can barely hear the screaming from the hall.

Chapter Eight

NATALIA



Even with my hands wrapped around my knees, I'm shaking so badly the bed is creaking. All I can do is stare at the scuffed door of the hotel and wait.

It seems like eternity before I hear the electronic beep of the lock disengaging.

Nikolai's large frame pushes into the room and I'm throwing myself into his arms. My tears disappear into the black knit of his sweatshirt.

"Hush, you're safe, now. He won't hurt you again." His stained hands cup my head and tighten me to his chest.

We stand clasped, gripping each other. All I can hear is his calming deep breaths and the steady beating of his heart beneath my ear.

"We need to go, the cleaners will be getting started soon. I don't want you to be seen." He tilts my chin with his thumb

and touches burning lips to mine.

“Yes, sir,” I say quietly as I follow him down the hall. Does he know this inferno that burns within me that he was my rescuer, again?

The shroud of night hides our departure to return to his estate with our hands clinging possessively in the silence of the trip.

When he opens the car door to help me out, he encircles me in a smothering hug before lifting me into his arms to carry me into the house.

“I was terrified I’d lost you.” His lips find my temple and I struggle to hold back the tears.

“They weren’t taking me to my father. I heard the blonde guy say ‘big boss’. Who is that?” My fingers stroke into the longer graying hairs on his face. The tickle of them soothes me as I bury my forehead into his neck.

“Yuri.” The sound rumbles through his chest and vibrates against my arm. “It is Tosya’s father.”

So, Svetlana’s also. “I wonder what he wants with me?”

Nikolai sets my feet gently on the tiled floor of the large shower. “He wants to bypass your father. Taking you without the promised contract.” His nimble fingers begin to undo the buttons of my blouse, his eyes following their motion.

When the halves of my shirt spread, he pushes the silken fabric from my shoulders and peppers my collarbone with tender touches of his lips. “What he does not know is that you’re mine.”

His voice sounds so firm, but I wonder if this is still a charade that we play. “Yours? But, you keep having to save me. What good am I?” My eyes squeeze the tears back and I let the feel of him undressing me take over my thoughts.

The clip holding my bra closed releases between his fingers and his mouth closes over one of my exposed nipples. A sharp nip of his teeth shocks my eyes back open. Glancing down at the top of his dark head that is sprinkled with gray, it draws my hands and I find myself running my nails through the tousled length.

“I’ll save you every time and kill a thousand men.” His lips move lower to my belly as his hot hands grip my waist. “They just don’t know you’re mine, yet. Once I put a child in you and a ring on your finger, they’ll know not to touch you.”

“A what?” My stomach quivers at his words. He can’t be serious, can he?

The cool air raises goosebumps on my naked skin. His hands leave me as he begins to shed his own dark clothes.

“You heard me. Something snapped in me tonight, little bird. I don’t want you out of my sight. Ever.” The bare heat of his body presses against mine. Swollen proof of his desire rages stiffly against my stomach.

Steaming water pours over us as he knots his hands into my hair.

“Ever?” Does he really want me? A sheltered girl?

“Oh, my love. You can leave if you want, I’m not locking your cage. But, I’ll protect you and worship you as long as you’ll let me.” His hands caress soapy hot water over my skin in long strokes up and down my body.

I feel as if I’m burning from the inside out. “You make me feel so special. Coveted. I do love it.” I don’t dare tell him how deeply I’ve already fallen. How my every thought circles back to him.

He works a lather down my breasts and between my legs, lingering to rub fiery circles around my clit. “If you stay, I want my hands to live here, buried against your soaked pussy. My pussy. I claim it.” A smile teases his lips as his touch builds a ball of electricity in my core.

Pants escape me and my forehead drops against his chest. “Yes, daddy. It’s yours.”

With a growl, he tilts my face to his and possesses my mouth with his while his hand works faster between my thighs.

Ripples of tightening pleasure work their way through my limbs. When he plunges a finger into me, a shivering cry escapes as waves of ecstasy roll over me.

“That’s it. Come for me, baby girl. No one else will ever make you feel as good as I do.” Still lodged within me, he picks me up and throws me over his shoulder.

I’m still buzzing from my climax as he lays me on the bed.

“Do you know what you make me want to do?” He steps away from the bed and disappears into his walk-in closet.

“What?” I know he can hear me. My body gyrates against the silk sheets in a luxurious stretch. I just feel so damned *good*.

His grin is lecherous when he reappears. Two of his finest ties are draped over his engorged hard on, trailing to his knees like fabric tentacles.

A leather belt is folded in his hand.

“I want to tie you up and keep you for myself. To fuck you so hard, you’ll be too exhausted to want to leave.” He snaps the belt between his hands, sending a thrill of excitement through me that makes my heart race.

“Tie me up?” Should I be scared? He’s never made me fearful, and I certainly don’t feel it now. I’m more interested than I thought I would be.

“If you insist.” He straddles my hips, tossing the belt aside and pinning my legs to the bed. His fingers are a practiced blur as he knots each tie around my wrist and stretches me, fastening me to the headboard so my arms are spread. They aren’t too tight, and I can move around a bit, but I’m at his mercy now.

His light brown eyes crinkle as he smiles down at me. “Now, I seem to have a fondness today for this position. It makes me want to pierce your belly with my cock until my cum spills out of you.” He leans over to find my mouth with his, invading me with his tongue. Angling himself, the tip of his hard dick digs into my lower stomach just below my belly button.

“Right there,” he breathes. “I want my cock right there, deep in your womb.” I can feel the heat of his knees working their way alongside my ribs until they’re braced under my arms. When he sits up, he stares down at his length resting against my cheek.

“You’re so fucking beautiful, Natalia.” His thumb strokes my cheek lightly, then pushes his hand behind my head. “Now, be a good little girl, and take a taste of all those babies daddy’s going to put in you.”

The purple head of his engorged erection bounces just out of reach, making a little ball of frustration form in my gut. I want to make him feel good. He makes me feel so amazing, it’s only fair that I can make him feel the same.

“Please, daddy?” Licking my lips, I meet his eyes. “I want it.” My thighs squeeze together. I’m already feeling the need for him to fill me. The moment in the shower feels like just an appetizer, and he’s teasing me with the main course.

A groan works its way from him and I can feel the quiver run through his legs where they frame me.

“Oh, baby girl, I’ll give you anything you want when you ask like that.” When he rolls forward, I can guide him with my tongue into my mouth.

At first, he doesn’t move as I bob my head and try to suck him deeper into me. But, I can feel the shudder run through him when I twirl my tongue around the drop of salty sweet pre-cum.

His fingers in my hair grips harder and his hips begin to rock as he pushes more and more of himself into my mouth. He wraps his other hand around my neck just under my jaw as he drives deeper.

Fighting a gag, I try to focus on stealing a breath between each thrust. Tears sneak from my eyes as he pushes deeper.

“That’s it. I can feel myself. You’re doing so good taking that cock.” The hairs from his sack tickle my chin as he pistons himself into me, blocking off my air until my arms start to tug on the restraints and my hips buck against the bed.

He shoves himself deeper and holds there.

I can’t breathe.

“Would you die for me, Natalia?” Sweat stands out on his forehead. His hand around my throat tightens, pinching himself within me.

My vision starts to blacken around the edges.

But, I know I would.

With a small nod, I relax and stop fighting. I’m his to do with what he wants.

A rush of air floods my lungs when he quickly withdraws himself, flattening his body over mine.

“I knew you loved me too. Stop fighting it.” He wipes the dampness from my cheeks. “I would throw the earth off its axis for you.” My lips feel puffy when he kisses me, but my body feels light, almost giddy.

New tears dribble down my temples. I believe him. He is the only person I trust. The only one who can keep me safe.

“I don’t deserve it.” My words come out in a whisper. How can he love me as I love him? When I showed up as a drug addicted virgin with nothing to offer?

His eyes narrow and his jaw tightens. In another hastened flurry of movements, he loosens my hands and flips me on my stomach before refastening the restraints around my wrists.

“On your knees.” His voice has changed. It’s colder. Clipped.

Obediently, I pull my legs and arms under me until I’m on all fours.

I didn’t expect the first lash of the belt across my butt. My yelp doesn’t cover my shock. It stings, but doesn’t hurt.

“Tell me you’re worthy of my love.” His voice is commanding and impossible to ignore.

“Yes, sir. I’m worthy.” There’s a quiver to my words.

Another stinging snap of his belt lands across my upper thigh, making me jump forward. “Tell me you want my children.”

“I, I want your babies, sir.” This time the bite lands over my pussy sending a jolt through me that forces a moan. I never expected this to feel good.

“No. Tell me you want me to fuck you so much you never want a period. That in exchange for a lifetime of orgasms,

you'll give me children as proof that you're addicted to my cock." His palm replaces the belt, but this time he rubs the anger from his blow and lets his fingers linger gently on my soaked pussy. Tingles surge through me at the difference.

"Please, sir, I'll have them all. Please fuck me." My whimpers pull a growl from him and the bed dips as he kneels behind me.

His hands rub scorch marks up and down the back of my trembling thighs, stoking the raging inferno that burns within me.

The warmth of his chest folds over my back as his hands slide along my sides to cup my breasts. "Tell me you love me, little bird." His words are soft, almost a whisper. "And that you'll let me keep you safe."

I bow my head to the bed, pressing my ass against him as far as I can reach. "I love you, Nikolai. Please, take care of me, daddy."

His hands trail heat down my belly. With his knee, he spreads mine apart. He reaches one finger to flick my sensitive clit which sends another moan from my throat into the mattress. Tugging at the ties that still tether me to the bed, my hips roll trying to grind myself harder against his hand.

"Oh, no," he grunts as he positions his hard length against me. "You only get to come on my cock. I want you to milk every drop out of me."

The hand that was pressing my belly moves and knots in my hair, pulling my head up until my back arches and my scalp tingles.

He guides his throbbing erection into me, filling me with a stretching ache I don't know if I'll ever get used to. Tightening in my belly transforms into a building pressure as he starts to move in and out of me slowly.

Something stiff wraps around my bent neck, digging into the skin.

The belt.

He twists his hand and it snugs on my throat, tugging my head back even farther. Two fingers plunge into my mouth as he intensifies the grip the leather strap has on me.

“Lick my fingers like you lick my cock.”

Obediently, I swirl my tongue over and around the length of his fingers, my breath wheezing past the tight lanyard on my neck.

His fingers disappear, but his thrusts deepen as he plunges into me. Another turn on the belt, and the air is nearly cut from my lungs.

I let my hips buck and he pounds into me while I take a ragged gasp. The fingers that were just in my mouth now press against the star of my ass and he pushes them into me.

“You would die for me. I would kill for you. We are a perfect match, little bird.” He cinches the belt just as the pressure

begins to explode out of me. My pussy clenches as my body seizes in its search for air.

He groans and jerks against me and I can feel the scald of his cum shooting deep inside of me. Stars burst within my vision as I'm rocked with wave after wave of shattering release that intensifies as I gasp a large breath past the loosened belt. It falls to the bed below me as his hands clamp around my hips. My elbows give and I collapse. I don't even care that I can feel the buckle digging into me. Pain doesn't register, just the euphoric warmth of his body stretching over me and untying my wrists.

Still seated deep inside of me, he curls my back against him and we lay, chests heaving, in the disheveled bed.

Whiskers brush against my ear as he nibbles lightly on my neck. One of his large hands settles over my breast, and with a sigh, he whispers. "Mine."

Chapter Nine

NIKOLAI



I've had trouble sleeping for years since my wife was killed. But, no longer. Waking up with Natalia in my arms has me rising like I'm twenty again. Rested. Invigorated. And, hard as a rock.

My internal debate on waking her up ends when my phone rings on the nightstand.

“Yes, Ivanov?” He has to figure out soon that I've had his daughter for weeks.

“Boss, are you available this morning?” The pitch of his voice betrays the calm delivery of his words. Panic tinges each syllable.

“I am. You can come over for breakfast at eight.”

Natalia stirs in her sleep and her breathing changes. Not my ideal way for her to wake up with a call from her father.

“Okay. Thanks, boss.”

The phone lands with a clamor on the smooth surface.

Fuck.

She turns to me, rubbing her nipples along my ribs. “Was that who I think it was?” She bats her green eyes as she smiles. Her nails rake tantalizing trails over my chest and send a twitch to my cock as she idly traces one of my tattoos.

It soothes the anger that threatens to grow within me. “He’ll be here in an hour. I’ll have the cook bring you your breakfast. The longer we can keep up the charade you are missing, the greater the weight will be on him.” Brushing one of her long copper tresses from her face, I pull her close so I can inspect the dull mark that still blemishes her perfect neck.

“Damn. I’m sorry, baby girl. It looks like daddy got a little carried away last night.” My thumb doesn’t smoothe it away, but she turns her cheek into my caress.

“I have no regrets. Kind of makes me wish I got kidnapped every day.” Her lips turn up in a mischievous grin.

She’s the devil, and I love her for it.

Pulling her to me, I sink into a long kiss before climbing out of bed with a groan. “I need to be ready. Stay here in your cage, little bird. I promise, one day, you’ll be free to roam again.”

“I’ll keep the bed warm for you.” When she rolls over, she pushes her bare ass up and wiggles it, glancing over her shoulder at me.

“You’ll be the death of me.” I sting my palm on one of her perfect orbs and walk away happy that my handprint will be proof of ownership on that beautiful cheek.

The melody of her giggle follows me into the bathroom as I struggle to dampen my cock enough to aim it down.



His bushy gray brows are furrowed as he pours whiskey into his coffee before taking a grimacing swallow.

“Are you sure you don’t want some food? Or going straight for rotgut this early?” It’s only since Natalia has been here that I have been eating it myself. She has a way of working up my appetite.

“No, thanks. It’s about my daughter.” Ivanov’s hands shake as he twists the cup on the oak table. I don’t think I’ve ever seen him this pale.

“Ah, I was curious if you’ve found her. Off partying in Miami?” One last bite of sausage and eggs, and I’m stuffed. Sitting back in my chair, I watch his reaction closely without belying my scrutiny.

“No. I wish.” He trails his thumb over the rim of the cup before taking another large drink. I watch his eyes dart over my shoulder to my two bodyguards standing just behind me.

I wanted to be ready. It’s a good habit to be in, including them in all of my dealings. Makes it less conspicuous on the

times I really need them there.

“She was found, but lost again. In the south side.” His dark eyes look up and meet mine. They look sunken since last I’ve seen him. “I need to find her. It’s very important. And, I was wondering if I could ask the favor of looking for her.” The tightening in his cheeks and the paling of his skin tells me how much it pains him to ask.

Favors come with a heavy price in our line of work.

My fingers steeple in front of me as I sit back in my chair. “Girls her age go crazy. She will likely come back with time. Why is it so important?”

“Well, um.” His lips thin and he shifts in his seat. “I may have promised her.”

There it is.

I let my face show surprise. “Promised her? To who?”

“It doesn’t really matter, boss. I just need—”

Leaning forward, I let my voice drop. “Who, Ivanov? It does matter.” I know I’m leaving him little option but to reveal himself now.

“Tosya Koskovich.” His eyes drop and his shoulders slump. He looks like a whipped dog.

My hands ball into fists and I let them. “What the fuck is wrong with you? What did they promise you?”

“I did it for you, boss!” He throws his hands up and falls back. “They offered to move more product, and I just thought

it would help us to maybe set up a bigger reach in Moscow.” His hands fall over the arms of the chair. “They even offered me a chance to move there and head up distribution.”

The fucker. They’re offering him a prime option to lead his own business.

Now I know where all of my missing merchandise is going. He’s funneling the shit to Russia for himself.

“I never asked for that.”

It takes everything in me not to put a bullet in his brain right now. Maybe I’ll strangle him with my bare hands.

I muse how I’m going to kill him for several minutes as he squirms beneath my neutral stare.

“Bring Tosya to our next meeting, and I’ll find the girl for you.” I’m not sure if I kept the edge out of my voice, but I’m sure he’s expecting some level of irritability from me.

“Th-thank you, boss.” Fuck, he must know that either I’m going to kill him, or the Koskovich’s will.

I don’t feel sorry for him as I watch him leave.

He did this to himself.



Furtive glances amongst my men bely the tension in the air. Subdued chuckles, more drinks, frequent shifting in their

chairs, all tell me they know something is going to happen tonight.

Ivanov switches his legs yet again and tries to disguise his glance at my study door.

Tosya isn't here. The sheen of sweat on Ivanov's forehead screams his nervousness.

Perhaps I won't have to unveil Natalia's presence after all.

"Chekov, how were the docks this week now that the frontman is eliminated? Any insight on the missing shipments?" The portly man sits up slightly at his name. His birthmark shines with extraordinary vengeance this evening.

"Only one missing this week, boss. It might be a holdover run from the snitch." His eyes narrow as he stares directly at me.

I must admit, I'm impressed at his unwavering gaze.

I haven't worked with him as long as Ivanov, but Chekov has always been an open book with me. Good or bad, his favorite pastime seems to be dumping every tidbit of information he has in my direction.

We've spent several hours this week going over plans since I discovered Ivanov's betrayal.

"Excellent. How did the talk with Mr. Dawson's wife go? Has he decided to push the permits through?" Three still are on hold. At least some progress is being made on the construction at my estate.

Chekov chuckles. “I sent Boris, my biggest and best looking guy, to talk to her. She practically followed him home on her own.”

The photos he hands me show the brute and the brunette twisted around each other in a hotel room. Jesus, the cock on that guy.

“She’s happy as shit, boss. We didn’t even have to tie her up. Dawson thinks she’s being held against her will. Fuck, boss, I doubt we’ll get her to leave.” Chekov shrugs as he leans back. “I think this is Boris’s favorite assignment yet.”

Laughter trickles out around the room, interrupted by a knock on the heavy door that leads to the foyer.

“Sir,” my butler says as he pokes his head through the opening. “There is a Mr. Tosya Koskovich to see you.”

“Send him in.” Giving a small nod to my two bodyguards standing in the back of the room, I rise to lean over my desk.

Prison has added a gaunt leanness to Tosya’s frame that makes his suit hang from his shoulders, but it hasn’t tempered the crazy that blazes from his dark eyes.

“Mr. Petrov!” His toothy grin spreads, highlighting gaps and gold caps on his teeth.

“Tosya. How was your time away?” He likely knows by now I had a hand in leading the investigation to point to him.

I’ll do anything I can to continue to fuck with the lives of the Koskovich family.

“Oh, you know.” His hand rocks in an idle gesture as he glances around the room.

Ivanov’s knuckles whiten as he tightens his grip on his glass.

“Ivanov! Where is my girl? You promised she would be here.” Tosya’s tongue lolls from his mouth as he grabs his crotch. “I can’t remember the last time I fucked a virgin.” His accent is still thick.

Anger boils under my skin, but I hide my ire with the motions of pouring a drink.

“Before I procure the prize, tell me of this deal you’ve made.” The smooth liquor tempers the rage that burns in my chest.

This bastard, and his father, had a hand in my wife’s brutal death.

“No big deal, Nicki.” He rubs his hands together and throws them out theatrically. “When my father came the first time, he saw there was room for growth. Building bridges, or some shit. I had to promise to marry an American girl and settle, isn’t that a fucking pain in the ass? Trapped with some cunt forever. But, hey, I’ve always wanted ginger pussy.” His laugh is a rasping cackle.

Ivanov shifts again and my nails dig into the wood of my desk to keep from tearing him apart.

Yuri was here. In my city. And, is putting down ties.

How many deals has he already forged here? Under my nose with Ivanov’s help?

Not going to happen.

“I see. Does the girl get a say in this?” I look to Ivanov for the answer, but Tosya laughs.

“Fuck no. Not if the deals are to stand.” He saunters to the center of the room, standing between me and the rest of the men. “Where is she?”

My bodyguards shift subtly behind him.

Stepping away from him, I turn and push the small door to the hidden alcove in the back of my office.

“It’s time Natalia.”

Chapter Ten

NATALIA



Hearing Tosya through the paneled wall talking about me makes my stomach roll.

I'm glad that Nikolai went over the plans for tonight in detail.

Now, I just have to play my role.

Straightening my short black skirt, I reach and hold Nikolai's outstretched hand. His grip is firm and sure as I step into the light of the room to a hushed intake of air from the array of men seated in the study.

My father's eyes drop when I search his face. Is it disgust or embarrassment that flashes over his downcast face?

A little piece of my heart withers as he refuses to meet my gaze.

“It seems, my dear, that your future is being determined today. Do you wish to marry Tosya?” Nikolai’s voice is steady as he addresses me. His fingers tighten over my palm as he positions me next to him.

“There’s no way in hell.” I stare at Tosya with as much disdain and hatred as I can muster.

“Well, Tosya. You should call your father and tell him you need a new wife.” Nikolai leans casually against his desk.

Only I’m at such an angle, I can see him slowly opening the top drawer.

“There’s no fucking way!” Tosya sputters. “Contract is signed. She’s mine!” He steps forward as if to grab a hold of me, but his arms are yanked to his side by the two large men Nikolai keeps near him for bodyguards.

He strains against their grasp until his face reddens.

“It’s true, Nikolai.” My father stands up. I’ve never heard him call Nikolai anything other than “Boss” before. His brows are furrowed as he glares at me, anger mottling his features.

“Well. Isn’t that interesting?” My hand shakes as Nikolai laughs. “You see, Natalia and I, well, we were married this morning in a private ceremony. Isn’t that right, little bird?”

My breath flutters in excitement and I raise my hand to show off the ring that now adorns it. “Yes, Daddy.” A genuine smile pulls my cheeks. I can’t contain the giddy feeling that I’ve had all morning after our vows were exchanged.

“There’s no fucking way.” Father tries to step closer, but is stopped by the heavy hand of one of the guards. “She wouldn’t want your old cock, Nikolai. She’s too young for you.”

“We very much found a way. And, I can assure you, she likes it very much. What irony is it, that your daughter runs into my arms, because *you’re* the monster?”

My husband turns me against the hard edge of his desk and releases my hand to place it on my waist. “It seems a little consummation of our marriage is necessary.” His words are low, but carry farther than just my ears. “I want everyone to know you’re mine,” he whispers so only I can hear him.

I give him a small nod. He warned me that it may come to this, and strangely, the thought has kept me wet since he first proposed it. He told me not to wear any panties to make this easier, but it also gave me easy access to relieve some of the nervous energy while I was waiting.

“Good girl.” He nips my ear with his teeth before I hear his zipper fall and his hand pushes me gently between my shoulders to bend over his desk.

“Fuck no! She’s mine!” Tosya struggles against the restraining arms of the big men.

I close my eyes as I feel Nikolai’s hard erection push against me and slide inside, filling me with his thick cock.

Fuck he feels good as he slams into me.

A couple of the men sitting in the study laugh. They even offer the occasional word of encouragement, but the phrases

are muddled to me as the pressure in my belly builds. The world around us fades as his fingers bruisingly grip my hips.

Closer and closer I get to the edge of oblivion as he thrusts into me. When his hand leaves my hip and tugs my hair to lift my face from where it rested on my arms, another scream fills the room making my eyes flutter open.

Tosya breaks free of the grip of the guards and rushes to me, his hands outstretched like claws.

I can feel Nikolai make a rapid movement before a gunshot echoes through the room making my ears ring.

Tosya falls across the desk. His eyes are just inches from mine and unfocus as the perfect round hole in the center of his forehead starts to ooze a single drop of blood.

Panic merges with the building inferno in my belly and I lose control. A wave of ecstasy rolls through me and the scream of my climax shudders with the tinge of fear.

Tosya's limp body slowly slides off the desk as Nikolai grunts his release and pulls my hair hard enough that I can no longer watch the macabre scene before me.

Applause breaks the silence. Heat flushes into my cheeks. I can't believe I just did that.

"Now, go back to our bedroom and be ready for me." Nikolai withdraws himself and I can feel a warm drip of his cum run down my right thigh.

His fingers find the escaped seed and he pushes it back into my pussy. "This stays here, baby girl." With a soft pat on my

ass, he pulls my skirt back down and ushers me from him.

My father has a guard on each one of his arms, holding him still. White knuckles glare like beacons from his clenched fists just below the big hands of the men pinning them down.

“Fucking whore,” he hisses. “You’ve ruined my life.”

I can’t resist. “Fair trade for what you tried to do with mine.” I glance back at Nikolai to see him zipping himself up and he gives me a wink.

“Take him downstairs.” The booming voice of my husband fills the room before I close the door behind me.



“Do you want to say goodbye to your father?” Nikolai spoons another bite of vanilla ice cream into my mouth.

Wiggling my butt on his lap in a poor attempt to change the subject, he laughs and squeezes me closer.

“Don’t worry, I’ll fuck you either way. But, I can’t let his betrayal stand. Who knows how many he has influenced from my organization. I have to send a message.” His thumb works under my lip and wipes an errant drop of my escaped dessert. When he pushes it into my mouth, I can’t stop my tongue from working circles around the tip.

His chest vibrates in a deep groan. “My sexy little wife, I love what you do to me.” I can feel him getting hard beneath my thighs and it makes me squirm teasingly again. “I need to

keep you safe though. It's important I tell the world not to fuck with me—" The heat of his palm wraps around my jaw and he pulls my face close to his. "—or mine."

"Thank you, daddy, for taking care of me." Threading my fingers through his short beard, I lean into him and let our lips touch.

There's nothing better than being spoiled rotten by a man who would kill anyone who has wronged me.

Including my father.

A sour feeling coils in my stomach as I decide to go and talk to him.

"Ah, there it is." His soft brown eyes search my face. "The moment of resolution. Do you want me to go with you?"

The clink of the spoon against the bowl is a temporary distraction as he scoops another luscious bite into my mouth.

"Hmm. No, I think I need to do this on my own." Maybe I'll finally have the guts to ask him the hard questions.

He drops the spoon into the empty bowl and kisses my temple before picking me up and placing me lightly on my feet. "Good. Go before you change your mind. I will feel better about what I have to do once you have a chance to say goodbye." When he stands, he wraps his arms around me as his lips tickle across my ear. "His fate is set, my love. He won't be able to hurt you again, but there isn't room for a change of heart. No matter what he says to attempt to sway you."

“I know. I don’t know what he could say at this point that would make selling me to a monster seem better.” Chewing on my bottom lip hard enough to tinge the flavor of vanilla with the metallic taste of blood, I find my way down the cold marble steps below the north wing.

The two sets of heavy oak doors are sealed so tightly, air hisses as I open them.

I bet it’s to muffle the noises.

A chill settles in my stomach that isn’t caused by the ice cream. How many people have gone behind these doors and never left alive? I may have grown up in this dark life, but now I’m married to the man at the head of it all.

In a strange way, it makes me feel safer. He would go to any length to protect me and his family. My hands wrap around my belly as the sound of my footsteps echo from the stone walls.

One of Nikolai’s bodyguards sits at a heavy table adjacent to a barred door.

“Boss said you’d be coming. If he gives you any flack, just yell.” A key appears in his large hand as he stands.

My father looks tiny in his shackles. I used to think he was larger than life, now, he’s just a frail old defeated man.

A scowl morphs his features when he sees me step into the small room.

“Why are you here?” The chains bind his wrists as he tries to cross his arms. They sink back to the bed with a curse under his breath.

“I just want to know why you wanted to trade me off to Tosya.” A vivid memory of his lifeless eyes meeting mine flickers through my mind causing a shudder to run through me. The things he said will be ingrained forever.

“It benefited me.” A point on the ceiling transfixes him while his white knuckled fingers dig into his knees.

Anger builds in my chest. I want to hit him, scream at him, shake him until I get some sort of response. “I don’t understand! Why? Am I so loathsome? I’m your daughter!” My foot stomps in fury on its own.

“No. You aren’t” His words are almost a whisper, but the force of them pierces my heart like a bullet.

Everything I’ve ever known comes crashing down around me. A hollow ache spreads through me with icy tendrils that close around my throat, stealing my voice. My knees give and I sink to the cold floor as silent tears blur my view of the man before me.

So many years of his subtle disdain makes sense now. The distance he always kept, the love he withheld, but I always told myself existed, was a charade.

“Your mother fucked around on me with her college professor. I nearly turned you out when she died, but realized you were an asset.” His cold eyes flick over me as he cocks one eyebrow. “You were going to buy me a new life. But, instead—” He rises to his feet, his hands trembling fists taut against the links binding him to the wall. “—you’re a whore just like your mother. Fucking away my investment and it’s

going to cost me my life. I hope you're happy. I took care of you after she died. I clothed you, fed you, even found you a replacement mother.” His face turns red as the words get louder until he's screaming. “Ungrateful! You owed me!”

I fall backwards in surprise as the door opens behind me.

Nikolai squats beside me and pulls me against his chest. “Did he hurt you?” His words are soft near my ear as he picks me up.

All I can do is shake my head. Tears flow too rapidly to see and my throat is so tight, I worry I'll suffocate if I try to talk.

Without another word, he carries me back to our room.

Chapter Eleven

NIKOLAI



The muggy July night matches my mood. An oppressive weight of a storm sits on my chest as the humidity stagnates the sweat on my brow.

This shithole of a warehouse we're in isn't helping to brighten my day much either.

O'Connor threw his best investigative team on the properties near the docks to find this place. Owned by Yuri Kokotovich through a front company, it is the perfect place to hold our little soiree tonight.

It's handy having the full force of the Chicago police department at my disposal. SWAT members are stationed around the perimeter to prevent any of Yuri's men from arriving unannounced.

All under the guise of a training exercise.

Mobile floodlights bathe the packed warehouse in yellow light, illuminating the dismembered remains of Tosya elegantly nailed to some of the large wooden crates that are stacked nearly to the roof.

I don't even care if some of this is my missing merch. It's a worthwhile trade knowing Yuri will be getting the statement he deserves for undermining me.

One of my bodyguards stands behind the chair where Peter Ivanov sits with a dark hood covering his face.

Lightning flashes through the dirty windows, highlighting the throng of my men standing near the door. This is a lesson for all of them.

"I trusted you. You were the closest thing to a brother I've ever known." When I pull the covering from his head and step back, he blinks against the weak light.

"Well, it's because of you I lost both my brother and nephew in your quest for revenge. And why? Some of your sons don't even look like you. Was your wife even faithful?" Ivanov spits the words out through his cracked lips. Two days in the cell without food or water hasn't dampened his bitterness, it seems.

A low rumble of thunder vibrates through the room, shrouding the sound of my rapid steps.

His dry mouth splits blood when the heavy ring on the back of my hand strikes it. Without a sound, he's thrown back into the chair.

Gingerly testing the wound with his tongue, he leans forward with his eyes piercing me. “I had her before you did.” He spits a wad of red tinted saliva on my black Oxford shoes and gives me a gory grin.

A roar breaks from my chest as I grab his shirt and heave him to the floor. With his hands still bound behind his back, nothing stops his nose from driving into the filthy concrete.

“You have backstabbed me for the last time!” My entire body shakes in rage and I rip off my jacket and throw it in a wad to my guard. “Rope! Tie his hands out to the crates!” Men scramble from their places to obey my command.

I’ll show them, no one undermines me and survives. Fear and loyalty is how this business functions.

Ivanov twists his cheek through the crimson pool forming around his broken nose. A low grunt looses from him as his arms are pulled out so he lies flat and tethered.

A small cloud of fine dust erupts as his feet kick out in a feeble attempt to lash out at one of the men as he passes. “You owe me, David!” he hisses. One bloodshot eye peers up from the floor to follow him as he tries to hurry away.

With a nod, I set two others to gather David.

I’ll deal with him later.

It was with great patience this morning I made sure my knife was as sharp as it could possibly be. Sharpening a blade is a lost art. My series of whetstones and honing oil are getting harder to find.

I wonder if that means I should sheath my blade and retire? Perhaps when one of my sons decides to step up and take over Chicago for me.

In the meantime, I'll keep my tools precise. For special occasions, just like this.

A staccato of heavy rain sweeps over the tin roof of the building making a low din of noise in the background.

All the better.

His thin shirt shreds easily down his spine revealing the pale skin dimpled with age spots. It hangs on his weak frame.

“Someone has been skipping the gym, Ivanov. Haven't I told you, staying healthy is important in this line of work?”

“Fuck you, Petrov. Some of us had to fucking work while you paraded around.”

My toe connects with his flank in a hard and fast kick. The crack of his rib echoes through the warehouse.

He doesn't hold in the shuddering groan as he gasps for air.

“Hard work, Ivanov? I gave you everything you asked for. All you had to do was make phone calls and deliver messages. In case you forget, I even made the charges disappear when you killed that professor all those years ago. Remember that? I had to burn down that fucking house because there was too much blood to clean.” The tip of my blade pops just under the loose skin on the back of his shoulder. “There was a family inside, Ivanov. I killed them, for you.” With a long, slow push, I open a line across his back to his other arm.

He squirms and grits his teeth. “He deserved it,” he chokes out. “She loved him. Even though everything I did was for her.” His lips pull back in a grimace as a tear streaks through the dirt on his swollen nose.

“No. You see, you have put me in a very bad situation. I know who that man was, now. You are forcing me to keep a secret from the one person I never want to hide anything from.” Changing the angle of my knife, I start a new slice from the center of the first and follow his spine. My hand rises and falls over each protrusion of his vertebrae like a small boat on the ocean as I trace it to the small of his shaking waist.

Dark droplets form along each line as the layers pull a gap, exposing the knotting pink tissue beneath.

Ivanov’s breath comes rapidly through his clenched teeth. “She’ll be the same, you just watch. She won’t be happy with an old fuck like you.” With every movement of his arms, the flaps pull farther apart at the base of his neck.

The steel edge bites again into his soft flesh, just over the top of his hip to filet a line across the top of his pelvis, intersecting with the line down his spine.

“You see, Peter. The difference is, I love my wife. I would never fuck around on her, like you did with yours.” Rolling back on my heels, I take a moment to admire the large ‘I’ shape I’ve carved into his back.

Using the flat of my blade, I peel up one of the corners near his neck until I can get a good hold on the slippery hide. With a hard pull and soft tearing sound, the flap peels back,

exposing the muscles over his ribs that stick small pale bands through the darker flesh.

His scream fills the room.

Several of my men shift and avert their gazes.

“This is what happens when you fuck me over.” My voice is booming as I let the words fill the cavernous darkness past the glow of the lights. “You end up on your belly like a snake, peeled and gutted.”

With a flick of my wrist, the last of the membranes are sheared. The entire left side of his back lays open, glistening with remnants of fat and tissue rippling over his heaving chest.

It only takes a moment, and another rending scream, to peel the right half to match. Now that he has abandoned his stoic facade, the cries flow freely from his torn mouth.

My knees creak as I stand and stretch them. Tucking my knife back in its sheath, I wander my way to my black bag of tools.

“O’Connor? How’s the perimeter?” The gangly police chief is looking a little paler than normal, but his jaw is set as he answers.

“Good, boss. No one is here, and SWAT hasn’t picked up on the noise.” His eyes cut away from me and glance at Ivanov prostrate on the floor. “Do you, um, want me to do a walkaround?”

“Does it make you uncomfortable seeing someone get what they deserve?” I don’t blink as I meet his eyes and watch for

the smallest reaction.

“No, sir. It’s just, um. Well, real, boss.” A single bead of sweat rolls down his temple.

“Sure. Another trip to Cancun on the docket, Chief?” He understands my question. Another bribe to go with the reminder that I own him. I keep his yacht stocked when he vacations. All of his favorite flavors of drugs and women keep him loyal.

So does the blackmail.

His large Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows hard. “Yeah, boss. That would be great.” He turns and disappears into the torrential rain.

I don’t need him to witness this, he’s already deeply embedded under my thumb.

Finding the right tool for the job is easy. The red-handled bolt cutters take up a significant space in the black leather bag.

Ivanov’s flaps of skin curl at the edges with the dust that gathers on them. His light colored ribs show through the thin membrane.

“You know, Peter. If you had a little fat on you, this would have been harder. I wouldn’t be able to see your bones so easily.” Lining up the cutting edges over where his lower rib attaches to his spine, I sink the dull blades around the bone and squeeze the long handles together.

A dull snap is punctuated by retching from one of my men who disappears into the night.

Ivanov screams, his body arching with the loose rib gyrating with each exhale. “What are you doing to me?” His feet kick out in a poor attempt to fend me off.

“I’m going to show everyone here just how black your fucking heart is.” Another rib shears with a light squeeze of the handles. As two more are freed from their captive hold by his spine, the frothy pink of his lungs begins to peek from the gap.

His screams are high pitched and his hips roll as he tries to avoid each snip. “Please! No more!”

“Do you know what my first wife told me when I tried to touch her the first time? She said she’d only been with one other man. She cried, Peter. She fucking cried that he had hurt her. That he fucking raped her.” Prying open the severed rib cage, I wrap my hand around the airy sack that inflates in my palm. Letting my fury flow into my grip, I squeeze the scream out of him.

“Did she beg ‘no more’ when you held her down and fucked her?” Loosening my hand from the sticky confines of his chest, I resume snipping his ribs down the other side of his spine.

Blood bubbles from his lips with each rasping breath. Watching him gasp as his lung quivers in its attempts to inflate brings dark pleasure over me.

Suffer. I want you in pain.

The oozing pool of congealing fluid grows around his body as I clip the last few bones. My knife slides easily, splitting the thick meat below his shoulders like a slab of pork before a barbeque.

A resounding crack pulls a garbled moan from him as I lay the right side of his back flat on the floor. The mirrored sound of the left echoes the same.

The muffled heave of vomiting comes from the shadows, but I don't look up.

Ivanov's throes have lessened. His fingers dig feebly into the dust, mixing with the puddle below him into a fetid smear.

Watching his heartbeat flutter the puffy tissue of his lung is mesmerizing. His mouth gapes and his lips begin to fade into a soft blue as the useless organs shake in the hollow of his chest. No longer bound to the walls of his body, they collapse upon themselves into foamy lumps.

"Quite the backstabber, aren't you?" Reaching into the hot, wet cavity of his chest, my fingers wrap around the pulsing heart.

Ivanov stiffens, his entire body goes completely rigid as his eye fixes on me.

Pulling a heart from a body is harder than it may sound. The large vessels that it's attached to are tough to tear, but give easily under the sharpened edge of my favorite blade.

Standing with the dripping core of the man I once called 'friend', I turn back to the men who frame me in the fringes of

light.

“This is what happens when you decide to make a deal behind my back. I will remove yours. Remember that.”

Turning back to Ivanov’s body, splayed out with his bloody wings, I push the heart into his silent mouth and stare into his unfocused eyes.

“Rot in hell, Peter.”

Chapter Twelve

NATALIA



My stomach is rolling and I curl into a ball in our bed as I wait for him to come home. Lightning flashes across the dark windows and rain taps a fast rhythm on the panes.

I know he's proving a point. It's strange that even though Peter Ivanov isn't my father, and treated me like shit, a part of me still wants to cling to the idea that he was.

Does this mean I have 'daddy' issues? I'm sure there's some therapist out there who would tell me that marrying a man thirty years older than me would qualify.

Will his sons accept me? I'm pretty sure I'm younger than all of them.

My jaw sets as a stubborn feeling settles in my chest. I don't care if they'll judge me. The way I love Nikolai transcends age. He's still young enough, I'll have many decades of memories to make with him.

I hope. It's a dangerous life. He was honest with me about what happened to his first wife. And here we are, a night of death surrounding our lives. Threats and betrayals have him gone from my side while he slays the demon that tried to sell me to the devil.

A wave of nausea curls in my belly as I think of the life I may have had with Tosya. I can't stop my heart from hammering in my chest at the thoughts of the pain and cruelty I may have endured in his hands.

Nikolai makes me scream in passion. The only agony he inflicts is the flicking of his magical tongue between my legs and the red handprints he leaves on my ass.

Not able to relax enough to sleep, I find myself pulling the heavy door to the suite open.

One of our hefty bodyguards sits outside and stands as I enter the hall.

"Ma'am. Can I call the kitchen for you?" His voice is deep as he looks to the ground at my feet.

"No. I'm sorry, yes. Do we have any ginger ale, please? And, I think I'd like to go to the library." Pulling my robe around me, it's an eerie feeling having him trail along behind me.

My husband is very strict about being accompanied anywhere outside of our room.

Trailing my fingers over the newest additions, their shiny gloss covers each beckon me to read. The shelves had been

mostly bare, but with Nikolai's encouragement, he's been letting me order whatever I want to.

It's a whole new perspective reading the racy romances now that I know what the scenes really feel like.

Maybe I'll try my hand at writing my own story one day. I wonder if it will make a good book?

The soft knock on the door signals the arrival of my drink. I find myself settling into one of the overstuffed leather chairs with a dark covered book boasting the naked chest of a man on the front.

While I'm idling sipping the bubbly soda, the door opens again.

"Natalia?" Nikolai's voice carries from the hall and I can hear him exchange a few words in low tones with the guard.

His hair and beard are damp and tousled as he steps into the room with little more than a low slung pair of sweatpants revealing his chiseled physique and a towel around his broad shoulders. A clean smell of soap and shampoo surrounds me at the same time as strong arms pull me up and fold around me.

The implication of his appearance hits me. He would never shower before seeing me unless there was something on him he didn't want me to see.

Pulling him tighter, I find myself burrowing my cheek against the soft hair on his tattooed chest. "It's done, isn't it." It's not even a question. I just know. "I'm glad you're safe. I

was worried that something would happen and you wouldn't make it back."

Even the thought of losing him is terrifying. He's so much more than my savior. He's my entire world.

"This will not mean our road is any easier, love." His beard rustles the hair on the top of my head as he rests his chin. "When Yuri finds out, there will be another war."

My stomach cinches tightly and I feel bile rising in my throat.

"Things are different now, though," he continues. "My sons are older and have made great strides in taking out many of Yuri's troops." His fingers splay over my ass as he pulls me tighter against him. "And we will work very hard on a whole new generation of soldiers."

He tastes like bourbon and mint as his lips touch mine.

Nausea flows over me with a cold sweat and I nearly lose my recent drink against him. Heat burns up my cheeks as I cover my mouth to run to the adjoining bathroom.

I barely make it before the acrid ginger flavor burns its way back out of me into the toilet.

"Baby bird, are you okay?" He leans against the frame of the door. God, he's sexy, even with that worried look on his face.

"I'm so sorry. I think it's nerves. I was really worried about you." My hands shake as I pull some tissues from the counter and wipe my mouth. Watching the crumpled wipes swirl down

the drain, my tongue runs over my teeth and my belly rolls again at the bitter taste.

“Maybe you’re showing your love for me in other ways,” he purrs into my ear as his hands wrap my waist from behind. “I have something for you. Come, let us go back to our room. Bring your book.”

Scooping up my ginger ale and novel from near the chair, he waits for me at the door and drapes his hand around my hips as we walk back to our suite.

With a click of the lock, he presses a firm kiss against my temple. “Wait here.” He gestures to the bed.

When he starts to walk to the closet, my tummy rolls again. “Daddy, I’m not sure if I’m ready for being tied up tonight.” As much fun as it is, I’m afraid I’ll puke into the pillows.

“Oh, no, little bird. Not tonight.” His voice carries before him as he steps back into view holding a small white box.

A tinge of excitement runs through me. “I love it when you give me presents! What is it?” My hand reaches out eagerly and he drops his surprise into my hand.

It’s a pregnancy test.

I practically float to the bathroom, a giddy panic fluttering my breath with each step.

Nikolai follows me and pauses at the door when I try to push it around.

“No. I eat there. You can’t block my view of my favorite restaurant.” His soft brown eyes crinkle in the corners as he smiles. “Go on, you’re killing me by making me wait.”

Clumsily I fumble with the plastic packaging before pulling out the small dipstick.

“It’s hard to pee when you’re watching me.” Fire burns across my neck and face as he peers down.

“I could make you come so hard you squirt on it, if that would help.”

That makes me laugh hard enough I relax and wet the end of the probe.

As I brush the vile taste from my mouth, we both stare in anticipation until a little blue line forms.

“Oh my god.”

His laughter fills the tiled walls of the bathroom and he scoops me into his arms, cradling me to his chest.

“My beautiful wife. Giving me a new purpose as a husband and a father.” He lays me gently on the bed and pushes the robe from my shoulders. Kicking his sweatpants off he frees his stiff length and pulls our naked bodies together.

“Don’t worry. I wish to hold you against me and think of all the places I want to come in you now that I’ve sown my seed.” He runs his hand down my shoulder and over my ribs leaving a trail of goosebumps in his wake. Tickling lightly over my hips, he cups the back of my thigh and pulls my knee over his.

“I guess we should enjoy this while we can,” I giggle. “It won’t be long until all you’ll be able to touch is my big belly.” My sensitive nipples brush his chest, sending small arcs of electricity through me.

Maybe I’m not as queasy as I once was.

“I’ll be able to touch every piece of you. Staying flexible and limber is important for an easy birth.” As if to prove his point, he pulls my knee higher until it rests over his waist. Broad strokes of his fingers work their way back up my body until he knots them into my hair, tugging my face up to meet his.

The fire of his lips claims mine for a torrid kiss before he begins to nibble his way down my jaw. “I cannot wait until you’re ripe and bursting for me.” His palm moves to my breast and he circles my taut nipple with his thumb. “When you’re so swollen with milk, you’ll leak with the smallest touch.” Sizzling heat flows from his teeth nipping at the tender skin of my neck as his fingers tighten creating an arc of searing pleasure that runs from my throat to my chest.

A moan escapes me and I tug on his hips until I can feel the rigid head of his cock pressing against my slick slit.

The rumble of his matching groan vibrates the air around me. “No, baby girl. You’re not feeling well. I’m feeling like a caveman right now and won’t be able to take it easy on you.”

“I feel better. Maybe I don’t want you to take it easy on me.” I force out my bottom lip in an exaggerated pout. “Please, daddy?”

Chapter Thirteen

NIKOLAI



That fucking lip. How can I resist her? When she bats her big green eyes and the corner of her pink mouth turns up in that teasing hint of a smile.

“Mmm, well you know, you’re already full to the brim in your hot little cunt. Maybe your ass finally wants a little taste of what it’s been missing?” I trace the small of her back and follow the crease of her perfect orbs until my fingers find her wet seam. Her clit is already full and she gasps when I circle it with slow circles.

A flush of pink works over the long arch of her neck as her eyebrows raise. “Will it hurt?” Her pouty lower lip finds its way between the white pearls of her teeth.

“Do you trust your daddy to take care of you?” Rolling over her, I pull her knee even higher until it nests against the side of her chest and she is spread before me.

The tension in her shoulders relaxes. “Yes, daddy. Do whatever you want to me. You always know what’s right.” Her fingers bury into my hair and she pulls my face to her chest.

“That’s it. I’ll make my little girl feel so good.” Peppering kisses down the smooth skin of her freckled chest, I take one of her tight nipples between my teeth and gently bite before sucking it into my mouth and rolling my tongue over the sting.

She writhes beneath me, running her hands over my arms. Threading her free leg over mine, her heel digs into my thigh in an attempt to pull me closer.

I relent and let her pull me until I sink my throbbing cock into the tight confines of her soaking pussy. Unable to stop the groan that escapes, I take a moment to enjoy the quivering grip her body has on me. “So fucking tight, little girl. Get good and wet.”

A frustrated moan comes out of her when I unsheath myself from her sultry confines. Replacing my cock with two fingers, I’m rewarded with a whimper from her as she thrashes her head back against the pillow.

Building a steady rhythm with my hand, my lips work my way down her body until I nip at the bottom of her belly button. “I can’t wait until I can feel our baby. Ours. Yours. Mine.” I punctuate each word with a twirl of my tongue over her clit.

Her palm finds my hair and her fingers tangle in it as I pull my hand free and take some of her delicious juices down to

circle the rim of her ass. Pushing my index finger into her snug recesses, she cries out and arches her back. “Yes! Oh, God!”

I can feel the tense muscles relax as she gives in to the intensity of the rhythm. Enough that I push a second finger past the clenching ring.

Her arms reach out and claw the silken fabric of the sheets into her fists as she folds her trembling thighs around my ears. Her hips spasm against my face as she seizes into a gushing orgasm that splashes over my beard and neck and sends rivulets down my chest.

“Look at my good girl, coming on my face.” Twisting my knuckles within her elicits another shaking moan, an aftershock rippling over my fingers.

Sweat pools in the hollow of her throat and she wipes a damp lock of her luscious red hair from her brow.

But, I don't give her a reprieve. Like a starving man, I ravage her pussy with my tongue and slip a third finger into her. I need to stretch her enough to fit my cock.

She rewards me with a long, low moan and her back arches from the bed.

“Please...” Her eyes flutter open and lock with mine as she gyrates against my mouth.

“Is my naughty Natty begging to have her virgin ass fucked? It's not enough that I've buried my fingers in there, now you want my cock?” I'm already leaking against my own belly in anticipation.

My perfect wife.

“Yes, please!” Her breath comes in short pants.

“Tell me,” I growl as I kneel over her.

She throws her head back against the pillows and wraps her hands around her knees, pulling them open. “Fuck my ass! I want you to come in my ass!” The pitch in her voice changes with every thrust of my hand.

I can't take any more. Palming my aching length, I rub the head over her soaking pussy, smothering myself in her wet desire. Pushing one hand onto the back of her thigh, I raise her hips to align myself with her alluring ass.

Her body is clenched so snugly I can barely sink the tip in. One of her hands braces against my leg. “Relax, baby. I'll go slow.”

My abs shake as I struggle to not plunge into her, but keep my strokes short and fast. It feels so fucking good, I can feel myself starting to swell.

Each squeezing drive into her I bury myself deeper. Soon, her hand is tugging at the back of my thigh and a climbing continuous moan is pouring from deep within her throat.

When I'm fully seated and my belly is slapping against the wet of her cunt, I grip her hips with bruising force and rut into her.

A brush of my thumb over her clit releases a scream from her as her body clamps down on me with crushing force as she climaxes hard enough to lock me in. The flood of her ecstasy

sprays between us, soaking my belly. Cascading tremors erupt from me as I spurt over and over into her until it feels like my nuts have turned inside out and I'm a dried husk that will blow away in the next wind.

My arms give and I collapse next to her sweaty body. "That, my dear, was magnificent. You're such a good girl, letting me do what I want with you. You came so hard." My cock softens and slides free of her ass, making her shiver against me.

Now that I've caught my breath, I shift out of the big bed and go to the bathroom to clean myself. With a warm washcloth and a big fluffy towel, I'm pleased to see she is drowsily curling her way between the pillows.

"Here, baby girl. Open your legs for me." Her eyes barely flutter as she obediently spreads herself so I can gently wipe her clean.

"Mmm, that feels good, daddy." A smile tugs her lips into a contented bow.

"Raise your hips." Tucking the fluffy towel beneath her, I need to remember to give the housekeeper a raise for dealing with changing our bedding daily.

The events of the day run through my head as I snuggle against her sleeping form. Lows and highs. Wrapping my hand over her flat belly, I make a silent vow to keep them both safe.



“Next on KBHR news, two bodies were discovered this morning in a warehouse near the docks. Authorities suspect they are tied to the owner of the building, but it appears to be a murder suicide. Chief O’Connor will be releasing a statement this afternoon after the families have been notified.”

It seems my little present for Yuri will be passed along now. O’Connor did exactly as he was told. I pull out two cigars and hand one to Chekov. “First order of business is done. Now, this. Things are working out.”

The churning of the concrete truck makes a low growl in the background, but it doesn’t cover the shrill pitch of Svetlana’s screams.

“This works out good, boss. We finally got the permits now that Dawson’s wife has been gone, and we’re saving on concrete.” Chekov grins and bites the end off of a fresh cigar.

“That it does. I’m glad that Dawson has been easier to work with. Did his wife really refuse to leave Boris after everything went through?” From my brief interactions with Dawson, it wouldn’t surprise me that his wife would leave him. That guy is a cuck.

Boris is with my small crew of guys working the concrete pour. His massive frame wields a shovel as if it’s a toothpick.

Fuck, I bet his cock is as big as my leg.

My own twitches in my pants as I help my wife out of the SUV. Her copper hair glistens in the pale sun breaking through the heavy clouds.

The storm still lingers from last night. I help her deftly step past a fresh puddle. “Are you sure you wish to witness this? My hope is to shield you from the depraved side of our life.”

“I’m sure. I’ve spent too long sheltered. I’m choosing this life, I need to know the dark along with the light.” Her delicate jaw is set, but the grip of her fingers in my palm betray the conflict that rages within her.

“I’ll love you either way, little bird. In the darkness or the light,” I murmur against her temple.

She fixes me with her emerald stare before giving me a small nod. “Thank you for letting me choose.” Throwing her shoulders back, she steps closer to the hole where the foundation is being poured.

“This is the last house for my sons. It seems fitting that her treachery shall be forever buried.” As we step closer, we can peer over the boards framing the network of tied rebar within.

“So much concrete! I’ve never seen this done before.” She watches the men as they sweat and curse, pulling the heavy gray mud further down between the forms.

Svetlana is there as well. Lashed on her back to the metal bars, she’s destined to be added to the walls of the new building.

“Is that them?” Natalia raises her arm and gestures at the two hulking bodies lying between the upright boards.

“Yes, dear. Both of her goons. I didn’t see fit to see them suffer as they were following her fucked up orders. But, they

still had to die for what they did to you.” My palm finds her hip as I snug her against my side.

She turns and gives me a wry smile. “Thank you, baby.” Releasing my hand, she steps closer to where Svetlana lies. “How do you like being held down?” Her voice carries in the morning air.

Svetlana opens her eyes, head swiveling until she sees Natalia standing over her.

“You fucking bitch! Get me out of here! You know I only did that to save your life!” She thrashes uselessly against the ropes that tether her. “Ask your father, it was his idea!” Her face is mottled as she screams.

“Oh, you mean the man who kept me captive to use as a bargaining chip? The man who is rotting on the floor of a warehouse as we speak?”

Listening to Natalia throw fire makes my cock leak in longing. My little bird is a phoenix, with a hidden inferno that boils to the surface.

“You just wait until my brother gets a hold of you! Nikolai won’t be able to protect you!” Svetlana’s screech causes Boris to glance over and grimace.

“Your fucking monster of a brother is in pieces in the same warehouse. Your fucking family is done!” Natalia’s face is flushed as she stomps her foot.

Taking a deep breath, she calms herself and squeezes my hand. “And, mine is just beginning.”

The heavy sludge rises beneath Svetlana as the concrete truck continues to empty its contents in the trench.

When it first touches her bound hands, she screams again. “No! Not like this!” Twisting her body loosens a fold of her dress to hang in the thick mixture.

The men push the chute closer until the viscous mess pours over her legs and begins to collect over her stomach.

“Please! Let me out! My father is a powerful man!” Her head turns back and forth at the men, desperation tinging her words.

“Your father will be the next to fall.” It is more than idle talk. I vow to remove Yuri from the face of this earth. I hate that my family lives under his threat.

My boys are now men. We are a force to be reckoned with.

Svetlana’s cries become heavy gasps as the weight of the concrete settles over her chest.

“Any last words?” Boris stands over her holding back the final wave.

“I hate you all.” Her eyes close as they are sealed beneath the liquid rock.

“Her hatred will make a strong base to build on.” The laugh works its way from my chest as I turn Natalia back to the car. “Come, my love. Celeste said she has created a new dish for us to try.”

Epilogue

NATALIA



“I can’t hide it anymore.” I can feel my lower lip slip out as I tighten my plum colored dress over my noticeable belly.

“I don’t want you too.” His beard tickles my neck when he slides his hand around my swollen bump. “I want the world to know that my beautiful bride is round with my child at a Christmas gathering full of family.” Latching his teeth onto the line of my throat, he sucks hard enough there’s little doubt it will leave a mark. “It’s a wonderful thing to celebrate.”

My head drops back, resting on his shoulder. “I’m nervous about this. All of your sons with their women. Daddy, they’re almost all older than me.” Tracing his arms, I thread my fingers through his in time to feel our baby rolling beneath his palms. “What are they going to think?”

“It doesn’t matter what they think, only me. They have their own happiness to pursue.” His touch works lower, pulling my flowing skirt up to expose my thighs and lower hip.

The rumble of his chest against my back is clear with his disapproval. “Panties, my love? They are not allowed, remember the rule?”

I catch his amber eyes in the mirror and catch myself chewing on my lip. “I just thought—”

“Thought you wouldn’t get a spanking?” His thick finger curls around the silken seam and he tugs them down. “For that, perhaps you should sit on Santa’s lap for the evening.”

Shock tightens my lungs as the dainty purple fabric falls to my ankles. “With your family right there?”

He’s hard against my ass. I think I already know the answer.

“Mmm, yes, little bird. You’re going to be punished by sitting on my cock in front of everyone without them knowing.” He digs into my hips, pulling me tightly against him as he rubs his stiff erection between my ass cheeks.

My reflection shows the red blush moving up my neck, matching the shade of his holiday hat. I don’t need to see it, I can feel the fire running up scorching my face.

But, I’d be lying if I said it didn’t make me wet. “Can’t I just sit on it now? So I don’t have to wait? Please, Daddy?”

Swiveling my hips makes his breath catch against my ear and he grinds himself harder against me. “My love, your

punishment will be just as difficult for me. These are the burdens we bear for those we adore.”

Stepping around me, he lifts my hand, bringing my wedding ring to his lips. With a sly smile, he tugs me to his side to meet his children.

I don't know what I expected, but it wasn't a long table full of large handsome men and beautiful women. It's a whirl of names and stories, so many it's hard to keep track.

The crystalline sound of a fork against a wine glass quiets all the voices as my husband stands.

“Come, now that dinner is over, let's have a drink in the study so this old man can give you all your gifts.” Nikolai with his gray beard and his Santa hat certainly looks the part.

The bloodstain where Tosya fell disappeared a long time ago, but my eyes still search for it reflexively. My life has changed so much since those days.

Nikolai pulls out his overstuffed leather chair from behind his desk so it sits at the front of how all of the furniture is arranged. His grip on my hand doesn't loosen as he takes a seat, pulling me to face him between his legs. “Now, my naughty Natalia. Have a seat.” The golden flecks in his eyes burn with hunger as he turns me around to guide me onto his lap.

It's a struggle not to gasp as he slides the swollen head of his dick into me with a smooth movement.

He's so big it's almost uncomfortable, but I'm afraid to move. Static electricity runs through my limbs and hums into my ears so I can't focus on what he's saying.

When he shifts to pick up a small box from the pile next to him, his fingers cinch onto my hip and he rolls just enough that some of the pressure lightens.

Until he sits back and drives himself deeper.

Pretending to cough to cover my whimper doesn't help. It clenches my muscles tightly around him making his thighs twitch beneath mine.

He calls his sons up, one at a time to hand each one their package.

I forget their names. Their faces. Even their existence.

All I can feel is him and the undulating inferno he is churning within me one fraction of a movement at a time.

To give each one a polite smile when my belly is quivering on the brink of release is a sweet torture.

"Go ahead, open your gifts." Nikolai's warm voice percolates over me as he shifts me again, his mushroomed head dragging along the walls of my sensitive pussy.

When his hand sneaks under the hem of my dress to cover my thigh, I know I'm in trouble.

As everyone's heads bow over their gilded boxes, he buries his finger to press firmly, but completely still, against my throbbing clit.

Squeezing his knee, I try to breathe through the urgent tightening inside me as he edges me closer to a screaming precipice.

“Keys?” Mikhail, the oldest, dangles a brass ring with a confused look. His eyes, so similar to Nikolai’s squint as he looks to his father.

My daddy, who’s buried to the hilt, laughs his deep baritone rumble that vibrates through me. “They’re for your new houses. One for each, so you’ll always have a home for your growing families.” His free hand raises and his legs press the floor, ramming me against his finger that makes an arduously long stroke over me.

I don’t think I can hold back much longer. All of my limbs are shaking, my sensitive nipples are raw against the thin fabric. A tinge of metallic taste trickles into my mouth. Shit, I think I bit the inside of my cheek.

“Yes, yes, you’re all very welcome. Now, go enjoy your new places. My wife and I have our own gifts to exchange.” His hidden hand flicks my clit, making me jump.

Amaia, Viktor’s girl, flashes me a look of concern.

“Baby kicked.” I feign pushing on my extended abdomen and give her a weak grimace, while I’m internally screaming.

She smiles and gracefully stands to take his arm.

Roman is the last to leave, his heavily tattooed arm disappears behind the closing door.

“Now,” Nikolai croons against my sweaty neck. “Do you feel you have paid your penance for breaking the rules?”

A shiver of delicious anticipation runs through me. “Yes, Daddy. Please, can I come?” My breath comes in tiny pants, every syllable is a struggle to get out.

“Why don’t you tell Santa what you want me to do?” His firm finger makes an agonizing circle on my clit. “I think you’ve soaked into my chair. Such a naughty girl.” His hips roll in an arch and he pushes between my shoulders, forcing his hard length deeper.

“Oh, my god,” I pant. “Please, fuck me?” My nails dig into his knees as my body shudders. It’s like every nerve ending in my body is being electrified.

“That’s my good girl. Christmas will come early for you, my love.” He pushes us both up, still buried deep inside of me. “Kneel on my chair. I want you to flood the seat so every time I sit in it I can think of your wet pussy.”

On shaking legs, my legs nestle into the warm leather and my elbows brace against the back. It smells like his cologne, subtle and spicy.

“Now—” His hands make heated trails up and down my thighs before settling around each of the globes of my ass. “—are you going to wear panties again?” He pulls back so only the very tip of his length is in me, then he pauses.

Wiggling my hips, a whine of frustration slips out of me. “Only when you tell me to.” My forehead drops to my arms. I

hope that's the right answer. Need quivers in me and drips onto the cooling cushion between my knees.

He thrusts lightning into me with a grunt, then withdraws and slams in again. "Is that what you want, little bird?"

"Yes, Daddy!" I scream to the ceiling as the first tremors begin to overtake me.

He grips my waist, rutting into me as spasms quake through me in shuddering waves. Stars burst behind my eyes when he groans and spurts his release, joining me in pulsing ecstasy.

His hands frame me, propping himself on the arms of the worn leather seat. Hot breath tickles over my shoulder before the soft nibble of his lips work along my collarbone.

"My beautiful wife. Consider your punishment rendered." As he withdraws his softening cock, another small aftershock runs through me.

"I haven't asked, yet. What did you want for Christmas?" He's given me all the money I could ever need, but what do I buy a man who can get anything he wants?

He helps me stand on shaking legs and smooth the wrinkled fabric of my dress before pulling me to him tightly, his lips tenderly touching my temple.

"This is all I could ever hope for. My growing family, all under one roof." His warm palm rubs down the curve of my extended belly. "And the fierce love of a magnificent woman. Let's get you off to bed. There won't be many restful nights

left. We're going to make sure the wall ring with the cries of children for many more years.”

About the Author

The logo for M.A. Cobb, featuring the name 'M.A. Cobb' in a stylized, handwritten font, with the word 'AUTHOR' in a smaller, sans-serif font directly below it. The logo is centered between two light gray rectangular bars.

M.A. Cobb
AUTHOR

M.A. Cobb is a lover of all genres, but in particular horror and romance. All varieties of macabre are welcome. Any type of post-apocalyptic and dystopian are particular favorites. You can find more at www.macobb.com

Also By

The Sunburst Trilogy:

Burst of Fate

Living far from the city, Avery worried only about her garden and farmer's markets. She never expected love to appear on her doorstep. But after rescuing the tall red-headed stranger from a horrible crash, they both discover the world is much darker than they originally thought. Will Avery and Morgan find hope in this new, powerless world?

<https://mybook.to/yUGx>



Burst of Shadows

Trapped beneath the city of Seattle when an irreversible darkness falls, Carly and James discover more than just light at the end of the tunnel. As they flee the impending collapse of society, chaos and danger are around every turn. Finally escaping the confines of the suffocating streets, they find that their temporary sanctuary in a small town has its own set of perils. Will their love survive the threat in the shadows that pursue them?

<https://mybook.to/WZvfY>



Coming soon:

Burst of Retribution

A year after the world goes black, Maddy decides to leave the safety of her new home to check on the family she left behind. But when she finds her childhood home empty, she discovers that the darkness in her past is merely the beginning of something more dire. Struggling to fight the memories, she's forced to choose to rescue her family, or fall victim to the darkness again. Captured by a man whose intentions are unknown, will she be able to escape to find the justice she deserves?



The Dire Reaction

As a veterinarian, Dr. Danielle Michelson was excited to be involved with a new genetic therapy designed to help fight a common pet

ailment. She even knew the perfect canine to enroll in the treatment, one belonging to the tall blond cowboy, Sam Downing.

Little did she know, while things were heating up between them, the world itself was transforming.

The cure turned into a curse, and created an army of monsters that thrive on pure chaos and destruction. The worst of them all, was someone they

both knew.

Now, they must find allies to fight back against the onslaught of carnal evil that threatens to overtake them.

Will Dani and Sam survive the monstrous terror that is overrunning their city? Or will the hordes of ravenous creatures consume everything, and everyone, in their path?

<https://mybook.to/FoQnj>



The Dire Legacy

After the virus ravaged the earth, it left a wake of men and terrifying monsters, vying for power.

But, sometimes, the monsters were not the ones with fur. Sometimes, they look like you and I.

Michael fled the only home he knew before his truth was revealed. Was he a monster like his father? Or did the world around him change so much he no longer fit in?

When he meets Hope, everything he thought he knew shifts. She redefines this new world, and reveals the true evil that still walks among us.

<https://mybook.to/czgbgIe>



Curse of the Mourning Ring

Alice, a reclusive author, has spent her life hiding behind her computer and only writing about love. But her hopes soon falter as she stumbles upon a little wooden box beneath the twisted roots of a fallen oak tree. Inside she finds a long forgotten heirloom.

A ring bound to a fierce man who had died a hundred years ago.

A ring that pulls his dark, tortured soul to her.

She can hear him.

She can feel him.

But can she love him?

Henry's life ended in betrayal. An oath he swears upon his father's ring holds him back from eternal peace, tethering his spirit to this plane.

He moves amongst the living, unseen and intangible.

A man out of time, out of touch.

There is only one thing in his grasp.

There is only her. She is his everything.

Will he win her love, or is he destined to linger in her shadow eternally?

<https://mybook.to/W9Vgv>



Nikolai Petrov: The Petrov Family

Nikolai lost his wife nearly a decade ago in a brutal act of retaliation from a rival family. His years of solitude were spent bathing in the blood of revenge until a tentative peace was made.

It's only after the daughter of his best friend sneaks into his life that he learns how thin that cease-fire really is.

She may be what he needs to heal, but will it be at the cost of his empire?

<https://mybook.to/KGePAM>