



POCKFORD PIRATES COLLEGE HOCKEY ROMANCE

SIN BIN

Puck Boy

LONDON CASEY

SIN BIN PUCK BOY

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ROMANCE

LONDON CASEY

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GABRIEL'S LOVE CAN BE BOUGHT AND SOLD!

Hockey Romance Hot Enough to Melt the Ice!

SIN BIN PUCK BOY

**It might not be the ‘most forbidden’ thing in the world...
but it’s pretty damn close if you ask me...**

It’s not supposed to be like this.

I’m not supposed to be dealing with a psycho ex.

I’m not supposed to get saved from my psycho ex by a college
hockey player.

My life is calm, quiet. Okay?

I’m an “assistant” professor at *Puckford University* with the
dream of becoming a full-time, real professor.

The last thing I need is Villi showing up just to see if I’m okay.

The last thing I need is Villi to show up to my class... and then
transfer to take my class... so he can ‘*protect me*’...

And the absolute last thing I need is for him to stay after class.

And wait for the room to clear out so it’s just me and him.

Because if he thinks for one second I'm going to ruin my career and reputation all for some student-professor fantasy...

(...he might be right.)

PROLOGUE

(WHEN A DEVIL TOUCH AN ANGEL... OR SOME KIND OF
FANCY CRAP LIKE THAT)

THE ROOM IS MOSTLY DARK BY NOW.

I usually only leave a few lights on as I finish up.

I take my time.

First to show up, last to leave.

Earning my... experience.

Fine, I admit it, sometimes it creeps me out.

Sometimes my mind gets the best of me.

The entire campus has got to be haunted in some way.

So much history.

Did you know, when Puckford was first introduced as a-

“Doing nerd shit again, darling?”

The voice slams into my body.

The chills that flood my body are dangerous.

Dangerous chills.

Evil chills.

My eyes look forward.

EXIT

The glowing red letters above the door.

I mentally have my escape planned out, but do I really need it?

I smell him before I bother turning around to see him.

What I need is a moment to collect myself.

I've already told him not to do this.

Not to show up. *Unannounced.*

Not to just assume that I'm...

I'm not some college girl.

You do understand that, right?

You do realize I have a job here.

I have a career I'm building.

He doesn't care.

I'm not sure he cares about anyone but himself.

No matter what he says or tries to show off.

Because he has that look in his eyes.

That little smirk on his face.

He's more than just dangerous though.

Danger is trouble.

He's above the level of trouble.

"Cat got your tongue, darling?"

I carefully slide my laptop into my bag.

I force myself to think about tomorrow's lecture.

Tomorrow we are discussing the positives and negatives of depreciation on assets and how to effectively use them for

business. How does it help? How does it hurt? What is the proper way to handle depreciation? Also, where does depreciation fit in the financial portion of a company...

Now he's standing next to me.

I can feel him staring at me.

I won't tell you that his eyes are a rich chocolate brown color.

Or that they have a way of *maybe* looking cute but they are always evil.

"It's late," I say. "I have to get home."

He places his hand on the strap of my bag. "That much of a rush?"

I swallow hard and I look at him. "What do you want?"

He inches closer to me. "You, darling. I've been very up front about that. I have no reason to lie or play games."

"I thought you enjoyed playing games. At least, isn't that what your reputation dictates?"

"Oh, darling, you've got me all wrong. College girls are fun. But a woman... a real woman... I can't help myself..."

He touches my right hand.

I look to my left at the empty seats in the lecture hall.

Everything is on the line.

Maybe it's always been on the line.

"You still haven't told me what you want, darling," he whispers. "I can see it in your eyes. Written on your face. I know it's in there."

The implications are terrible.

I'm an assistant professor.

He's a college student.

We're both adults.

I want to become a professor and have a good life.

He's going to be a famous hockey player.

He inches even closer to me.

He's not like anyone I've ever met before.

And I'm not like anyone he's ever met before.

Oil and water.

Fire and ice.

Give me all the cliché names you can right now...

... because...

“Tell me, darling,” he whispers with a little growl in his throat.

That's when I finally snap.

I turn my head and look at him.

“You really want to know?” I whisper.

“It's the only thing I care about right now.”

I suck in a slow breath.

I know I'm about to fuck up everything in my life.

I can't help it.

I touch his face and I smile.

“I want you to fuck me on this desk... right now...”

VILLI

I DON'T HAVE MANY RULES IN LIFE.

Or maybe I do.

I don't fucking know.

What I do know is...

I should have known better when she wanted to go back to her place.

I didn't like that.

I didn't want to know anything about her.

But she's just...

Voluptuous.

Look, I will never judge a woman based on anything ever.

But this one...

She's a cougar with a capital C.

Hips that could sway like a sledgehammer.

A low-cut top showing off tits that are just... huge.

Mesmerized for a second or two, next thing I know I'm walking around her house to the backdoor.

That's when I had to walk by the fridge and I saw pictures of the kids.

Kids.

Ah, fuck, Villi.

What are you doing?

She has kids.

You think that stops me?

Nah.

Slows me a second or two.

Look, if this bothers you, then bail on the entire story.

This is who I am.

This is Villi.

Villian.

Got it?

You already know I have a thing for women older than me.

That's my vibe.

That's my *thing*.

Simple as that.

I've tried screwing around with women my age but the college stuff...

It's a great appetizer, okay?

But a real woman?

A woman with curves... experience...

Yeah, a woman with a husband that doesn't go down on her anymore because the mortgage is too high...

Again, I should have known better.

I'll give you that much.

I'm breaking rules I've never actually written but should be common sense.

I'm distracted by this woman's body.

I have to see her naked.

So we end up in the bedroom.

The master bedroom.

Sure enough there's a wedding picture on the wall.

I'm really trying to muster up some guilt or remorse and take off running.

But she moves to the bed, turns around, and smiles at me.

"This has always been a fantasy of mine," she whispers. "To just pick someone up at a bar and bring them home. You're not going to fall in love, are you?"

"No, darling," I say. "When I'm done fucking you, I'll leave."

"I never had any fun in college," she says. "My life was just..."

She sighs and smiles.

She pulls her top down.

I've never seen a bra so thickly padded before.

It's needed to hold those tits in place.

I'm about ready to lick my lips waiting for her to pull that bra down...

There's a soft buzzing sound.

She turns and grabs for her phone.

"Fuck," she cries out. She looks at me. "My husband is home."

Ah... shit...

Here we go, Villi.

Nicely done, moron.

She looks at me now, not so much scared, but maybe intrigued.

I think she wants her husband to find her in bed with a college stud.

I think this woman is fucking crazy.

Which breaks my heart because I'll never actually get her in bed.

I stand there and picture her riding me.

Those huge, beautiful tits dancing like they've never danced before.

A real woman's body too.

In my hands.

A door opens and closes.

Some guy's voice calls out...

"Caroline! Where are you?"

I turn and run out of the bedroom.

I'm lying if I don't say this has happened to me before.

Getting chased out of a house or two.

A condo.

An apartment.

One time I got caught in the back of a minivan.

That guy was out to kill me but I managed to somehow open the back latch of the door and take off.

This time though...

I reach the top of the stairs and turn.

The husband is at the bottom of the stairs.

“Who the fuck are you?”

The guy’s voice is loud and mean.

“I’m the plumber,” I say. “But don’t worry, I didn’t even get to lay any pipe yet.”

Yes, I know I’m an asshole.

I know on the scale of one-to-ten on the piece-of-shit meter, I’m a seventeen on a good day.

“She’s doing this again?”

Again?

I’m not the first?

Oh... damn...

Now the husband is charging up the stairs.

He wants to take his marriage frustration out on me.

I turn and run the other way.

I have no choice.

I really don’t want to have to fight this guy.

I don't want to have to hurt him.

Imagine that for a smack to your pride.

You come home to find some big, strong, sexy college hockey player ready to fuck your wife. And then the guy beats the shit out of you.

Double ouch.

I run down a hallway.

The husband comes after me.

The wife - *Caroline...*

She starts screaming.

"Tom! Stop this, Tom! This isn't what you think, Tom!"

Oh, but it is what you think, Tom.

For sure.

If you came home just two minutes later you would have found me sucking on your wife's tits as though they leaked whiskey.

I turn to the left at the end of the hallway.

I open the door.

A bathroom.

I see another door.

The husband - Tom - has some speed.

I open the other door.

I'm back in the master bedroom.

Caroline stands there, still with her top down, showing off her bra.

And those massive tits pouring out of the top.

I turn and step backwards.

I have one chance to escape... but...

I put my hands together.

I nod at Caroline.

Her husband is seconds away from reaching me.

But. I. Have. To. See.

At least one, right?

I hold up one finger.

Caroline grins and pulls her bra down, letting her left breast fall free.

It's amazing...

“We are having a long talk about this!” Tom yells at his wife as he runs by her to chase after me.

She's still standing there, one tit hanging out.

Somehow I'm still the bad guy here.

I turn, run out of the master bedroom, and now I have a clear path to the stairs.

I pick up some speed and I'm out the front door in a few seconds.

I take off running, going in the opposite direction of my car.

As I said, I've done this before. You don't lead the husband right to your car.

I run for two blocks even though Tom gave up well before the first block.

I pause. Catch my breath.

Then I make a wide circle around the neighborhood and
get to my car.

I start the car and drive away.

At a red light, I grip the steering wheel tight.

I picture Caroline's tit.

I growl in my throat.

I really could have had fun with her.

Then again, I could have gotten hurt or killed.

I tell myself maybe it's time to stick to college girls.

To women my age.

Early twenties.

Looking for some fun.

I smile and shake my head.

One thing about me you'll figure out quick enough...

I never EVER learn my lesson.

VERA

I HURRY THROUGH THE DOORS OF THE RESTAURANT TO MEET Blake.

Being late isn't exactly something I'm proud of but I always find ways to make it happen.

I tell myself it's a cute feature about me.

Oh, that's just Vera! She's just late! How cute!

Blake stares at me from across the restaurant.

White hot chills pierce my gut.

They climb around to my lower back and right up my spine.

I hear a voice way back in the depths of my head.

Leave.

Vera!

Turn around and leave.

A lot of thoughts hit me at once.

I battle logic and reasoning and in some weird way, I justify way too much.

For the sake of a nice dinner.

For the sake of a nice glass of wine.

For the sake of the company of a man.

“I am so sorry, Blake,” I say. “You would not believe-”

“How embarrassing it is to sit here and have the waitress ask me three times if you were going to show up?” Blake cuts in.

Heat fills my cheeks.

I’m suddenly three inches tall.

I sit down and stare at a glass of water on the table.

Why, Vera?

Why...?

I take a slow breath.

“How was your day, Blake?” I ask.

I smile at him.

My brain screams one word.

Diffuse.

That’s all I can think to do.

Diffuse it all.

Yeah, I know how it looks.

And, yeah, I can hear my sister Abby’s voice in my head.

If this were her, she would have broken a glass over Blake’s head a long time ago.

Also... *what kind of example is this for Violet?*

There's a lot to digest with my younger sister.

I'm sure you know all about her by now.

My sweet, innocent sister. With a *bad boy* college hockey player.

It worries me a lot.

But a guy like Mac?

He would kill to protect my sister.

A guy like Blake?

"My day was a shitshow, Vera," Blake says. *He's mean.*
"Meetings all fucking day with no fucking point. My boss up my ass about reports from last quarter that were fucked up by the loser interns they bring in. I can't take it anymore. And then I get out of work and rush over here and I'm practically stood up by you."

"Blake, I showed up," I say. "Come on. Let's have a drink and forget about the day. For both of us. Mine wasn't all that great either."

"Oh, your life is hectic, huh? Substitute teacher?"

Blake smirks.

He knows how much I hate when he calls me that.

There is nothing wrong with substitute teaching. I did it for a while to get some great experience. But I worked my ass off and worked into an assistant professor role.

It took a lot to get where I am.

And I'm proud of myself for it.

Especially considering my two sisters.

Hello, Messy Monroes!

(You've heard that name before, right?)

“You're funny,” I say to Blake.

Diffuse.

The waitress comes over and to my surprise she asks me if I got stuck in the traffic jam on Warrington.

I did get stuck in that traffic jam.

What happened - *if Blake bothered to ask* - was that someone ran a stop sign and hit another car. The driver fled the scene. The police had the roads backed up for what felt like ever.

Which, Blake, is why I showed up late.

So sorry.

We order our food.

We sit there in semi-silence.

I let Blake dictate the conversation.

I'm honestly tired.

My long day was *long*.

A part of me wishes Blake would ask about my day. Let me vent for a little bit. Then tell a silly joke or order me a stronger drink or do something.

In some sense, I guess his job has more meaning than mine.

I don't think it should be that way though.

“Have you applied to any other colleges?” Blake asks.

“Oh. Well. Not recently, no.”

“Why not?”

“There’s really nothing out there. My best bet is to keep my connections going. You know what I-”

“What you need to do,” Blake says, pointing a butter knife at me. “You need to apply. Show up. Demand. Get mean, Vera. Show them who you are and what you want.”

“I don’t think it works that way, Blake.”

“Now you sound like those lazy interns I deal with. They want someone to come to them with a six-figure job.”

“I’m not saying that’s my plan, Blake. There’s just a certain way to handle this. And to be honest, I’m happy where I am right now.”

“Substitute teaching?”

“I am not that,” I growl.

Blake leans back. “Oh. Someone getting mean?”

Our dinner shows up.

We eat in silence.

The salmon is perfectly cooked.

The broccoli perfectly steamed, keeping its rich, green color.

The yellow rice is also perfect.

I see Blake casually picking through his food.

That means something has him annoyed.

I finish eating and it just so happens Blake declares he just wants to leave.

The best thing for the night.

I've really had a crappy day.

And I don't want to have to deal with Blake any longer at the restaurant.

Of course, I know how this could end up.

He's annoyed.

I'm here.

Meaning we go back to his place.

He tells me we should go into the bedroom.

I follow.

Then it's a few minutes of him grunting and thrusting on top of me and he finishes.

He always finishes so early...

I wait, biting my tongue, waiting for him to touch me.

To pleasure me.

Then to get hard again.

"I'll pay the check," Blake says.

He's in a big rush.

I guess I am too.

I watch him take care of the tab and I swear I notice something...

"I'll meet you out front," Blake says.

He walks away from the table and I grab the bill and I see what kind of tip he's left.

Nothing.

Zero.

The waitress walks by and I let her take the little, black folder.

She walks away.

I know she's going to open it and feel her stomach sink.

I can't let this happen.

I can't be part of Blake's nonsense any longer.

I pull myself from the table and chase the waitress down.

I dig a twenty dollar bill from my small purse and catch up to her and hand it to her.

"He forgot," I say, smoothly.

"No, he didn't," the waitress says. "That guy is an asshole."

My jaw tightens.

"Sorry if you love him or whatever. But if that was me... I'd run."

The waitress lifts an eyebrow.

She repeats it again.

"I would run like hell."

She walks away.

She's not the first person to tell me to run from Blake.

I wonder if she'll be the last.

VILLI

MAC PUT THE GAME WINNING SHOT ON MY STICK FOR SOME reason.

I only trailed him just in case something went wrong on his end.

I wasn't looking for a pass. Or a shot.

Truthfully, I was annoyed and looking for a fight.

So, long story short here, Mac drops the puck back to me.

He runs interference on the goalie.

A masterful move to be a prick to the goalie.

I saw Gabriel from the corner of my eye.

Somewhere in my head this beautiful play began to form.

Then I remembered something simple...

Just take the fucking shot!

I took the shot. The puck went in.

The game was no longer tied.

And I was a hero.

Now I'm the last to make it to the locker room.

Being the guy who scores the game winning goal, I had to hang back for a few minutes to let everyone praise me.

That means standing there, nodding, maybe waving, looking at everyone.

For me, I picked out all the hottest girls and pictured them topless.

I actually considered making the hand gesture to have them lift their shirts, just to see...

Then the party stopped.

I step up to the locker room door and carefully open it.

The first person I see is Gabriel.

Shirtless, still wearing the bottom half of his hockey gear.

"There he is," Gabriel says. "Nice shot, man."

I open the locker room door.

Gabriel smiles.

"Fuck," I whisper.

I don't have time to bolt before the rest of the guys pour a large container of some sticky, sugary energy drink all over me.

I lick my lips.

Lemon-lime.

I shake my head.

"Fuck you guys," I growl.

“Don’t be a prick,” Knox says. “That was a great way to end that damn game. Portland is playing with fire this year.”

I look over at Mac.

He’s not grinning.

I can already see the wheels turning in his head.

What a messed up guy, huh?

Not every hockey game is clean and easy.

We aren’t living in a video game.

But that’s how Mac wants it.

That - of course - is his father’s doing.

You remember *Big Matt*, right?

Jax gets in front of me.

He puts up a fist.

I swing my right fist and smash it against his.

I’ve known Jax since we were sort of kids.

I think we became friends when we were twelve or thirteen.

From the day we hung out for the first time (*and took a baseball bat to some rich peoples’ mailboxes*) we made a plan.

Play hockey together.

Right through college, then right into the pros.

Together.

“One step closer to the big one,” Jax says to me.

“You should have stuck around out there,” I say. “I love when the ladies jump up and down for me.”

“I bet you wanted them all topless,” Jax says.

“Of course,” I say.

“You can’t just appreciate and use your imagination?” Gabriel asks.

I look at him. “That’s like having a beautiful girl with you, then decide to stroke your own cock but close your eyes and pretend it’s her.”

“What’s wrong with that?” Gabriel asks. “Mutual masturbation, man. It’s a thing.”

“He can’t get anyone to touch his dick,” Jax says.

“Yeah, okay,” Gabriel says. “Just ask your mom.”

Jax lifts an eyebrow. “Is that supposed to offend me?”

Look, I’ll step away from these two idiots for a second.

Jax’s mother?

She can get it.

She can get it anytime, anyplace, and in any position.

Now Jax is my best friend and all but he doesn’t exactly know my ‘thing’ for women older than me.

If I had a chance with Jax’s mother...?

I’m well aware she’s more plastic than skin.

That doesn’t bother me at all.

Lips, tits, ass, and legs.

“This has been fun,” Gabriel says. “I have to shower and meet up with the main office.”

“Are they kicking you out?” Knox asks.

“No. Something financial or whatever. I don’t know.”

“Oh, did your daddy forget about you?” Jax asks.

“No. He’s just mad because I fucked your mom.”

Jax tilts his head.

We all tilt our heads.

Gabriel runs a hand through his sweaty hair. “Okay, fine. That one made no sense.”

“Yeah, let’s wrap this party up,” Mac says.

“The lover needs his attention,” I whisper to Jax.

“I really thought after popping that cherry you’d move on,” Jax says. “Like that was going to be your thing. You know? Start a business. *Need your cherry popped? Come see Mac! He’s discrete. Prices are fair. His dick is perfectly average!*”

“Do you really want to compare size?” Mac asks.

“We were just out on the ice,” Jax says. “You know... chilly...”

Mac ignores Jax. “Violet is supposed to meet me here.”

“She’s coming into the locker room?” Knox asks.

“I didn’t say that,” Mac snaps.

“Okay,” Jax calls out. “That’s it. We’re going to a party right after this. No excuses. Mac, no excuses. Bring Violet. Whoever else she’s with too. We’re partying in honor of the game winning goal scorer!”

Jax points at me.

Next thing I know Jax has his phone out and he’s making the plans.

I glance over at Mac and shrug my shoulders.

Mac shrugs his back at me.

Mac then opens the locker room door.

Sure enough, there's sweet and pretty Violet.

For the record, yes, her tits still look amazing.

Anything she wears, her tits look great.

I am actively working on both Mac and Violet to just let me see them one time.

Is that so much to ask?

Violet isn't alone.

She rarely is.

Ruby... *Pecker.*

Okay, it's just Peck.

But still.

She's little-miss-priss yet she's looking into the locker room, eyes wide, hoping to see who has the biggest hockey stick.

Then there's Mila.

Oh, and look at that, Mila isn't alone either.

She's holding hands with Ward.

Now that guy is a douche.

And next to him is his sister...

What's her name again?

Starts with a W.

W... Whitney?

W... Willow...?

Yes!

It's Willow!

I see Ward's eyes growing bigger and bigger.

I can't tell if he's mad or maybe he secretly likes to look at shirtless, sweaty hockey players.

“What are we doing here?” I hear Ward growl at Mila.

He tugs at her hand with a little bit of force.

Ah, he's jealous.

Jax suddenly makes a move.

He snaps his fingers and points at Ward. “No sausage allowed, dude. Why don't you go fetch us some popcorn or soda?”

“What the fuck did you just say to me?” Ward growls back.

Jax laughs.

We all step up next to Jax.

I flex my hands, my knuckles pop.

I'm in the mood for a fight.

“Ward, come on,” Mila says.

They start to walk away.

“Hey, Ward, you forgot your sister,” Jax calls out.

“Yeah, don't leave her alone with a bunch of amped-up hockey players,” Knox adds.

He looks at Willow and winks.

Now Willow simply rolls her eyes, lifts both middle fingers to Knox, then walks away.

I whistle and shake my head.

Mila looks back at us - right at Jax - and she stares some serious daggers.

Jax looks at me. He smirks.

“Yeah, okay,” I say to him. “Learn lessons from your old buddy Villi.”

“You don’t know when to quit,” Jax says. “She’s not happy with him.”

“Ask the source,” I said, nodding to Violet.

“Ask me what?” Violet asks.

“Mila and Ward,” I say.

Violet’s cheeks turn red.

Ruby jumps right in. “I hate Ward. He’s such a controlling piece of shit.”

“Tell us how you really feel,” Gabriel says with a smirk.

Ruby eyes him up and down. “I’d feel better if you would shower and not smell like a dirty sock. Ew.”

We all laugh again.

Well, except for Mac and Violet.

The way those two stare at each other is dangerous and uncomfortable.

They’re so crazily in love...

Believe me, it doesn’t make me jealous.

I’m not looking for love.

What hurts me about those two so in love?

I’ll never have the chance to see Violet’s bare tits.

VERA

IT'S A GOOD SIGN WHEN I'M INVITED TO THESE KINDS OF meetings.

Yes, they are super boring.

Talking about administrative polices and all that.

Talking about possible changes to classes and curriculum.

A lot of professors will send their assistants because they don't want to attend.

For me, I look at it this way - I'm getting face to face time with some big names.

Not just for Puckford.

These are people who have connections to other colleges too.

Right now, it's all about making connections.

I'm really lucky at the moment I get to be on campus and close to Violet, but I know someday (hopefully soon) I'll be at a different university.

“We’re going to let Professor Dorthwall speak now...”

Professor Dorthwall looks to be as old as time.

He looks like a skinny Santa Claus.

He refuses help as he presses his hands to the table and stands up slowly.

He reaches for his oddly shaped cane and favors his right leg as he works his way to the front of the room.

“Turn this crap off,” he growls, referencing the screens.

I smile.

Professor Dorthwall is a pain in the neck.

He’s old school and hates anything that resembles technology and change.

But he’s smart. Very smart.

If you take the time to get to know the guy just a little you can pick up on his wisdom.

He stands at the head of the table, taking deep breaths.

“We can get you a chair,” one of the assistants say.

That was dumb.

Professor Dorthwall looks at the assistant.

No words are spoken.

None need to be.

The assistant looks down at his notes and pretends to flip through them.

Before Professor Dorthwall can speak, my phone vibrates against the table.

It feels like the vibration is twice the normal speed.

It's just bad timing.

"I apologize," I say as I grab for my phone.

I glance at the screen - *always worried about Violet.*

When I see Blake's name, my heart sinks.

I swallow hard.

The guy won't give up.

I told him a week ago I was no longer interested in seeing him.

We really weren't anything exactly official.

But I did give him the respect to talk to him.

I didn't just ghost the guy or make up excuses.

I kept it straight and honest.

We just didn't mesh together.

I thought he would accept that.

Nope.

His offering was to take me into the bedroom and make me come so hard that I would end up marrying him.

For the record - he never made me come. Not once.

But that's not exactly his fault though.

I don't think I've ever really... you know...

At least not with someone else.

Don't judge me, okay?

Anyway - back to the story - Blake will not leave me alone.

Even after I told him we were not going to have breakup sex or make-up sex or any kind of sex.

That I was done.

He threw out the notion of friends with benefits and I declined.

So... yeah...

Now he just keeps texting me.

“Miss Monroe?” Professor Dorthwall says.

I look at him. “Yes, sir?”

“Do you have input? Believe it or not, a stubborn old man like me can hear the words of the next generation of professors.”

I feel honored that he considers me to be the next generation...

“Well, I feel that-”

“Stand up,” he calls out. “Be proud.”

I slowly stand up.

My face starts to turn red.

I hate that.

I look around the room.

I have no idea what I’m supposed to say.

I don’t know what Professor Dorthwall was saying...

“We’re talking about interaction,” he says to me. “How to reach our students. How to create a relationship.”

“Right,” I say. “Of course. What I’ve found is that we need to essentially *read the room*. Meaning look around and make

changes as needed. Obviously we have to abide by the curriculum and whatnot, but I do believe there are ways to-”

Buzz. Buzz.

Buzzzzzzzz....

My throat closes up for a second.

My phone is vibrating again.

The logical thing is to grab my phone and turn it off.

But I don't want to live that way.

I don't want to have to turn my phone off because of some guy like Blake.

“I think I was hoping for more information on the class itself,” Professor Dorthwall says. “In terms of current day business practice and policies.”

Now I feel really small.

Everyone stares at me.

I tell myself I can save this moment.

Easily.

Laugh it off.

I can talk about business all day long.

I have degrees in business. I have my MBA.

I have teaching certifications.

This is my thing.

My passion.

I smile.

I open my mouth.

Buzz. Buzz.

Buzzzzzzzzzz....

I feel my face twist in both anger and shame.

Professor Dorthwall groans and touches his pearly white beard.

“Perhaps you should tend to that very important phone call.”

“It’s just text messages,” I say.

Now I feel even smaller.

“Right,” Professor Dorthwall says. “Maybe you should tend to those text messages, Miss Monroe.”

“No. I’m fine right here.”

“That wasn’t necessarily a suggestion.”

And just like that I am now equivalent to a piece of chewed up gum stuck to the bottom of a runner’s shoe.

I grab my bag and I apologize as I leave.

I blurt out something about a possible emergency.

Nobody cares.

Once I’m outside and my cheeks start to cool off from their embarrassing heat, I glance at my phone and shake my head.

I have twenty-five unread texts from Blake just in the last few hours.

Speaking of gum sticking to the bottom of a shoe...

How the hell am I supposed to get Blake off my ass?

VILLI

CARSON CUTS THE MUSIC AS I WALK BY.

He grabs my shoulder.

He gives a little tug.

He's lucky I don't smash my fist off his pretty-boy face.

He's all smiles.

Pumped to be in the presence of me.

Yeah, I know how that sounds, but it's the truth.

"I have an announcement to make!" Carson yells.

He looks at me. "Follow me, man. Up the stairs. It's worth it."

I can lie and say I hate the attention.

I follow Carson halfway up the stairs, just as they begin to turn.

"We have fucking hockey royalty in our house tonight!" Carson yells.

Everyone there erupts into cheers.

“I don’t want Villi to be without a drink in his hand or a beautiful girl begging for his attention,” Carson says. “Do I make myself clear?”

There’s an agreement of murmurs.

“Who was in attendance at the game today?” Carson asks.

Hands go up.

A lot.

But not all.

“You,” Carson calls out, pointing to some guy. “Why didn’t you go to the hockey game?”

“I was studying,” the guy calls out. “I’m really sorry. I’ll never let that happen again.”

“Studying before hockey?” Carson asks. There are some boos. “Up to Villi to decide the fate of this idiot in my house.”

I thrust my right hand out and give a quick thumbs down.

The guy lowers his head.

A second later two frat brothers grab the guy by the back of his pants and his boxers and pick him up.

They toss him out of the house.

I look back at Carson. “That’s enough of that bullshit. I’m going to go enjoy the party.”

“One more thing,” Carson says to me. Then he addresses the crowd. “All the beautiful ladies out there. Villi scored that goal for you all. Villi won that game for you all. And I think the least you could do... is give him something to look at...”

“Titty Time!”

The voice comes from somewhere upstairs.

The chant starts to break out.

I lift my hands up a little and wave.

It's quite the scene in front of me.

As though my fingers control so many shirts.

Up they go.

One by one.

The first few are just the shirts.

A nice colorful display of bras.

Pink. Yellow. White.

The next two the bras go up too.

Carson lets out a *woot* sound.

He sounds like a fucking idiot who's never seen a set of tits before.

All in all I'd say about twenty girls have their shirts up.

Out of those twenty, at least fifteen have their bras up along with their shirts.

I slowly clap for the beautiful college girls.

I scan them all too.

I'm a boobs guy.

And in fact in some weird way if it wasn't for my enjoyment of breasts, Mac and Violet wouldn't be madly in love.

I walk down the stairs and two freshmen guys are waiting for me.

Don't worry, they have their shirts on.

But they have drinks for me.

I take the cups and I step into the *Land of Tits*.

Big ones. Perky ones. Thick ones.

Large nipples. Button-like nipples.

Dark pink colors... light pink colors...

Even some that blend right in with the natural skin tone...

I'm in love with them all.

I want them all.

I want to touch, taste.

I want to flick my tongue on each and every nipple.

I want to suckle and savor and spend hours teasing...

I turn to my right and freeze when I see Heather.

Oh... fuck...

She's fully dressed.

Staring at me.

“Oh, darling,” I call out to her. “You were never shy about getting topless before.”

And there is Hunter.

Appearing from nowhere.

With a couple of his baseball buddies with him.

These guy are such douchebags, they're wearing matching jackets.

Hunter points at me. “I'm going to hurt you, Villi. I swear on my life, I'm going to get you.”

“Don’t worry, Hunter,” I say. “I haven’t fucked her in a while. She’s old news to me.”

Hunter pushes Heather out of the way.

I’m ready to fight.

Even with a sea of breasts behind me.

Jax and Knox appear at my sides.

Now it’s a three-on-three situation.

Carson hurries to stop anything from happening.

Hunter vows to get me and hurt me.

I flip him off.

I turn around and look around at the beautiful college girls...

... who are all clothed again.

Mac and Violet work through the crowd.

“Hey, we’re splitting,” Mac says.

“Why?” I ask.

“I’d rather be at a bar,” Violet says.

“Damn, darling,” I say. “Listen to you now. How much you’ve changed.”

“We’re going to where her sister works,” Mac says.

Oh, that’s right.

Violet has two sisters.

One teaches here on campus.

The other is a bartender.

I am very intrigued by Violet and her family.

Turned on too.

I look around at the swarm of tipsy, pretty, and willing college girls.

I take a deep breath.

You probably already know what's going to happen next.

These college girls are all beautiful.

Worthy of my time and presence.

But there's a problem.

Mac and Violet are going to a bar.

You do know what's at a bar, right?

Not just drinks.

Not just a taste of freedom from the campus life and partying.

There's a better crowd at a bar.

Yeah, you know what I mean.

There's someone older at that bar... who doesn't even know she's waiting for me to show up.

VERA

I REACH FOR THE HANDLE AND I STOP MYSELF.

Nope. Can't do this.

I turn and walk away.

Down the sidewalk a handful of steps.

Then I pause.

I can't just go back home now.

Or maybe I can.

I mean...

Is this really that bad?

I reach into my bag and find my phone.

I start to walk away, face down in my phone, blending in
as best as I can.

I don't want to do this again.

There's no need for me to review the texts again.

It's pretty cut and dry.

Blake is a fucking psycho.

And I think he might try something crazy... I think he might try to hurt me.

Why do I think that?

Let's review some of the texts.

These are just from the last couple hours.

Still playing hard to get? That only turns me on even more.

Vera, I don't get why you're doing this to me. Why can't we just talk?

Okay, you want to try and ghost me? Then I'll do the same - I'll scare you!

Great, you have me drinking now. Are you happy? That's all I do. I sit around and drink. I called off work again today. Because of you. Are you happy with yourself? I wish I knew the real you before I met you.

And then the last one he sent...

The reason why I'm debating going into the bar where my sister works to ask her for help. Or advice. Or something...

Okay Vera. You're going to make me do something I really don't want to do.

Obviously there's no voice coming from texts but that last one irked me.

I mean, they all bother me.

It's just nonstop texting from him.

It's to the point where I have to turn off my phone during class, lectures and anytime I meet with someone from the

university.

An embarrassing moment happened today when I was talking to the accounting professor Jeff Ardemeyer.

A quick question from him had me grabbing for my phone.

A normal thing for anyone, right?

Except my phone's off.

So now Professor Ardemeyer starts asking about my phone being off.

I play it off, laugh it off, whatever.

Then when I turn the phone on, guess what happened?

All the texts from Blake come through at once...

Completely mortifying moment for me.

Now I'm outside the bar where Abby works.

Yeah, *that* Abby.

My sister.

She and I get along like gasoline on a fire.

Does that one make sense?

Whatever.

Bottom line - Abby and I do not see eye to eye on much of anything.

Or actually anything at all.

In fact the only things we have in common are our last name and that we both keep an eye out for Violet.

Although her version of that is different than mine.

I read the texts from Blake one last time.

Then I put my phone away and turn back around.

I hustle to the door and open it.

I step into the bar.

For some reason I unfairly pictured the place in my head as some dirty place.

Like men passed out at the bar.

The smell of body odor and filth.

More cockroaches than customers.

That kind of dive bar vibe.

This place is very nice actually.

It has a small town bar feel but it's a little bit upgraded where it needs to be.

Such as televisions everywhere.

It's actually the perfect place to come to when you want to get off campus for a little bit.

And Abby works here.

She basically manages the place.

She...

She's right there. Right behind the bar.

I step to the left and watch my sister.

She's got straight hair and freely wears provocative clothes.

Not that I can blame her or anything.

I hate to be *that sister*... but Abby got the good boobs for sure.

They're big and they're winning the war against gravity.

I swallow hard, instantly feeling self-conscious about my chest.

I mean, other than surgery, there's nothing I can do about my chest.

Abby is wearing a dark red tank top.

She's using her cleavage and chest to her advantage.

All eyes are on her.

I watch the way she leans against the bar, sort of over it, full attention on whoever is talking to her.

She's a genius.

Street-smart genius when it comes to that stuff.

And I guess that makes me the nerd.

I'm the book-smart sister.

I can willingly study for hours and call it fun and pass the hardest tests...

... but I can't get rid of a clingy guy I dumped.

Hence the reason I'm here.

I take a few steps forward, still with no idea what to say to Abby or how to even start a conversation with her that won't turn into a huge family fight...

Cue the Messy Monroes music!

Abby turns and looks right at me.

She freezes in place.

I freeze in place.

It's as though we haven't seen each other in years.

It hasn't been that long but it's been a while.

There's never really a need for Abby and me to interact.

She knows that too.

Which is why she purses her lips for a second.

She calls out to me, breaking the ice for conversation.

“Well... this can't be good news...”

VERA

“So I GUESS YOU’RE TELLING ME YOUR PUSSY IS LIKE FIRE...”

“No, Abby,” I say. “I’m not saying that. Why would a guy want to shove his dick into fire?”

Abby laughs. “You’re too literal. I meant that your pussy is great. Addicting. Delicious.”

“Can you keep it down a notch? People are looking at me...”

“Good,” Abby says. “You want to get rid of this asshole? Find someone else. Find someone who will protect you. Seems like this Blake guy needs a good ass kicking.”

I sigh.

This is why this is a mistake.

Way to go, Vera.

“Wow, you are uptight tonight,” Abby says. “But you always are.”

“And I’m sure you’re still loose, huh? Do you feel it when a guy fucks you?”

Abby throws her head back and laughs.

That comment is supposed to make her mad, not make her laugh.

I start to push at the bar and Abby touches my right hand.

“Okay, let’s talk then. You were dating this guy. Banging him. Then it got...”

“Well, he’s not a good person.”

“How’s his dick?”

I sigh. “Abby...”

“Look, you’ve got to come to reality, Vera. You know how men have the hot and crazy meter for women? Well, we have the same for men. It’s the dick and dick meter.”

“What does that mean?”

“The size of the dick determines how much of a dick a guy can be before you dump him,” Abby says. “For example... a nice six incher... but he’s an asshole? Peace out. Get me to eight or nine inches... he can break a few things in my apartment. Understand?”

“That’s so wrong.”

“But it’s also so right.”

“Okay. I’ll play the game. On the dick and dick meter? Blake couldn’t even break a pencil.”

Abby coughs and laughs. “What?”

I nod.

“So he was...”

“He can’t help it.”

I look at Abby’s chest.

Just like I can't help that whoever make the decision deciding to give Abby all the boobs... and I'm left with...

“So he’s packing one of those little pickles?”

“It’s not about size.”

“Sure,” Abby says, rolling her eyes.

She thinks for a second.

Someone needs her attention.

She bounces away.

I watch the way she moves and acts.

She’s casual, free, and confident.

She pours a handful of beers.

Then without hesitation she declares, “Listen. My nerdy sister is having a crisis over here. There’s a guy possibly stalking her. I need to help her out. Unless any of you men want to take her home and keep her safe.”

That’s when everyone at the bar looks at me.

I see plenty of head nods and smiles.

I hate you, Abby.

My sister walks back to me, smiling.

“You’re a bitch,” I say.

“I know. But I’m proving to you there’s no reason to worry or deal with this guy. He’s a loser. A little dick loser. He’s insecure. Guys with smaller than average dicks? They can either own it or suffer.”

“Oh?”

“I’ve been with guys who have *little dicks*,” Abby says. “Truthfully, yeah, it’s not about the size so much. You need to have that energy. This guy doesn’t have that. He wants you to coddle him. He wants you to play with his dick and pretend it’s fifteen inches long.”

“Abby, he says he’s going to hurt me,” I whisper.

“I’ll handle this,” Abby says.

She swipes my phone off the bar and backs up.

I jump up, about ready to jump over the bar.

Abby looks at me and smirks. “Do you have naked pictures on your phone, Vera?”

“No. I have stupid memes and pictures of lectures slides.”

“That’s the saddest thing I ever heard.”

“Abby.”

“Hold on,” she says.

Her thumbs start hitting my phone.

Stupid me thinks she will show me the text before sending.

I mean, who wouldn’t, right?

Abby.

She tosses my phone to the bar and I see that she’s texted Blake.

I gasp.

“What did you do?” I ask.

“Told Blake he can take his little dick and fuck off with it.”

For the record, that’s exactly what the text to Blake says.

My jaw slowly drops.

“That’s not what I asked you to do...”

“You didn’t ask a thing,” Abby says. “I helped. Now shut up and have a drink. It’s on me tonight.”

“No. I am not-”

“Shut the hell up, Vera,” Abby growls.

She walks away and returns with a drink for me.

It’s clear.

“This isn’t straight vodka, is it?” I ask.

“No, Vera. I know you. You couldn’t handle straight liquor. It’s a mixed drink. Taste it.”

I sip the drink.

It tastes like pineapple.

It’s fruity and delicious.

“Full of rum,” Abby whispers. “Now drink up. I’ll get another made for you.”

“Abby, wait a second,” I say.

She’s whistling loud on purpose.

Just because she makes the drinks doesn’t mean I have to drink them.

Although it does taste very good.

Abby brings me a second drink, plus something for herself.

“Now this is straight vodka,” she says to me.

She picks up the glass and downs it like water.

I cringe.

“I bet you wish you could do that,” Abby says. “Just like you wish you had nice tits like I have. And Violet too.”

“See, this is why I don’t talk to you,” I say.

“Oh, come on. Take a joke.”

“None of this is a joke to me, Abby. You know, why do I bother? You’re the one who tried to fuck your sister’s boyfriend.”

Abby’s lip curls. “Really?”

“I’m not wrong. I heard all about that. How you took Mac home. Had him in your bed.”

“And the second I realized who he was, I backed off and called Violet.”

“You have a tone... what? You want an award for that? For doing the right thing?”

“Look at you. Five sips of rum and Vera has an attitude. She’s fighting back for once. I like this. Keep going.”

“Abby, I don’t need to fight back. Just look around you. Look at reality.”

Abby laughs. “Don’t get mad at me for following my desires. Keep it real. Violet’s guy? He’s hot as fire. He’s huge. I mean... all those hockey players are. But having Mac here? Drunk? Wanting me? What was I supposed to do? Guys like that are like the devil to me. I can’t resist.”

“Maybe you need an exorcism,” I say. “An exorcism of cock.”

Abby bursts out laughing and claps her hands. “My sister Vera just made a dirty joke!”

“Fuck yourself, Abby,” I whisper.

“Ohhh... that rum is getting you fired up...”

Abby looks to her right and smiles.

“Oh, speak of the devil himself,” she says. “Our sister and her fuckable hockey boyfriend are walking in.”

I jump up and turn.

I suddenly feel like a protective mother, ready to snap.

I remind myself that Violet is over the age of twenty-one.

She’s allowed in a bar.

She and Mac are holding hands.

Mac is a big, strong guy.

Protective too as he looks around.

They’re not alone either.

Looks like more of the hockey team is coming in with them.

VILLI

I'M BUSTING INTO A BAR WITH A BUNCH OF COLLEGE PEOPLE.

It kind of blows my cover out the window.

I'm used to coming to bars alone, dressed a certain way, with a certain look and vibe.

Anyone who sees me will know that I'm *young* but they don't know how young.

Then again, some of them ask and want the fantasy of being in their late thirties or forties and having a college guy like me on top of them. *Or behind them. Or going down on them...*

But to walk in with a little entourage vibe going on.

Then having Violet's sister point us out right away.

It kills the vibe just a little.

So I hang back a few steps.

Mac and Violet are on their way toward the bar.

Now I have to be fair here as I'm being as authentic as I can be.

Remember.

My name is *Villian*.

I am not the good guy, okay?

I only bring that up because I'm staring at Violet's sister's tits and I'm licking my lips.

Violet has great tits.

But her sister?

She's got full, *womanly* tits.

And these things are pouring out of the top of her shirt.

It's no shock to anyone who sees Violet's sister that she dresses that way on purpose.

And I applaud it.

I fucking applaud it.

She probably makes a killing off tips working behind the bar like that.

She's bouncy and flirty.

But she's not bubbling.

She doesn't play dumb or anything.

She's very rough and... mean.

I feel my hands balling up into fists.

There's a voice in the back of my head telling me I need to fuck one of the Monroe sisters.

I make a list in my head.

Three sisters.

First up - Violet.

The sweet and sexy and innocent Violet.

Once a virgin.

Now dominated by Mac's cock.

Good for her. Good for Mac.

Good for them.

To be honest, I just want to see her tits.

Now, when she and Mac were on the rocks a little and I had a shot at her...

I didn't take it.

I was a good friend.

Remember that.

With that said, I will scratch her name off the Monroe I Want to Fuck List but I'm leaving an asterisk there, because if something ever happens with Violet and Mac...

I'm jumping in on that.

And I don't care what anyone thinks.

Okay, on to the second sister.

Abby.

Abby with those double D's hanging out of her top.

I know nothing about her.

Other than she's related to Violet and has amazing tits (just like Violet does).

Then again, do I need to know anything else about her?

I'm not looking for love.

I just want to flick my tongue on her nipples until she's a waterfall between her legs.

And I'm pretty sure Abby would be perfectly okay with that.

Now, for the final sister.

Vera.

Just think about that name.

Vera.

Even saying it... it forces you to bite your bottom lip.

(You just tried saying it, didn't you?)

I don't know anything else... or maybe...

My thoughts dissipate when I realize that Vera is sitting at the bar too.

Mac and Violet have closed in on Vera.

Abby is already pouring drinks.

Now for my understanding and casual gathering about Violet's other sister, she's not the bar type. She's not the party type.

She's kind of like Violet.

Sweet and innocent.

But she's older.

She works on campus too.

Assistant professor and all that.

Hmm, Villi, you know more about Vera than you realize.

I guess that's true.

I take the long way as I walk.

Following the walls instead of just going to the bar.

I'm like a lion in the Sahara.

In the tall, dead grass (or whatever it is out there).

I see the prey.

I don't just pounce.

I walk around.

I watch. I listen.

I smell...?

No. I'm not smelling anything other than deep fried foods.

Vera is at the bar now talking to Violet.

Mac sits there and looks at the television screen for a second or two.

Abby says something.

Violet turns and points at Abby.

Abby laughs and puts her hands up.

I can't help but notice the way her tits bounce.

They're so jumpy and big, wanting to be free.

Wanting to be in my mouth...

I collect myself.

I look at Vera again.

She's laughing at the exchange between Violet and Abby.

Vera is beautiful.

From behind.

She's got dark blonde hair.

Looks like natural curls in it too.

You know the hairstyle where women pull the top of their hair back and use a clip to hold it?

That's Vera right now.

She looks proper. She looks like... *like a professor.*

Seems like she doesn't wear any makeup either.

Violet doesn't and is naturally beautiful.

I can see that Abby does.

Not much though.

These Monroe sisters are fucking delicious.

Vera picks up her glass.

Just the way she's holding it, it makes me smile.

She's unfamiliar with it.

She's not a drinker.

At least not whatever Abby gave her to drink.

I catch myself leaning against the wall, pondering this third Monroe sister.

The one who seems to have her life together.

But we all know appearances don't mean shit, right?

I'm used to a certain vibe when it comes to the bar scene.

I'm not one to pick up someone and have to guide them along.

I'm looking for the woman who is at the bar thinking the thoughts I'm going to bring to life.

The neglected wife.

The overwhelmed mother.

Someone who just needs that spark of adventure that lasts for less than one night.

We never talk again.

And life goes on.

Vera is not that at all.

Yet I can't look away.

Fuck, I haven't been able to shake her from my mind since the first time I met her in the dorm that one day.

Now she's at a bar.

With her two sisters.

And she just finished her drink.

And Abby is already making another for her.

Vera tries to wave her sister off.

Abby doesn't care.

She smirks as she makes the drink and then hands it to her sister.

Vera shakes her head.

Violet touches Vera's shoulder and says something to her.

Vera and Violet look at each other.

Vera closes her eyes and shakes her head.

Then she begins to down her next drink.

A smile creeps across my face.

I start to walk toward the bar.

I mean what's a little harmless flirting with a beautiful assistant professor who never drinks but is drinking...?

VILLI

I CUT RIGHT BETWEEN MAC AND VIOLET.

I stare forward for a second or two, smiling.

Then I look to my right.

I wink at Violet and pucker my lips.

She tilts her head. “No chance.”

“Not even a peek?”

Violet inches closer to me. “No peeks. No tits.”

“Ouch, darling,” I whisper.

“Hey, that’s enough, man,” Mac says.

He sticks his elbow to my chest and pushes at me.

I playfully stumble back, grabbing for my heart.

Abby appears (*now those are some tits that are visible, huh?*) and she points at me.

“What do you have for a broken heart?” I ask Abby.

She simply smirks.

Oh, I can only imagine what you have...

“Your sister broke my heart,” I say. “I just want to see her-”

Mac jumps up and turns.

He’s blocking my view of Abby.

I’ve hit a nerve. No shocker there.

I’m good at hitting nerves with people.

“Just one time,” I whisper to Mac.

I lift my shirt a little.

Mac curls his lip.

I step closer to him.

“I’m fucking around, man,” I say. “Just relax. Have some fun. You’ve never been in love before. You’ve never had a relationship before.”

“No shit, Villi,” Mac growls. “And right now I don’t need my roommate trying to flirt and fuck the girl I love.”

“Whoa,” I say. “I don’t want to fuck her.”

“What’s wrong with me?” Violet asks as she turns.

Vera turns a little and looks at me.

Oh, yeah... there you are...

I nod at Vera.

She nods back.

She shows me her glass and then finishes her drink.

I lift an eyebrow.

She’s getting lit up tonight.

That kind of drinking isn't good news drinking either.

Something bad has happened...

“Villi?” Violet purrs.

“What, darling?” I ask.

“What’s wrong with me?”

“Oh, well, I can’t possibly tell you that I would love to see you naked and explore your body and fuck you...”

Mac grabs my shirt.

I grab Mac’s wrists. “Deep breath. Have a drink with your girl. I’ve got other business here.”

“Then go find it,” Mac says.

I pucker my lips again. “Quick kiss, buddy?”

“Asshole,” Mac growls.

He returns to the bar.

Now I have my opening - not that I need one.

I step up to the bar, on the other side of Vera.

My left to her right.

Abby inches her way down toward me.

She moves in such a flirting motion too.

Side-stepping. Slowly.

Making those tits bounce.

On purpose.

She knows exactly what she’s doing.

“Another one of these!” Vera calls out to her sister.

She shake her empty glass and giggles.

A very cute drunk giggle.

My attention is stolen from Abby's chest to Vera's drunk laugh.

"This is the first time my sister has gotten drunk," Abby says to me.

Vera snorts and giggles again. "You're a bitch, Abby." Then Vera looks at me. "This is not the first time I've been drunk. Okay? I get drunk all the time!"

Vera then thinks about her last comment.

She gasps.

"No. Wait. I didn't mean it like that. I'm not like... a drunk or anything..."

"Just a good time every now and again," I say.

"Yes!" Vera yells in my face. "You get it!"

"Are you sure he gets it?" Abby asks.

Now Abby has a devilish grin on her face.

Vera looks at Abby.

The tension between them is so obvious and hanging around like a suffocating fog.

I feel the temptation to poke at that tension and see what happens.

"I'll be right back," Abby says.

She swipes Vera's glass.

With Abby out of the picture, I now can start to-

"Hey, Villi," Violet says. "Congrats on the game."

I lean forward and look down at Violet. "Thanks, darling."

I hear Vera whisper the word *darling*.

My eyes move to meet hers.

Her cheeks instantly start to blush.

“Darling,” I whisper to her.

“Here you go,” Abby announces.

I suddenly feel like Violet and Abby are trying to cockblock me from their other sister.

Abby puts a beer down in front of me.

I reach for it.

She doesn't let the beer go.

I touch her hand.

She smiles at me.

“See anything else you want to touch?” Abby asks.

Before I can respond, Vera grabs my left arm.

“No way,” she calls out. “I saw him first! He's all mine!”

I turn my head and look at Vera.

She's drunk.

“You okay, Vera?” Abby asks.

“I'm great,” Vera says. “I saw him first. Plus, he doesn't want to go near someone who fucks everything that walks.”

Vera laughs.

Nobody else does.

“What?” Vera asks. “Huh? What? I can't say something mean? Fuck you, Abby. You're a slut.”

“Vera,” Violet gasps. “Are you serious?”

“She’s done,” Abby says.

She grabs Vera’s drink.

Vera scoffs. “Excuse me?”

“She’s not staying here with me,” Abby says. “Get her the fuck out of here right now. Or else I’ll call the police.”

“You won’t,” Vera says.

Abby’s eyes widen. “Want to fucking try me right now?”

I’m in shock.

Holy... fucking... hell...

I guess this is my front row seat to the so-called *Messy Monroes*.

“I’ll get her back home,” Mac says. “Everyone just calm down for a second.”

“Done,” Abby growls.

She walks away to the other end of the bar.

Violet takes Vera’s left hand. “Why did you say that? Huh?”

“Oh, please. It’s not a secret the way she is.”

“Why did you show up here?”

“Yeah, I know. This is all my fault. Everything is always my fault, isn’t it?”

“Vera, come on, we’ll take you back home,” Mac says.

I watch as Vera stands up and grabs for Violet.

I’m still sitting at the bar.

Still amazed at how fast this all fell apart.

A part of me really considering saying I’d take Vera home.

I think about it for second.

Vera. Drunk.

Me. Taking her home.

I think about walking her to her door.

Then the moment...

Vera. Drunk. Grabbing at me and demanding a kiss.

I know I won't deny her a kiss, or more.

There's another part of me though...

I slowly move my eyes and look at Abby.

At the other end of the bar.

Slightly bent forward.

Her shirt pulled up, showing off skin.

Her black pants hugging her ass...

I grit my teeth.

*I feel like my fate is sealed and I will be fucking one of the
Monroe sisters.*

VERA

I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO OPEN MY EYES RIGHT AWAY.

I feel it.

In my head and in my body.

The deathly creep of an intense hangover.

I peel my eyes open.

I frown.

My bedroom spins for a second.

I'm thankful it's just for a second because the last thing I want to do now is end up in the bathroom getting sick.

Calling off work because of a night of drinking?

That's unheard of for me.

I force myself to sit up in bed.

I reach for the nightstand to get my phone.

I feel a piece of paper.

I quickly slump down and turn.

It's a note from Violet.

“From Violet?” I whisper.

It takes me a second to let pieces of the night before flicker through my head.

I read the note.

VERA -

I WON'T EVEN BOTHER ASKING HOW YOU FEEL.

Not what you're going to remember.

You need to get in touch with Abby.

Immediately.

Hate her all you want but last night was not cool.

You need to apologize for what you did.

I'm being serious too.

Feel better.

Keep in touch.

• *V*

I TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

My forehead throbs.

I groan and crumble up the note from my sister.

I reach for my phone and the first thing I realize?

My head pops up.

There are no texts from Blake.

I bite my bottom lip.

I open the texts with him.

I read what Abby sent him.

A horribly mean text... but...

But maybe it worked.

For all I know, Abby's text scared the hell out of Blake.

I mean, that was the exact reason I went to the bar last night.

My last hope.

Talking to Abby.

Getting her help.

And what did she do?

I swallow hard and I shut my eyes.

She helped.

She gave me free drinks.

She wanted me to stay.

And I...

I groan and open my eyes.

What did I do?

I ended up drunk and acting like an idiot.

Abby and I just didn't get along.

There's no other way to say it.

Last night...

"Oh, Vera," I whisper.

Abby and I arguing over a guy?

That's what it was, right?

One of the hockey players...

I sit up in bed and debate what to do.

Believe me, the voice in the pit of my stomach knows I need to call Abby.

I need to tell her I'm sorry.

I need to...

"Text her," I whisper.

Call it a weak move, I don't care.

A text is just fine for Abby.

Plus, she lives like a vampire.

She's up all night.

She sleeps all day.

I'm the opposite.

Oh... what? Vera and Abby are opposites? No way!

So, yeah, a text.

A texts works.

She'll read it at some point later in the day.

She won't respond.

Why would she?

She doesn't like me as much as I don't like her.

But we know the drill.

If shit ever hit the fan hard enough, we'd be there for each other.

Just like she attempted to help with Blake last night.

She did help. The guy stopped texting.

And we both know when it comes to Violet, we'll always be there for her.

I take a deep breath...

Hey. Just wanted to say I'm sorry about what happened. Things I said. I blurted out some stupid stuff and I shouldn't have done that. I wanted to thank you for being there for me too. Listening to me. Could have done without the free drinks obviously. Lol. If it means anything to you, I'm paying for those drinks right now. The inside of my head feels like a construction zone. Anyway. I'm sorry for what I said.

What a mess of a text, huh?

I send it anyway.

What else am I supposed to do?

I'm not going to sit and edit and find the best words for Abby.

She'll scan the text, make fun of me for it, and then go on with her day.

And for the record, Abby sleeps around a lot.

And there is nothing wrong with that either.

Not at all.

She's happy with her life.

So go for it.

I'm just... you know...

Unfairly trying to justify what I did last night.

Which makes me even more wrong.

I toss my phone to the bed.

I force myself out of bed.

What I need now is a shower.

A hot shower.

Or maybe a cold shower.

Just to wake myself up a little bit more.

Chase the hangover away.

At the very least, I can ignore it.

I can also ignore the night before.

It's done and over with.

Oh, wow, look at me.

I went out.

Had a few drinks.

Got a little drunk.

Said some stupid stuff.

Came home and slept it all off.

Everyone does that once in a while.

It happens.

Life goes on.

It wasn't like I ended up in jail, right?

Now that makes me laugh.

Me. In jail.

I laugh some more and walk to the bathroom.

I choose a hot shower.

Wash away the night.

Let it all go.

Drunk Vera has been put to bed for a very long time.

VILLI

I FUCKING FEEL LIKE MAC ALL OF A SUDDEN.

Not able to sleep.

Staring at my phone waiting to climb my ass out of bed.

I stare at the ceiling, my hands behind my head.

I'm fully dressed for the day, ready to cause some trouble.

There's only one thing I think about.

A swirling thought I had running through my head all night.

Call it a fantasy.

Call it pulling from the *spank bank*.

I don't really care.

I'm sure you want to know what it is, right?

Okay.

Picture this...

She's sitting on the bar.

Legs and feet dangling off the bar.

She leans back a little.

Her eyes are flirting like crazy.

She just wants to be fucked.

She just wants her pussy teased with my tongue.

She just wants my mouth to make her come.

I grab for her hips and pull her toward me.

I hear a giggling noise that breaks up my thoughts.

I groan and swing my feet off my bed and I walk to my door.

As I walk toward the wannabe kitchen of the dorm, I see Mac and Violet.

Violet is sitting on the counter.

Mac in front of her.

She has her legs around his body.

His right hand up the back of Violet's shirt a little.

I see his hand move.

Violet gasps and wiggles.

Then she giggles again.

“Stop tickling me,” Violet purrs.

“Stop tickling me...”

I mimic Violet.

She and Mac look at me.

“Guess you woke up on the wrong side of the bed,” Violet says.

“Should have woken up in your bed, darling,” I say.

“Fuck off,” Mac says.

There’s a pause.

Then Mac lifts an eyebrow. “Wait a second, Villi. Are you alone?”

“That’s right.”

“Wow,” Violet says. “Villi alone. Even after last night? All that tension? Winning the hockey game? Where did you end up after we dragged my drunk sister home?”

I curl my lip.

I’m not telling them what I did last night.

I’m not telling them that I left the bar a minute after they did.

That I resisted all my urges to hang around and flirt with Abby.

That Abby begged me not to leave.

She wanted me to stay.

Free drinks.

She leaned against the bar, showing off those tits...

Or that I came back to campus, walked around for a bit, then came right back to the dorm.

That I was already relaxing in bed by the time Mac and Violet showed up after getting Vera home.

“Don’t worry about my night,” I say.

“I’m not,” Mac says.

He tickles Violet again.

She squirms and punches at Mac's right shoulder.

Mac leans in and kisses her.

"Oh, wow," I call out. "This romance shit is getting worse by the second with you two. I miss the virgin thing."

"Can't un-pop my cherry," Violet calls out.

Mac puts his head back and laughs.

"You're dirty now," I say to Violet. "I'm glad we never hooked up. You're way too dirty for me."

"I highly doubt that, Villi," Violet says.

"You'd never hook up with her?" Mac asks.

He stares at me with a certain look in his eyes.

What are you up to, Mac?

I watch as his right hand moves a little bit more up the back of Violet's shirt.

Lifting her shirt.

Showing off some sweet, cream-colored skin.

His left hand moves around to the middle of her back too.

They look at each other for a second.

They both smile.

Look, I'm only human here, okay?

So it's only fair to admit that as I'm staring at Mac and Violet staring at each other...

And the way Mac is lifting up the back of her shirt...

I'm seeing skin.

I'm seeing the flirting look in her eyes.

I'm getting hard.

There.

I'll admit it freely.

I'm getting hard...

Then Mac and Violet look at me.

They end up going cheek to cheek.

Mac just stares with a cocky smirk on his face.

Violet bites her bottom lip.

Mac spreads his fingers wide under Violet's shirt.

And he begins to lift her shirt.

I'm doing my best not to let my jaw drop.

I refuse to look desperate in front of them.

So I keep the same face.

The same annoying looking Villi face.

But Violet's shirt is going up... and up... and... up...

Violet's not wearing a bra.

No bra. No fucking bra.

Mac's fingers touch the back of Violet's shoulder blades.

Her entire back is exposed.

I'm staring at skin and cute little freckles...

I wonder if Abby has those same freckles.

I wonder if Vera does too.

I block those thoughts and focus on what's happening right now.

There's just one issue here.

The front of Violet's shirt hasn't moved up all that much.

She's got her chest pressed against Mac's body.

I'm not going to see any tits.

No chance.

Just Violet's back.

I shake my head and growl deep in my throat.

"What's wrong, Villi?" Violet purrs.

I walk to the door and almost rip it off its hinges.

"Where are you running off to?" Mac asks.

I pause and look back. "I'm going to class."

I shut the door behind me and hear Mac and Violet laughing at me.

Yeah, I'm going to class... for sure...

The question is...

What class am I going to?

VILLI

DON'T ASK HOW I KNOW WHAT I KNOW.

Just know that I know what I know.

I take a quick detour and grab something to eat.

A big fat bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich.

A cup of black coffee.

A glass of orange juice.

All from the special cafeteria for the professors.

I'm even bold enough to sit outside and eat it.

"Good morning, Mr. Steele," a professor says to me.

Yeah, my last name is Steele.

"Professor Richardson," I say with a nod.

"Do I dare ask if you've written your paper on business ethics yet?"

"Working really hard at it," I say. "I promise."

"Smell that? Smells like bullshit."

I laugh.

“You should move along,” Professor Richardson says.

“Planning on it right now,” I say. “I’m actually off to class.”

I walk down the stone steps, ditch my trash, and now I need a piece of gum or something freshly mint flavored.

I hit one of the campus stores and take care of that.

I really am going to class.

It’s not some kind of joke.

Am I signed up for the class I’m going to attend?

Not exactly.

Should I be going to this class?

Not really.

I walk to the modern looking lecture hall and open the door.

Not everything at Puckford is all old buildings.

There’s a healthy mix of new and old together.

The old buildings are the ones the *real professors* get to enjoy.

I guess you have to earn your way there.

Which is odd because the newer buildings are more comfortable and updated.

I’m not here to get into the inner workings of a professor’s mind.

I’m here to learn.

To study. And to learn.

And that's the honest truth.

I carefully sneak into the hall.

Class has already started.

In fact, it's been going on for a little while already.

I guess I'm late. Whoops.

The last thing I want to do right now is disturb the class.

Or the professor.

Excuse me... the assistant professor.

I'm smiling ear to ear.

Did you figure it out yet?

I'm not supposed to be here for this.

But I have to see Miss Monroe.

I have to hear her voice.

Vera has been stuck in my mind for way too long.

Did you really think I was going to let last night go?

VERA

SOMETIMES DURING LECTURES YOU'D LOSE THEM ALL.

No matter what you do.

Whiteboards.

Slides.

Conversation.

You'd just lose them.

I see a lot of dazed eyes staring back at me.

Hardly anyone listening.

And I get that.

Sometimes the conversation of business and growth can get a little boring.

I don't think many take the time to realize how impressive it is to see a business scale itself without failing.

"So we have a breaking point in growth," I say as I gently pace near the front row.

If I don't pace, my headache will return and my stomach will feel weird.

"Expansion requires a..."

I pause and look up to the top row.

A handful of students are sleeping.

Another handful are on their phones.

I walk back to the desk and stand there.

In complete silence.

Nobody says a word.

The entire room is way too silent.

Finally someone in the front row raises her hand.

"Miss Monroe, are you feeling okay?"

"No," I say. "I'm not feeling that great at all. I'm looking around and I see a bunch of minds wandering. Now next week when you have your test about this and the grades are shit, then what?"

The word *shit* gets more attention.

"Are you going to bitch and complain to me about it?" I ask.

I rarely have an attitude.

I usually just focus on my job.

I want and need the experience.

But I also need these students to respond.

To listen and absorb.

Sure, I need them to get decent grades, but more than anything else, I want them to take something away from the

class.

I clap my hands together. “Come on, everyone. We’re almost done here. Don’t mess this up right now. Expansion. Growth. New business development. Come on. That’s the fun part of it all. Finding new markets. Testing things out. Pick your favorite fast food place. Have you ever thought about how amazing it is that any one you go to it’s all the same? The look. The feel. The menu.”

“Not internationally,” someone calls out.

I point and smile. “Great point. In some international markets you cater to the market itself. That’s another part expansion. See how in depth it goes? You need an organized team. You need financing. You need clear, concise plans. And...”

“You need a business plan and mission statement,” someone says.

“There you go. That’s how you make every location operate the same as others. You want your customer to have the same experience whether they’re in New York City or in Los Angeles. Right?”

I get a whole bunch of head nods.

“There we go,” I say. “We’ll stop there for today. I know these morning lectures are as much fun as throwing up from drinking too much, right?”

That gets a few pity laughs.

I turn and feel my cheeks burning red hot.

Sometimes I think things in my head and they sound really good.

But then I say them and...

I give myself away.

I'm not a party girl.

Far from it.

Remember last night?

The class begins to clear out.

I probably shouldn't have stopped class early.

I just need a minute or day or month to myself.

Just as I start to sit down, I see someone from the corner of my left eye.

Everyone is piling out of the room.

Except one person.

I straighten my legs and turn my head.

I see him standing next to the door.

Hands at his sides.

Wearing a white t-shirt that looks a little beat up.

Black jeans.

Like he doesn't give a damn how he looks because he doesn't have to.

His dark hair comes a little bit long and very messy.

He's staring right at me.

Last night flashes through my mind again.

He's the reason why something happened with my sister.

Why I said those mean things to her.

I was drunk and playful and went too far.

I look down at my desk.

Villi.

That's his name.

Of course I know his name.

He's roommates with Violet's boyfriend.

Villi and Mac live together.

I wait and hope Villi turns to leave.

But I know he won't.

This isn't his class.

I've never seen him here before.

So I look at him again.

The second the last person leaves the room and the door shuts, Villi pushes from the wall and struts toward me.

"Can I help you?" I call out.

Villi laughs.

He laughs.

Not a cocky reply.

Just laughs.

I don't like the way it makes me feel.

At all.

Villi comes closer to my desk.

I grab for my bag and hurry to stuff my laptop and some folders into it.

I'm hoping he takes the hint that I need to leave.

He doesn't.

Also, let's be honest.

There's not a single person on or near this campus that doesn't know about Villi.

His name is Villian.

Goes by Villi.

Of course that's not his real name.

But a guy that goes by Villian...

He's big, strong, and a menace as a hockey player.

I look at Villi one more time.

“Do I have to ask again?”

“Maybe,” he says.

“You don't belong here, Villi,” I say.

“Then do something about it,” he says without hesitation.

For a quick second I lose all feeling in my legs from my knees down.

They buckle for that quick second too.

Which makes me look like I just thrust myself at the desk.

Villi slowly lifts his hands and shows me them.

Then he half smirks.

That deadly half smirk from a good looking guy...

“Vera, I just want to talk.”

VERA

VERA, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THIS GUY WANTS.

He's got to go.

You've got lunch to get to...

My stomach flips.

The thought of food makes me want to vomit.

For a second I think about if I puked on Villi.

Maybe that'll chase him away.

He can run off and tell all his hockey buddies that Miss Monroe threw up on him after a night of drinking.

Yeah, but then it'll get back to Mac.

Mac and Violet.

Violet will be at your door in an hour...

“What do you want, Villi?” I ask with a sigh.

Villi makes a groaning noise.

It's subtle, deep in his throat.

I beg my body not to let my brain feel the sudden warm chill dancing up my spine.

I also beg to not have my cheeks turn red.

Luckily, they don't turn red.

But that chill?

It's worked its way up to the back of my neck.

"Just wanted to see how your night ended up," Villi says.

I look down at the desk and close my eyes for a second.

Fuck.

Last night is going to haunt me...

"Why are you worried about last night?" I ask.

"I was just worried about you."

I smile. "I appreciate that, Villi. But as you can see, I'm standing just fine. Right? I'm here. And you belong somewhere else."

"I actually think I belong right here."

His eyes lock to mine.

Dark eyes.

Very dark eyes.

"If you don't tell me, then I'll just assume," Villi whispers.

"What exactly are you going to assume?"

"Well... let's see how this could have happened..."

Villi moves closer to the desk. He makes fists and places them on the desk.

I swallow hard.

I look up at him.

I have no choice but to look up at him.

He's tall.

Very tall.

Big.

Muscular.

Vera...

“I'm going to assume you got home safely,” Villi whispers. “Maybe your husband was there to take control. Make sure you didn't get sick or if you did, you got cleaned up. Then again, *Miss Monroe...* you're not married.”

“I could have kept my maiden name,” I say.

“Not you. You'd take the man's name for sure.”

“Oh? What does that imply?”

Villi shrugs his shoulder.

Oh, okay.

I see it now.

This guy is a dick.

A total dick.

A strong hockey player who thinks he's better than everyone else.

“This has been fun,” I say. I slide my bag off the desk. “Got to go.”

“Engaged,” Villi whispers. “Boyfriend... I can't be sure of that either.”

“Oh well.”

“Maybe you just sat there with Mac and Violet. Nope. I remember them coming home. They were mad at you. Just like your other sister. Abby. With the tits...”

I suck in a breath and curl my lip.

This guy is a complete and total asshole.

He can go fuck himself.

“You’re flustered now, darling,” Villi whispers.

“*Darling*,” I say. “How charming.”

“I didn’t mean that in any way against you,” he says. “I was just calling out the most obvious feature. You know? She uses them to make money. Does nothing for me.”

That comment makes me laugh. “I’m sure.”

“Hey, wait,” Villi says as he moves in front of me. “Are you assuming things about me now?”

“I don’t need to assume.”

“I don’t understand, darling.”

“Do not call me that, Villi.”

“Excuse me. *Miss Monroe*.”

Something about the way he says that...

Then for good measure, Villi strokes his bottom lip with his tongue.

This guy... he’s good...

“Come on,” Villi whispers. “Tell me what happened last night.”

“No.”

“So I can safely guess that you have a drinking problem.”

Now he's done it.

I drop my bag to the desk.

"You know, you have a lot of nerve," I say. "Don't you dare even speak something like that out loud. You have no idea what anyone goes through."

"So you're a drunk?"

"I never said that!"

"You're getting defensive."

"I am not. I'm just..."

"Getting defensive," Villi says with a smirk.

"You really have some nerve," I say. "You know nothing about me and you don't need to."

"All I know about you is your Violet's sister."

"Yeah."

"I know a lot about Violet. Saw her topless earlier."

"You did what?" I ask.

"She's not so innocent anymore."

"I don't want to hear this."

"Then let's talk about you."

I laugh. "You know what, Villi? I'll give you credit for being smooth. But that's it."

"Some credit is better than none. Now, *Miss Monroe*, how can I get some... extra credit?"

I grab my bag. "I'll be blunt. You're a student. I'm a professor."

With that, I walk away.

Villi chuckles.

That makes me angry.

“Assistant professor,” Villi calls out.

As though I need to hear that.

I have about twenty things I want to call him right now.

Instead, I keep is professional.

“Goodbye, Villi!”

VILLI

I THOUGHT THE GREATEST THING I EVER HEARD IN MY LIFE WAS
I'm not pregnant.

After hearing Vera say my name over and over...

Just hearing it in my head over and over too.

Villi.

Nibbling on her bottom lip, without any choice either.

The beauty of a *V* name, huh?

Oh, as far as the pregnancy thing goes? That was a little bit of a possible slip-up last year. Everything turned out fine. She wasn't pregnant. We were both relieved. So relieved that we ended up fucking again. That time? I wore a condom.

Back to Vera.

Her being frustrated with me only makes things hotter.

She's pulsing throughout my body.

I find myself wondering things more than my normal.

My normal?

What do her tits look like?

What color are her nipples?

Does she like to have her nipples nibbled on?

Does she have any tattoos? Piercings?

Does she... shave...?

Of course my normal revolves around sex.

Look, if there's anyone on campus that wants to call me a *fuck boy*, then I accept it.

I really don't care.

There are two things in my life that make sense.

The first is hockey.

I know where I'm going with hockey.

I know I'm two breaths away from a lucrative deal.

The second thing that makes sense in my life...?

You can guess it.

Sex.

I love it.

They love it.

Everything is perfect.

Vera may be a little bit of a wildcard but that's only because of who she is.

She works at the university. Check.

Which makes this fun crush very risky. Check.

She's Violet's sister. Check.

I can go on and on.

I do want to know what the tension is with Abby.

And I want to know what made Vera get as wasted as she did.

That's not her normal.

No way.

And it's burning in the back of my head.

"Hey, you have a hangover or something?" Knox asks me.

I look forward at him as I sit in my practice gear, waiting to hit the ice.

"No," I say. "Not at all."

"You look dazed."

"His bed has been empty," Mac says, tossing me right under the bus.

"Come here, my man," Gabriel says. "Let me check for a fever."

Gabriel walks toward me and I stand up.

He still has the balls to try and touch my forehead.

I grab his wrist and twist it just enough to send him to his toes.

"Fuck," he says.

"I'll end your season," I warn.

"Villi," Jax says. "Really?"

I let Gabriel go.

He smiles at me. "You got something on your mind. I'm not stupid."

"Empty bed," Mac says again.

I look at Mac. “One more word and I’ll tell these guys the noises you make when you finish.”

“Noises?” Mac asks.

“We’re in a dorm. Thin walls. Even on the opposite side. You sound like a fucking dog toy squeaking.”

All eyes go to Mac.

I turn and slip out of the locker room.

I hear Gabriel ask, *‘What kind of squeak toy?’* and they all start laughing.

I walk to the ice and get started on my own.

Doing laps around the rink, hoping to rid my mind of thoughts about Vera.

I spot Coach Damon on the bench.

A flask in his hand.

That same flask to his mouth.

As soon as he sees me he hides the flask and stands up.

He claps and nods. “Good to see you, Villi!”

I stop skating and lean against the boards. “Coach. How’s it going?”

“Wonderful, Villi. Wonderful.”

Yeah. I bet. A belly full of whiskey, huh?

“Big game coming up,” he says with a nod. “Big game.”

“The *ball sacks?*” I ask with a grin.

Coach Damon laughs.

We call Sacramento the ball sacks.

The rest of the team decides to join me on the ice.

Coach Damon climbs up on the bench and blows his whistle.

Just like that, we're in full practice mode.

I go up against Mac right away.

I'm sensing a little tension between us.

Maybe it was the comment I made earlier.

Or maybe it's me.

I think about him pushing up Violet's shirt and showing some skin, but not enough.

We end up behind the net, tangled up.

Sticks smacking at each other.

Kicking our skates.

"Come on, pussy," I say to him. "Get the puck. You're the fucking star of the team."

I throw my shoulder into him.

He throws his shoulder and lifts up a little, hitting me in the jaw.

I see a few stars bouncing around but I ignore that.

Mac and I look at each other...

Sticks hit the ice.

Gloves hit the ice.

And we grab for one another.

Coach Damon is blowing on his whistle like he's been stuck on an island for ten years and sees a ship out on the horizon.

Knox throws his goalie mask down and hurries to jump in.

Mac and I are just taking cheap shots at each other.

Growling at each other too.

Jax ends up pulling Mac away.

Gabriel and Knox pull me away.

Coach Damon kicks us off the ice.

Mac and I walk back to the locker room together, in silence.

He punches open the door.

I follow him inside.

He throws some equipment around, then heads to the showers.

I sit and wait for him to finish showering.

When he returns wearing nothing but a towel, I stand up.

We look at each other.

“Fuck you,” he says to me.

“Fuck you more,” I reply. “Piece of fucking shit.”

“Because of Violet?”

“What the fuck do you think?”

“You know how fucked you are? Acting like this? Because you want to see my girlfriend’s tits and I won’t let you?”

“It’s her decision.”

“She doesn’t want you to look either.”

“I could have had her, Mac. When you fucked up.”

“You never had a chance, Villi. Stop being a little bitch about it.”

“Yeah? Maybe I’ll go fuck her sister then. Abby is wild.”

“I was in her bed first,” Mac grins.

I laugh. “You’d never say that in front of Violet. She’d cut your dick off.”

Mac shrugs and turns to face his locker.

I walk up to him. “We good?”

“Of course we’re good, Villi,” Mac says. “You miserable fucking prick.”

“Hey. Don’t be talking shit about my bed being empty. Okay?”

“What’s up with that? Did you catch something from someone?”

“No. My dick is in perfect working order. Maybe I’m just taking a break. Maybe I’m waiting for you to fuck up with Violet again so this time I can make a move. Either way, my dick and my bedroom activity is my business.”

“Fine,” Mac says. “And, you know, I don’t fucking squeak when I come.”

That makes me laugh.

I laugh all the way to the showers.

By the time I’m done and dressed, Mac is nowhere to be found.

I step out into the hallway and see Coach Damon.

Sipping from a flask again.

That’s the second time I’ve caught him boozing.

We nod at each other.

He's not going to bust my balls about fighting with Mac
and I'm not going to bust his balls about catching him
drinking.

A fair trade if you ask me.

I'll be cocky again for a second.

I don't need to practice right now.

The second and third lines need the work.

I leave, freshly showered, kind of a fight under my belt,
and I feel decent enough.

I begin my walk all the way across campus.

I have a class to catch.

Well, actually...

I do have a real class of my own I'm supposed to go to.

But I'm going to skip that class.

I mean, I actually have no choice in the matter.

There's another class I kind of have to attend.

VERA

HEY THERE, ABBY.

Way to go.

Your text message only pissed off Blake even more...

I try really hard not to think about it.

But it started last night at eleven o'clock.

The first text from Blake.

MISS ME YET?

Needless to say I did not sleep last night.

I'm tired and grumpy right now.

Blake sent at least ten texts.

Wanting to know if I was ready to get back together.

Then wanting to know who I was fucking instead of him.

Then threatening to kill whoever I was fucking instead of him.

I keep myself intact during class.

Luckily Professor O'Malley led the lecture to start.

He wanted to make sure everyone had a grasp of the material.

That felt like a punch to the stomach for me but whatever.

He left.

I took over.

There's only a minute or so left.

"Just remember the material," I call out. "Study. Think. Process. Use the information. Don't just memorize it. Sound good?"

There's a collective head nod from almost everyone.

I glance at my phone.

To check the time.

There's another text from Blake.

My heart dances up into my throat.

Don't make this worse than it already is Vera. You do not want to fuck around okay?

"We'll call it a day," I say without looking up from my phone. "Go study. Apply everything. Be safe and happy."

I have no idea where the *be safe and happy* thing comes from.

I can't look away from my phone at the moment.

I hear everyone shuffling out.

The soft murmurs of some conversations.

Others just talk like nobody else is around.

I get the feeling that someone is watching me or standing right next to me on my left side.

“Do you need something?” I ask without looking.

“More than we can do right here,” a voice says.

I gasp and turn my head.

Villi is standing next to my desk.

Chills race up my spine.

My spine actually straightens, stiff as an arrow.

“No,” I say.

Villi smiles. “No? No what? I haven’t even gotten started.”

Heat threatens to race to my cheeks.

But I’m not in the mood.

At all.

I’m tired. I’m hungry. I’m scared.

I don’t need this college hockey player hanging around me.

“Are you okay?” Villi asks.

“You don’t need to worry about me.”

“I think that’s my decision to make.”

“I’m not sure what your game is here, Villi, but it’s time to end it. I have to go.”

“Rushing off after class again? Where to? I’m just curious. I can’t figure you out.”

“You don’t have to figure me out. So stop.”

“Wait, hold on,” he says. “Let me just try to take a guess. I’m not sure if I see you as a coffeeshop girl.”

Girl...?

“I can see you in a bookstore though. Do you read a lot?”

“I’m not answering that.”

“You’re right. Sorry. I’m asking too much. I just want to talk to you. That’s all.”

More heat rushed through my body.

My brain feels scrambled.

I have a psycho guy texting me horrible things.

And I have this... this hockey player... saying... that he wants to talk to me...

“Villi, I’ll repeat what I said before,” I say in my most proper voice. “You do not belong here. And you cannot just-”

“Sorry to interrupt you, Miss Monroe,” he says with that cocky smirk. “But I am part of this class now. I just picked it up.”

“You did what?” I ask in a loud voice.

“I decided I wanted to take your class. I am going for business. You may not know that about me.”

I start to shake my head.

This isn’t real...

“Also,” Villi says. He reaches for his back pocket. He brings forward folded papers. “This is a paper I wrote about the class. Just so you know I’m not behind on anything. Sorry that it’s folded. I don’t carry a bag around or anything.”

Villi hands me the papers.

I glance for a second.

He’s written a paper. It’s got to be at least five pages too.

I'm shocked.

I don't know what to say.

"I just wanted to stop by and hand that paper in, Miss Monroe," Villi says.

Stop saying my name like that!

I know that tone!

"Hope you have a great rest of your day. I'll see you in class."

His voice is almost sultry.

It's oozing with...

My teeth actually chatter for a second.

Villi does the little move where he bites his bottom lip for a split second.

Then he winks at me.

Then he turns and walks out of the room.

He walks with more confidence than I've ever seen on a person.

He acts like he owns the place.

He acts as though he's in control of everything.

As though he's the professor. As though I'm the student.

When the door shuts and Villi is finally gone, I slowly shut my eyes.

I place his paper on the desk.

I take a deep, long breath.

Then a second.

A third.

Finally, a fourth.

But there's one thought that keeps running through my head.

Plaguing me.

I try to chase it away.

I take more breaths.

It doesn't matter.

Want to know what I'm thinking right now?

There is no way I can actually be turned on right now by a college hockey player... who is now technically one of my students...

VILLI

TEN SECONDS AFTER THE PUCK DROPS, MAC DRIVES SOMEONE into the boards.

The guy hits the ice.

The whistle blows.

Our fans *boo* the ref for throwing his arm up.

Mac turns around and looks ready to spew fire at the ref.

I look over at Jax.

Jax is already looking at me.

Gabriel skates in front of Mac to keep him from saying something to the ref and making this worse.

A couple *Wolves* players check on the guy on the ice.

A few others try to go after Mac.

“Fuck,” I whisper, quickly skating forward, needing to get into this scrum and keep my players safe.

It’s nothing but a push and shove thing.

Grabbing jerseys.

Trying to smack one another in the face with our thick padded gloves.

Just stir the pot and set the tone for the rest of the game.

Mac makes it out of the scuffle and I look at him.

“The fuck?” I call out.

“Fuck him,” Mac says. “Fuck you too.”

Here’s the deal with Mac.

The dude can deal with a lot at once but when he finally reaches a breaking point... watch out.

The look in his eyes.

He wants to ruin the game. For everyone.

He has no loyalty to a team, a logo, a school, nothing.

This side of Mac is dangerous.

He’s pissed off about something.

Better yet, he might be hurt about something.

Last time I saw him like this, something went down with his mother.

Now I don’t know the full story there but she wasn’t around much. She remarried. And something happened that really dug into him and fucked up his head for a bit.

This is just like that.

So here we are ten seconds into this game on home ice and already down a man.

The *Wolves* are on a power play and our best guy is sitting in the penalty box, staring down, not even knowing or caring

that he's at a hockey game.

Shit.

This is going to be a long game.

We work our ass off on the power play.

Knox makes three great saves.

With twenty seconds left in Mac's penalty, Gabriel dumps the puck down the other end of the ice.

Instead of chasing it he waits back.

"Gabriel!" I roar. "Chase the fucking thing!"

"Fuck off and wait," Gabriel yells back to me.

The *Wolves* quickly try to put a play together with the last few seconds they have.

They come down the ice and Gabriel plays up on defense and pokes the puck away.

The penalty ticks down to zero, the power play is over.

Mac comes out of the box just as Gabriel feeds him the puck.

This is normally heaven for Mac.

This is like coming back to the dorm after a long day of practice and you're tired and achy and all that shit and there's a beautiful girl in your bed, naked, legs spread, ready for anything and everything.

Mac with open ice.

Nobody on his ass.

Him versus a goalie.

That's it.

That's the play Gabriel sets up.

Mac passes the fucking puck right back to Gabriel.

The second the puck touches Gabriel's stick, he gets drilled with a clean hit.

The *Wolves* set up a quick play and Knox makes an insane save, diving onto the puck and holding it.

Smart move.

We need a whistle. Bad.

It's more than obvious Mac is not here right now.

Challenging him on it now is a stupid move.

Jax doesn't care though.

He skates up to Mac and they start arguing.

Coach Damon screams for all of us.

Next thing I know he's messing around with the lines.

Now the game is a complete disaster.

I take off my normal enforcer hat and do my best to lead the team.

The only issue is that half the guys are deathly afraid of me.

Most of them have taken a dirty hit from me in practice a time or two.

Or just a punch to the mouth when they were acting stupid.

Knox is playing the game of his life.

Gabriel is flustered.

Mac is on and off the bench way too much.

Each time his skates touch the ice, he's out for blood.

Jax and I finally put a play together.

He gets lucky and picks up a garbage puck along the boards and takes off with it.

I turn and go with him.

I look back and yell for Gabriel to trail us.

Our third line defense is focused, just in case we lose the puck.

Jax fakes like he's going to dump the puck behind the net.

Then he acts like he's going to cross ice it to me but instead drops it back to Gabriel.

The second the puck touches Gabriel's stick he sends it up to me.

I just take the shot.

At this point, any shot on goal is a good one.

And we can traffic the net and hope for a mistake on their part or a juicy rebound.

Don't ask me how it happens but my shot is fucking perfect.

A thing of beauty as it sails through the air.

I almost see it in slow motion.

The puck flipping over and over.

The *Wolves* goalie trying to lift his right shoulder instead of his body.

The puck finding a very narrow opening, hitting the top of the crossbar, the sound of that echoing like a gong.

And then the puck flipping over again and into the net.

The arena explodes with celebration.

I'm on a hell of a streak lately with scoring goals.

The rest of the game is a push and pull, back and forth defensive game.

When the final siren blares out I skate right to Knox.

"I owe you a beer," I say to him.

"The entire team does," he replies.

"Agreed."

Especially Mac.

Mac is already skating off the ice to the locker room.

He had two shots on goal for the entire game.

Sat in the penalty box three times.

And he had a fight.

A weak fight, but still...

Once we're all in the locker room, I see Mac in the back corner, almost hiding.

Coach Damon gives his post-game speech to us.

"... a hard fight. Not every game is a blowout. Not every game is clean and goes to plan. Sometimes you just play the game. You play hard. You play the game as the game comes to you..."

We all clap for Coach Damon and each other.

The second he's out of sight, I look back at Mac.

Mac has a small bottle of whiskey in his hand.

I take off my skates and go to talk to Mac.

The small bottle of booze in one hand, his phone in the other.

“Think we should have a talk, brother,” I say to him.

“No,” Mac says.

He downs the booze and nods at me. “Party time, Villi.”

“What?”

“In our honor. You know the drill.”

“Mac...”

He tosses the empty bottle to the floor and then grabs my shoulder. “Is Villi... *the Villain*... going to deny going to a party?”

There’s red flags dancing all around Mac right now.

Believe me, I’m not against going to a party.

I just have no idea what’s got Mac ready to explode.

VERA

I STROLL THROUGH THE FARMER'S MARKET WITH A CUP OF expensive coffee and a little basket hanging off my arm.

It's a slow kind of busy here.

The smell of wood and fresh food.

A hint of something being deep fried somewhere near me.

Strands of lights with large clear bulbs hang overhead.

I have a random collection in my basket.

Some bananas.

Some tomatoes.

Fresh romaine.

Cucumbers.

Stuff for a salad.

(Minus the bananas.)

I have a little container of English breakfast tea.

I buy a small bag of popcorn from a sweet little girl selling popcorn for a fundraiser for her soccer team.

Row after row.

Aisle after aisle.

It's just relaxing to walk around.

I pause at a flower stand and smile.

"Nothing wrong with buying yourself some flowers, is it?"

I look at an older man with big dimples.

Wearing a dirty flannel and dirty jeans.

"Do you grow all these?" I ask.

"Sure do. My late wife always wanted a field of flowers. Damn mad at myself it took me so long to do it for her."

He walks toward me and reaches for a small bouquet of sunflowers.

They're smaller but beautifully yellow.

Like different shades of yellow.

They almost look fake.

"Here you go," he says to me.

"No," I say. "I'll pay for those."

"No need. I saw the way your eyes lit up when you saw these. She'd want you to have them."

I smile and feel a lump in my throat.

I take the flowers and insist to pay again.

The man shakes his head. "No. My opinion? A pretty woman like you should always have fresh flowers."

Now I'm gently blushing.

“I’m going to pay this forward,” I say.

“As you should. See? I knew it about you. Not many like you anymore. You enjoy those sunflowers.”

I’m not sure how to feel.

Was that man just being sweet? Or was he trying to flirt?

Or do I have this aura of being single, alone and desperate that some old man gave me flowers to cheer me up?

I keep to my word and pay it forward.

I go back to the little girl selling popcorn and give her what I think the sunflowers would have cost.

I don’t take any extra popcorn.

The excitement of the little girl makes my night.

As I’m leaving the farmer’s market, I see a taco stand.

My plan to go home and make a nice salad for dinner gets tossed to the side...

That can be for tomorrow.

Tacos are for right now.

I listen to my stomach.

And, yes, I sit alone at a picnic table with my purchased fruits, veggies, popcorn and my free sunflowers and eat three delicious hard-shell chicken tacos.

If you’re as bored as I am right now, then I do apologize.

This is my life.

The only thing missing is someone sitting across from me.

Eating tacos too.

I smile and stare, picturing someone with a little dab of sour cream on the right corner of his mouth.

And then I reach across the table...

Or.

I lean across.

Or.

I sit next to him and kiss that little dab and tease and flirt and...

"I'm so pathetic," I whisper to myself.

Fantasizing about some man in my life.

Who? Who is the mystery man? Huh?

Is it Blake? The psycho?

Imagine if Blake had food on the corner of his mouth.

He'd demand a refund from the taco stand for having too much sour cream on his food.

So... then who is it?

Is it Villi?

That snaps me right back to reality.

I stand up and throw out my trash and hurry to my car.

Someone watching me would think it's starting to rain by the way I'm hustling to my car.

Really, Vera?

A thought about... Villi...?

I drive home to my quiet apartment.

I put away my produce and fruit.

I place my sunflowers in a vase and place that on the coffee table.

A wave of loneliness hits me when I realize I don't want to read a book, drink a glass of wine or watch some singing show.

I think about sliding my keyboard out from under my bed and playing some piano...

Yes, it's a secret talent of mine.

All the Monroe sisters have some kind of musical talent.

I wonder if Mac has heard Violet's singing voice.

She's got a really good voice.

As for me?

I was never *rock star* enough to sing in front of people.

I can play piano.

Just for fun.

But nothing is happening tonight.

And speaking of Violet...

She's always my go-to when I need some company.

I reach for my phone and it vibrates, which surprises me.

A text from Blake.

SEE YOU SOON.

My throat tightens for a second.

I've come to the conclusion to just fully ignore Blake.

Let him text me and try to rattle me.

I switch over to Violet's name.

Wine? Guy talk? Cheesy movie? MY TREAT!

Violet responds with a sloppy looking text.

I decipher it as she's at a party with Mac and some of the other *Puckford Pirates* celebrating their win.

Of course she's at a party.

She's in college.

With a boyfriend.

I look around my apartment.

I sigh.

I mean, if I really wanted to...

I can open an app and find someone to spend time with.

But I know I'm not going to do that.

I'm not sure why.

Or maybe I know why and I don't want to confess it.

Either way I'm sitting home alone.

All alone.

I can cuddle under a blanket, hug a pillow... *hump a pillow...* but it won't change how alone I feel and am.

My phone vibrates again.

I glance down.

I see Blake's name.

I look away.

I bite my bottom lip.

All of a sudden I don't feel safe in my own apartment.

VILLI

I SIT ON A SWIVEL COMPUTER CHAIR, PUT MY HANDS BEHIND
my head and interlock my fingers.

Just a few feet away, she takes off her shirt.

A girls fit hockey jersey.

Puckford Pirates.

Her bra is black.

Her tits full.

Not big but far from small.

They fit her body perfectly.

She's got chin-length blonde hair, dark blue eyes, a cute
little nose, and thin pink lips.

What the hell am I doing here?

It's a college party.

What the fuck do you think I'm doing here?

Everyone here is celebrating a team win.

And this blonde firecracker walked up to me and confessed she's always wanted to suck my dick.

I'm just offering up what this girl wants.

Letting her chase her dream as I shoot a load down the back of her throat.

I don't see a thing wrong with that either.

Now, I'm not completely shallow.

I know her name.

Of all things... *Valerie*.

I feel like these women with *V* names are driving me insane.

"Were you at the game, darling?" I ask.

"Of course I was," Valerie says. "I couldn't wait to get to this party and find you."

"I can see that."

She reaches back and twists the clasp of her bra.

She drops her bra and walks toward me.

Her tits are so cute, perky and bouncy.

Smaller than handfuls for me, but I'm not picky.

Her button-like nipples get harder with each step she takes toward me.

Now I'm going to play a little hard to get just for fun.

She's right there in front of me.

I can smell her skin.

Something like rose petals and... honeysuckle...?

I curl my lip.

I make her reach for my hands.

Her hands can barely fit around my wrists.

She pulls my hands and guides them to her breasts.

I touch her.

She sighs and groans.

“Oh, Villi,” she purrs. She puts her head back. “Yes... Villi...”

My cock starts to climb down the inside of my right leg.

Thickening and filling up with temporary love for Valerie.

I knead at her tits.

Gently squeezing.

Playfully rubbing my thumb against her nipples.

I finally move my right hand to the small of her back and pull her toward me.

She lets out a gasping yell as my mouth moves over her left breast.

I take the whole thing into my mouth.

I'm hungry. Thirsty. Ready to fucking devour.

She tastes good.

She tastes great.

Like temptation and need swirling together.

I bring my teeth together against her tender nipple and I tug.

I growl as I tug.

She lets out a weird noise from the back of her throat.

I go for her tit again.

This time I suckle even harder.

I grab her by the hips and drive her down against my cock.

She slams against me and I love it.

I start to move her... *using her*... rocking her hips back and forth against my cock.

I keep my eyes shut though.

Want to know why?

I'm not thinking about Valerie right now.

Who do you think I'm thinking about right now?

I pull away from Ver... *Valerie's* chest again and I let out a growling breath.

She looks down at me.

Her lips look savory and I can't wait to feel them sliding up and down my cock.

I'm seconds away from it...

Then the bedroom door flies open.

"Busy in here!" I roar.

"Villi, something bad is going on," Jax's voice says.

"What is it?" I growl.

"Mac..."

Fuck.

I stand up, taking Valerie with me.

I put her on her feet and brush my lips to hers.

“Sorry, darling,” I whisper. “I’ve got business to tend to. Stay up here and play with your clit. Think about me. Promise me?”

“Yes,” Valerie purrs. “Anything for you, Villi.”

“Good girl,” I say.

I grit my teeth as I walk toward Jax.

“I’m sorry, man,” Jax says to me.

“Don’t worry about it,” I say as I leave the bedroom. “She wasn’t that exciting anyway. I’ve got someone else on my mind.”

“Who?”

“None of your fucking business,” I say.

I hear a loud yell and then glass shattering.

“Ah, fuck,” Jax yells.

We race toward the stairs and down.

Mac is holding someone up against a now broken mirror.

“*He’s bleeding!*” some random voice calls out.

Jax grabs for Mac and spins him around.

There’s fire in Mac’s eyes.

He takes a swing at Jax.

I lower my right shoulder and slam into Jax, saving him from a possible knockout punch from Mac.

Jax hits a wall.

I plant my feet and turn around.

Mac is trying to go back after the guy he threw into a mirror.

From the corner of my eye I see Violet standing there, covering her mouth.

Her eyes welling with tears.

Knox and Gabriel push through the gathering crowd.

There's a guy on the ground, bleeding from the back of his head.

Mac is ready to keep going too.

I grab the back of Mac's shirt and pull him against me.

"You're scaring the fuck out of the girl you love, you fucking asshole," I growl into his left ear.

That's the only way I can think to get Mac back to neutral.

And it works.

One look at Violet and he's calmer.

"We're out of here," I say. I look at Violet. "Let's go, darling."

I offer my right hand and she takes it.

I squeeze her hand tight with my right hand.

Violet hugs my arm.

She's worried.

I push Mac out the front door.

"I'm coming with you," Jax says.

"No," I say. "Stay here with Knox and Gabriel and clean this up. Make sure things are good."

Now I'm basically on my own here.

At least we're on campus.

We're safe in some aspects.

I don't speak a word.

I shove Mac forward and let him walk on his own.

Violet still clings to my arm.

I shake her way and put my arm around her and pull her close.

She clutches at my shirt.

“What's happening, Villi?” Violet whispers.

“I don't know, darling,” I whisper back. “It's not good though. You should go back to your dorm.”

“Never. He needs me more than ever right now.”

I nod.

Mac is one lucky guy.

It makes me almost start to hate him the way Violet loves him.

We finally get back to the dorm.

The first thing Mac does is grab for a bottle of booze.

I grab the bottle and he looks at me.

“Do it,” I challenge. “Hit me. Hit me as hard as you fucking want.”

“Fuck off, Villi.”

“You're scaring her, man. She loves you so much, you stupid fuck. What's wrong, huh? Tell me what's wrong?”

I push at Mac's chest.

Soft at first.

Then harder.

And harder...

Harder...

I drive Mac back.

He stumbles and then lunges for me.

He grabs my shirt and I'm ready for anything.

Well, maybe anything.

I did not expect Mac to suddenly burst into tears.

GABRIEL

ONE SECOND YOU'RE TAKING A CHEERLEADER'S SHIRT OFF, about to find out if the rumors of her having her nipples pierced are true... the next you're grabbing for napkins to hold to the back of the head of some guy that your best friend slammed into a mirror.

By the way, I'm Gabriel.

Not sure there's much else you need to know right now since there's a guy possibly bleeding to death in front of me...

I'm crouched down.

Jax and Knox are standing there like trees in a fucking forest.

I turn my head and call out, "Someone give me a fucking shirt!"

A few people look at each other.

"Oh, fucking hell," a girl says.

She takes her shirt off and tosses it to me.

My eyes light up.

“Thank you,” I say to her. “And you should hang around. You’re fucking beautiful.”

“Fuck yourself,” she snaps, then turns and walks off.

That kind of attitude makes me fall in love.

I put her shirt to the back of the guy’s head.

That seems to work a lot better than some napkins.

“Come on, dude,” I say. “You have to stand up.”

“Don’t move him,” someone says.

“Check for a concussion,” someone else suggests.

“Ask him questions....”

“What are we going to do here?”

“It hurts,” the guy says.

“Yeah. No shit. You’re bleeding. Do you know who you are?”

“Yes. I’m not out of it or anything. Just... whoa. That all happened so fast.”

“I didn’t see anything. I was about to get my teeth on some nipple piercings. Ever see any? In person?”

“No. My one friend’s girlfriend had them done.”

“Never snuck a look?”

“Nah. I’m a good friend.”

“Sounds like you’re a moron,” I say. “Better to ask for forgiveness, right? Instead of permission?”

Knox crouches down next to me. “Hey. They’re talking about calling medical. That happens and shit is going to hit the fan big time.”

“Okay, dude, time to stand up,” I say. “Enough fucking around here.”

Knox and I help the guy to his feet.

He holds the shirt to the back of his head.

“I’m standing,” he says. “We’re all good here.”

I’m a little relieved.

I don’t have to give the guy the speech.

The gentle reminder that we’re hockey players and he’s not.

And does he really want to start fucking around by dropping names about what happened and all that?

“Okay, big guy,” I say. “You’re standing. Now let me see your head. I’ve dealt with a ton of bloody wounds before.”

He turns and moves the shirt.

I actually cross my fingers.

I’m worried a piece of this guy’s brain is going to fall out of his head.

Mac has been in a horrible mood.

And angry.

This guy for some reason was a target.

When he moves the shirt I see some blood.

A cut here and there.

Nothing too drastic.

Nothing that needs real medical attention.

“So here’s the gig,” I say to him. “You find yourself a pretty girl that wants to patch you up. Let her play nurse. Then

when she asks how you want to pay you go down on her and treat her clit like it's one of those whack-a-mole games at a carnival and you're going to win the giant teddy bear. Got that?"

The guy turns and looks at me. "Yeah."

"Hey, what happened anyway?" Knox asks.

"I didn't know Mac was standing behind me," the guy says.

"And?" I ask.

"I said something about his girl. Just a passing comment. You know..."

"Wait," Knox says. "You said something about Violet?"

"It wasn't anything bad."

I look at Knox.

His lip curls a little and he nods.

Ah, fuck.

I open my mouth, ready to give a little speech to this guy.

Then I stop myself.

I curl up my right fist and swing.

Yeah, I know. I'm hitting a guy who already got jacked up by Mac.

It's the point of the matter.

My fist connects with his jaw and down he goes again to the floor.

Everyone watching gasps with surprise.

Hey, I'm surprised too.

“Don’t ever talk about Violet again,” I say to the guy.

He’s on the floor, staring up at me, totally dazed.

I don’t know if I should feel bad or not.

I mean, I get it.

Violet is totally a babe.

Unexpected too.

Ah, shit, I think I am starting to feel bad.

Knox grabs my shoulder. “Come on, man, you need a drink. Let it go.”

I nod.

I need a drink... and I need to get laid.

VERA

I DIP MY RIGHT TOES INTO THE BATH WATER.

It's so hot, I gasp.

Then I smile.

Yes, us women love a shower or bath hot enough to melt our skin.

It takes me a few seconds to get used to the water as I slowly enter the tub.

There's no way I'm taking a bath with the regular bathroom lights on either.

It's candles or nothing.

I need a little darkness and some shadows to make myself feel better.

I'm the one who has to stare at my body.

I slide down into the water and feel the bubbly heaven wash over me.

This bubble bath I'm using is apparently supposed to relax your body and ease your mind.

I'm sure it's just clever marketing to get people like me to overpay.

I sink down even more.

Bending my knees, allowing the top half of my body into the water.

I go right up to my chin and I stop.

The bubble bath smells good.

My body is on fire from the hot water.

The suds are working wonders too, keeping me from actually seeing my body in the water.

Put it this way, I don't exactly have buoys that are floating above the water...

In other words?

My boobs are perfectly content in the water.

Trying to reach the top, maybe begging for it.

I swear to myself I won't do it...

But of course I will.

I'm sure when Abby gets into a bath, half the water splashes out to make room for her chest.

Ah, the joys of that subtle stinging, stupid sister jealousy nonsense.

Or maybe that's just another byproduct of being part of the *Messy Monroes*.

I reach to my left where I have a small table set up with my phone and a glass of wine.

I turn on some soothing bath music.

I don't know what that actually is - I just choose a playlist that has that title.

My body does feel very relaxed.

The candles.

The water.

The music.

The smell.

I always tell myself I'm going to do this more often, but I don't.

The next time I take a hot bath will probably be when I'm sick.

I put my head back and close my eyes.

The music playing is soft and soothing.

The song begins to fade out.

The next one starts.

This song is a little more... romantic.

Just the vibe and the beat of it.

Maybe it's just me but it's making me think of... you know...

Alone time.

Or sexy time with someone.

I mean, I am in a hot bath.

All alone.

Letting the stress of the day melt away.

I feel good. I feel relaxed.

Candles burning.

Their little flames tossing shadows against the walls and ceiling.

I reach up with my right foot and curl my toes around the handle to turn the water down and to make it even hotter.

Under the water I feel my right fingertips start to rub together.

I touch my right leg.

I lick my bottom lip.

My lower back tightens and arches a little.

I catch myself groaning in the back of my throat.

Just a quiet little groan.

My eyes are still shut.

My right fingers ease to the inside of my right leg.

Then up.

I swallow hard and take a deep breath.

My left hand touches just above my belly button.

I dance my fingers up to my right breast.

I carefully hug my breast with my hand.

My right middle finger touches between my legs.

I curl my finger and I-

Suddenly have a vision I did not ask for.

No, Vera, no!

You cannot picture Villi right now!

It doesn't matter if you're alone.

It doesn't matter if nobody else can see your thoughts!

You cannot picture Villi walking into your classroom, shirtless and sweaty, stalking toward you with force and maybe a little anger...

I gasp and open my eyes.

I'm frozen in place.

My cheeks burning hotter than the water.

I realize my music has stopped playing.

I turn my head and look and see Violet's name on my phone screen.

She's... calling me?

I hurry to sit up and grab a towel to dry my hands.

All dirty thoughts and touches are tossed to the back of my mind.

"Hey, Violet," I say as I answer the call.

"Vera! *Ohmygod*, Vera!"

Violet's voice is shaking.

Chills race up my back.

"What's wrong?" I yell.

"It's Mac! He's losing his mind..."

I hear a noise in the background.

Something slamming.

"Vera, where are you?"

"His dorm," she says. "I can't believe what... and then he said... and I just... I wanted to... I had..."

She's blubbering and choking on words.

"Violet, I need you to take one big deep breath right now,"
I say.

She listens to me.

I hear more noise in the background.

I hear a voice.

A familiar voice that makes my body jump.

My teeth chatter as I realize the voice is Villi's.

I'm not sure if that's good or not.

"Violet, listen to me," I say. "Are you listening?"

"I'm listening," she says.

"Don't move... I'm on my way over right now..."

VILLI

MAC IS NUTS.

Fucking nuts.

One second he's crying in my arms and the next second he's throwing a punch.

Yeah, that's right.

Mac shoves me away and throws a punch.

Like a wire snaps in his brain.

I have no idea how he doesn't hit me all the way.

He just kind of gets the right side of my mouth.

Enough that I stumble back.

I'm in shock.

From the left side of my view I see that Violet is crying.
Again.

She was just on her phone with someone.

I assume it's Mila and Ruby.

Just what we need here.

A damn audience for this show.

The Mac Losing His Fucking Mind and We Don't Know Why show.

Bring the popcorn!

Fuck.

Bring some booze too.

Mac points at me.

“What?” I ask. “What is it, man? Huh?”

“I just... everyone just needs to clear out,” Mac says. He runs a hand through his hair. “I just need to be alone.”

“That’s not going to happen,” Violet says.

“She’s right,” I say. “Unless you want to send me and Violet out there alone. Or send her to my room. I’m fine with that.”

“Do you want me to kick your ass, Villi?”

“Yeah, I do,” I say. “I want to see you try. You won’t be able to, Mac.”

“You fucking prick.”

Violet tries to run over to us.

I put my left hand out as though I can magically stop her.

“It’s fine, darling,” I call out to Violet without looking at her. “This is how us hockey players settle our feelings.”

Mac is right up in my face.

His nose touches mine.

“I love you, brother,” I whisper to him. “Whatever this is... I’m here...”

Mac slams his hands against my chest and drives me back.

I really don’t want to do this...

But I lunge for him.

I grab his shirt and jam my fist up into his jaw.

He throws his right arm around my neck and we are tangled up.

Violet lets out a scream.

“You fucking idiots! Stop this! I hate you both! You hear me? I hate you, Mac! I fucking hate you!”

I wrestle Mac against a wall.

He’s trying to squeeze my throat.

“She hates you now,” I whisper to him. “She’s going to be so vulnerable. Nothing tastes better than vulnerable pussy.”

Mac lets out a roar and pushes back at me.

We end up in the middle of the dorm.

The backs of my legs hit the couch.

I go down and Mac is on top me.

We roll to the floor and knock over a table.

I’m then on top of Mac and I bring my right fist back.

I know if I hit him now, like this, I’ll shatter his eye socket...

Mac stares up at me.

He puts his arms out.

“Just fucking say it, man,” I growl.

“Get the fuck off me, Villi,” he says.

I stand up and offer Mac my hand.

I pull him to his feet.

It’s like a wave crashes over his face.

“I got a call,” Mac says. “From Mike. You know who Mike is?”

“Who the fuck is Mike?” I ask.

“He works for my father’s company. He’s like the second in charge over there. He’s a really great guy.”

“Okay,” I say. “So Mike called you. And...?”

“It’s worse, man. It’s really worse now. He didn’t tell me.”

“What does that mean?” Violet asks.

“My father. The cancer. It has spread everywhere now. It’s done. It’s over. It happened. You know that moment I kept saying where one day he’d wake up and just know he was done for? It fucking happened.”

“Oh, Mac,” Violet says as she covers her mouth.

“Fuck,” I growl.

I grab Mac by the back of the neck and pull him toward me.

“My father is going to die,” Mac says as his voice cracks up again.

His face hits my right shoulder and he’s crying again.

I look to my left and put my left hand out for Violet to take.

She reaches for me, shaking.

I grab her and pull her toward me.

My left hand slides around her body and I hold her against me and against Mac.

“Mac, I’m so sorry,” Violet whispers.

“It’s all sinking in now,” Mac confesses. “And the fucking guy didn’t tell me. He didn’t want to tell me. He didn’t...”

“You know Big Matt,” I say. “He’s a stubborn fool. He thinks by not telling you he’s helping you.”

“Yeah, right,” Mac says. “And I’m just going to get a call one day that my father is dead.” He lifts his head. “I fucking hate the guy so much, Villi. But I still love him.”

“Of course you love him,” I say. “He’s your old man. And this shit is complicated as fuck.”

“I’m so fucking angry right now,” Mac growls.

“We see that,” Violet says.

Mac tries to push away from me again.

I grab him tighter.

Violet hugs him from the side.

“Come on, man,” I whisper. “Just stay like this. We have to talk this all out.”

Mac laughs.

Not a happy laugh either.

He forces himself away from me.

He puts an arm around Violet.

There’s so much hurt and rage in his eyes though.

Sadness hiding behind it.

“He’s going to fucking die,” Mac calls out. “And he can’t even call me to tell me. What do I do with this? Huh? What the fuck do I do?”

His voice gets louder and angrier.

“Right here,” I say. “Want to keep fighting? Get it all off your chest?”

Mac eases Violet away from him and he steps toward me again.

“Your father is a piece of shit who fucked you over,” I say. “Right? He’s got your head twisted all around. And now he’s going to die.”

“Shut the fuck up, Villi,” Mac says. “I’m not in the mood for this. For your games.”

“No games. Just reality.”

Mac looks ready to explode again.

Behind me I hear a quiet knock at the door.

I turn my head and see the door opening.

I feel Mac grab the front of my shirt.

Violet screams his name again.

I blink a few times to make sure my eyes are correct.

I smile as I watch Vera entering my dorm.

VERA

THESE COLLEGE GUYS ARE FULL GROWN MEN.

Full of testosterone.

And Mac is really angry.

Villi stares at me with those dangerous eyes.

I know he's a second away from something stupid and flirty.

My only intention is to get my sister out of this situation.

Then Mac clocks Villi in the jaw.

Violet gasps.

I let out a scream.

I'm not privy to violence like this.

I'm not for it.

I don't put myself in situations where this kind of stuff happens.

Not in front of me.

Not with my little sister inches away from it.

The anxiety ridden practical side of my brain knows all it takes it one misstep for Violet to get bumped into and knocked over and she could get really hurt.

I step forward but then step right back.

Villi takes the punch like it's nothing.

He makes a weird move, dipping down...

Then I see what he's doing.

He jumps forward, throwing his shoulder into Mac's gut.

Then he picks Mac right up and has him over his shoulder.

Somewhere in the back of my mind there's a voice...

Vera! Are you watching this?! These are two college hockey players! Look at this! This is madness!

Villi carries Mac to the opposite end of the dorm.

I move my attention from them to my sister.

I hurry to her side.

She grabs my hands.

"Violet," I whisper. "You can't be here right now."

"I have to be," she says. "You don't understand what's going on. Mac just told us about his-"

There's a slam and Violet gasps.

I look and see Mac on the ground and Villi with a foot on Mac's chest.

Villi looks big and dangerous right now.

His chest puffed way out.

His hands balled into fists.

He looks at me.

Then he looks at Violet.

There's something about the way he looks at Violet.

Like he wants to protect her.

I can instantly tell he cares about her.

Maybe not in the same way that Mac does.

Mac is in love with my sister.

Villi is... I don't know... like a protective big brother?

Unless of course there is something between Villi and my sister.

Which is weird. Maybe gross.

I don't know.

I'm scared right now.

Villi reaches down and picks Mac up.

He puts him against a wall.

“You’re scaring them,” I hear Villi growl. “Think about it again, Mac. Violet loves you. She would do anything for you. I’m so sorry about this shit. But Violet wants to be here for you. And now her sister is here. You’re not going to act like a fucking fool and scare Vera. I’ll knock you out before you make her feel anymore uneasy. Got it?”

Chills race through my body.

I’m talking head to toe.

The sound of my name coming out of his mouth when he’s angry.

Angry, but protective.

“Are we done now?” Villi says to Mac.

Mac tilts his head back.

He doesn't like being put in his place.

He doesn't like being stood up to.

But he looks at Violet.

I look at Violet too.

The look they share...

Wow, is it dangerous.

They really do love each other.

“Come here, Mac,” Violet says. “Please. Just come to me...”

Villi steps back away from Mac.

Mac doesn't break his stare from Violet.

I watch him walk across the dorm toward Violet and me.

The look between them... it's packed with energy.

Sexual energy.

That makes my stomach flip since it's my sister that Mac is eye fucking like crazy.

As soon as they can, they reach for each other.

A hug.

A kiss.

A much deeper kiss.

I see their tongues touching...

I clear my throat.

Violet looks at me and blushes.

“Keep him settled,” Villi says to Violet. “If you need me, text.”

Violet grabs Mac’s hand and leads the way to a bedroom.

I cringe again.

I can only imagine what my little sister is going to do to keep Mac calm.

Not that it’s any of my business.

The bedroom door shuts and I realize instantly that I’m now alone with Villi.

I side eye the door to leave.

I can’t handle any silly flirting right now.

I barely even got a chance to talk to my sister.

I have to make sure she’s okay.

As I start to turn, Villi shakes his head.

“She’ll be fine,” he says. “I promise.”

“Oh?” I ask.

Villi starts to move toward me. “It’s not what you think. This isn’t how Mac acts.”

“Could have fooled me.”

“Can we walk closer to the door to talk?”

I note how serious Villi’s tone is.

His voice is deep. Serious. Still with dark undertones.

Why does he make me feel so safe?

We walk to the door.

“Not sure how much you know, but Mac’s father is sick,” Villi says in an almost whisper.

Whispering... sexy...

I swallow hard.

“He’s got cancer,” Villi says. “Terminal cancer.”

“Oh, no.”

“I guess it’s been quiet for a while. Mac’s father is mean and stubborn. I think the guy just ignores it. Acts normal. Well, I guess things finally caught up to him now. It’s really bad.”

“How bad, Villi?”

“That’s the thing. Mac found out from someone else. That’s what made him snap a little. His own father couldn’t even call.”

“Maybe he just...” I shake my head. *This is not my business.* “Never mind.”

“It’s okay, Vera,” Villi says.

He touches my arm.

I swear time freezes.

He’s called me Vera.

He just touched my arm...

I move out of Villi’s reach.

“Mac’s father is going to die. I don’t even know how bad it is right now. I’ve been trying to calm him down.”

“I guess it’s a good thing you’re here.”

“Don’t even think anything bad about Violet. Believe me. Mac would never let anything bad happen to her.”

I take a deep breath. “I really should go check on her. Talk to her myself.”

“Violet?”

I nod.

Villi smirks. “You want to walk in that bedroom right now? You’re smart. What do you think is going on in there?”

I cringe. “Stop it. That’s my little sister in there. I’ll just leave. It’s fine. I suppose. If anything happens...”

“I can call or text,” Villi says. “If you give me your number.”

He adds a little smirk that pisses me right off.

Using this tragic situation to try and get my number?

“Violet will keep in touch,” I say.

I open the door and walk out.

I think I’m home free now.

Villi grabs my arm.

MAC

ONE TIME, WHEN I WAS EIGHT, I BROKE MY RIGHT THUMB.

It was so dumb the way it happened.

I somehow jammed it while trying to carry my hockey bag.

When I told my father my thumb was broken, he grabbed it to make sure.

He looked into my eyes and watched the way I reacted to the intense surge of pain.

He told me that showing pain meant showing weakness.

Then he asked me if I was really going to skip practice because of a broken thumb.

I told him of course I wasn't going to skip practice.

I can still remember the pain.

You don't really realize how much you need certain body parts until they are hurting.

Everything I did on the ice seemed to revolve around my right thumb.

If I dared to cry, practice would go longer.

If I missed a shot because of the pain, I had to take fifty more.

Practice that day lasted an extra hour too.

My father didn't plan on taking me to the hospital either.

Mike did.

When Mike saw my thumb the next day, he lost his mind.

He thought I was hiding the injury.

He took me to the hospital and I told him what had happened.

I thought Mike was going to hit my father that day.

I also thought my father was going to fire Mike that day.

They had a huge argument and Mike took a long weekend.

I look down at my thumb and flex it.

My right thumb still aches to this day.

Because it was never properly treated when the injury first happened.

I feel Violet's hand touch my back.

"Mac," she whispers.

I turn my head.

I see just how afraid I've made her.

"I'm not better than he is, sugar," I whisper.

"What?"

"I've scared you."

“No, Mac. You didn’t scare me. The situation did. I hate that you still have the need to hide.”

I turn around.

Violet touches my face. “Don’t respond to that, Mac. It’s okay. We’re all flawed.”

My jaw tightens.

“And don’t worry about Villi,” she says. “You know how he is. He says things to piss you off. To open the flood gates.”

“He’s got a thing for you.”

“No he doesn’t. He wants to see my boobs.”

I curl my lip.

Believe me, I wonder sometimes what would happen if Violet just opened Villi’s door and flashed him. Just get it over with...

“He’ll never see them,” she says and jumps to her toes.

Her right hand then slowly glides down my body, nestling between my legs.

“But you can,” she purrs. “Anytime you want. Even right now.”

I groan in the back of my throat.

My emotions are a fucking mess.

I step back from Violet and keep going until I reach the door.

I don’t break my stare away from her.

I reach back and lock the bedroom door.

Then I nod.

“Oh, you want a show?” Violet purrs.

“Right now, sugar,” I growl.

She playfully dances her hips and lifts her shirt up.

My dad is going to die.

I've known it all along.

But it's really happening now.

Violet throws her shirt toward me.

Then she reaches back for the clasp of her bra, pauses and smiles.

I can still hear Mike's voice.

'Hey, kid, I've got some bad news. Your old man is going to have my ass for telling you this...'

My father spent two nights in the hospital.

He didn't tell me.

He was told he needed immediate care.

Possibly hospice care.

Fucking hospice?

Like the end of the road kind of thing...?

“Mac?”

I blink and realize Violet is now topless.

She looks so beautiful.

Sweet and innocent.

Her perfect full breasts, nipples knotted tight.

Cream colored skin and a light stroke of pink color for her nipples.

I walk toward her and I take my shirt off.

She puts her hands up and claws at my chest.

“Mac, we don’t have to—”

I move her hands away, grab her by the hips and pick her up.

She’s eye level.

I kiss her.

My father is going to die really soon.

Could possibly be tomorrow.

Or maybe months from now.

I groan in my throat but it’s more of a whimper.

Violet claws at my face and kisses me harder.

We race to strip the rest of our clothes off.

I take her in my bed.

My cock seeking her tender body.

Needing attention, love, everything she has to offer.

I thrust into Violet and she arches her back, crying out.

I nestle my mouth to the right side of her neck.

Tears suddenly fill my eyes.

Violet grabs for my back.

She gently moves her hands up and down it.

She knows...

I keep thrusting.

This has never happened to me before.

But I have Violet.

She holds me as I fuck her.

She groans into my ear as she takes my cock.

She nibbles at my ear and whispers that she loves me.

Tears slip from my eyes, but she'll never see them.

But I'm sure she can feel them touch her neck, cheek, and chest.

VILLI

I CAN'T JUST LET HER SLIP AWAY THAT EASILY, RIGHT?

I can't just let her show up and think Mac is dangerous for her sister, then watch her take off.

I know she wants to go into the bedroom and check on Violet.

But I know Mac.

I know Violet.

I know exactly what's going on in that bedroom.

Hell, this could be my opportunity.

Vera wants to check on her sister.

I can be by Vera's side.

I can open the door for her.

Her command, right?

And if I'm right - which I know I am - I'll get a look at Violet.

Finally.

I realize it's been about five seconds since I've grabbed Vera's arm.

She's turned a little.

She's looking at me.

Fuck, she's pretty.

Really fucking pretty.

She doesn't have that certain look that most college girls around here do.

That almost youthful innocent look if that makes sense.

Vera is a woman.

A real woman.

Her face. Her lips.

Her eyes.

They're intense.

They've got... wisdom. Experience.

They've got years.

And I'm not even talking about her body yet either.

I don't care what anyone says, when a woman is a *real woman* there are subtle curves that make my knees feel instantly weak.

That's Vera.

And she's staring at me.

I'm staring at her.

"I have to go, Villi," she says.

She pulls away from me.

“Thank you for showing up,” I blurt out.

She seems confused. “Oh?”

“It was intense. I won’t deny it. I just don’t want Mac to get a bad reputation from it. I know you care about Violet.”

“Yes, I do care about Violet. And, yes, I’m not sure how I feel about tonight.”

“I swear nothing would—”

“I heard you when you said it the first time, Villi.”

“Right. That’s fair. It’s nice that Violet can call you and you show up. That’s all. I’m sure the whole thing is weird.”

“Weird?”

“Well, you’re basically a professor around here,” I say. “These are the dorms. And up until recently your sister was a pure good girl.”

“Goodbye, Villi.”

She turns away again.

I shake my head.

I still can’t just let her sneak away like this.

But I can’t exactly pounce either.

Vera isn’t some college girl looking to have a few drinks, forget about life and get silly between the sheets.

She’s also not some irritated wife who is looking for a secret adventure for just one night to remind herself what it feels like to be alive.

In reality I should just let her go.

Let Vera leave.

It's not like I'm not ever going to see her again.

I think about Violet. And Mac.

There's no way they aren't naked right now.

Mac probably face down in those tits that I just want to see for a second.

Violet probably clawing at his back, begging for his cock.

I grit my teeth.

I've got a million of those in my phone right now.

One text.

That's all it would take.

That's not what I fucking want though.

I suck in a deep breath through my nose.

I'm searching for her scent.

Who the fuck am I right now?

Some paranormal romance werewolf or something?

Fuck, Villi, what is this?

This, my friends, is pure lust.

I'm lusting for Vera.

She's not like anyone else I've ever met.

I leave the dorm and jog down the hallway.

I follow Vera outside.

But not in a creepy way.

"Hey," I call to her when we're outside.

She stops and turns.

I show her my hands.

No funny business, darling.

“I meant what I said,” I say to her. “I’m sure it means a lot to Violet to have you show up. And Mac too. I don’t know how else to say this...”

“Villi, stop.”

“No. I’m trying to tell you that the guy your sister loves? He’s going to lose his father. You need to be ready for it. We all do.”

Vera swallows hard. “Oh.”

What did you think I was going to say, darling?

“I know that might sound weird, but we all... we all love Mac.”

There’s a light in Vera’s eyes.

Her guard is slightly down.

I step closer to her.

It doesn’t seem logical but under the cheap light hanging off the building to our dorm, Vera somehow looks even more beautiful.

Almost like she’s not used to being outside late at night.

My mind scrambles to make up stories about her.

And I’m ready to write one that falls in line with non-fiction.

Truth. Reality.

I step even closer to Vera.

Violet’s sister.

Technically one of my professors now.

I make my move to kiss her.

VERA

HOLY SHIT, VILLI IS GOING TO KISS ME!

The words echo around in my head way longer than they should.

Meaning in terms of me taking the proper action.

For some reason I have a split second thought of it happening.

I see it happening in my head.

His lips gently touching mine.

In such a risky and vulnerable spot too.

We're right outside.

Anyone can see us.

Anyone can be watching.

Everyone has a phone glued to their hand now too.

One picture of Villi and I kissing?

Are you freaking kidding me?

That gets posted online...

There's so much social media risk of exposure and all that.

I realize Villi isn't trying to kiss my lips.

He's moving for my cheek.

This big, mean and almost scary hockey player who can't stop flirting with me is going to *just* kiss my cheek?

It's such a vicious move.

It's incredibly sexy too.

Vera, it cannot happen!

I step back.

Out of the reach of Villi's lips, but definitely not out of the reach of his strong hands.

Side note - I need to get out of reach of those strong hands.

This is completely and totally wrong.

Wrong!

Anything he or I could possibly feel right now is merely because of the emotional scene we just witnessed.

And the fact that Mac's father is dying of cancer.

That's all.

Mac and Violet have each other for comfort.

Villi doesn't have anyone.

And it sure as hell cannot and will not be me.

"See you in class, Villi," I say in the most proper tone I can find.

I turn and walk away.

This time I know I'm not stopping no matter what he does.
Or says.

“See you in class, *Miss Monroe.*”

When he calls me that, my toes curl.

Of course I stumble too.

I'm the idiot who can't flirt and can't handle being flirted
with.

I don't fall but I throw my arms out like I am going to fall.

It's a disaster.

I don't even look back.

I just have to keep going.

I have to get away from Villi...

I LOOK AT THE BATHWATER.

The bubbles are all gone.

The water is room temperature.

I open the drain and crouch down.

Watching the water rush down the drain is almost soothing
to me.

I feel like I'm almost meditating for a few seconds.

The drain gurgles.

A water tornado forms.

I smile.

I think back to when Violet was really little.

She used to get scared of the water tornado.

She always thought it would suck her down the drain.

Of course it didn't help matters that Abby told Violet that forgotten pets lived in the pipes and sewers.

All the goldfish people didn't want grew to the size of lions and grew fangs.

Or that people would flush baby alligators down the toilet and they'd grow into massive dinosaur-like creatures.

That's just how Abby was.

A bitch from the day she was born.

The water finishes going down the drain.

I clean up my small mess from my attempt at a bath.

I think about Violet again. And Mac.

It hurts my heart to think about what he must feel right now.

I'm not thrilled at all over his reaction to it.

Or how he handles bad news.

I guess at some point I have to let Violet do what she wants.

She's an adult.

In college, sure, but an adult.

She has big goals in life.

Wanting to go to law school.

It's well known that Mac is pro hockey bound.

As are most of the *Puckford Pirates* right now.

Not that I'm one to follow hockey or get lost in the college excitement, but from what I've seen and heard, it's a record-setting kind of thing they have at the moment.

Yeah, Vera, look at you right now.

Almost acting like a cheerleader, huh?

I roll my eyes and walk to the kitchen.

I deserve a glass of wine.

No, I deserve a bottle!

I laugh.

Last thing I need is a bottle of wine.

Not after what happened last time I got drunk.

As I reach for a glass, I hear my phone go off from the living room.

I run like the apartment is on fire.

I fear something is wrong with Violet.

It's Blake.

KEEP PLAYING GAMES. REMEMBER THOUGH - ALL GAMES COME TO AN END. TICK TOCK BITCH.

I take a deep breath.

I tell myself I will not be afraid. Or worry.

Blake wants me to be afraid of him.

He wants to get under my skin and wants me to do something.

I have to keep ignoring him.

But... what if...?

I swallow hard.

A thought pops into my head.

Imagine if Villi knew... about Blake...

I gasp and race back into the kitchen.

I skip the wineglass.

I start to drink right from the bottle.

VIOLET

I DON'T REMEMBER FALLING ASLEEP.

I think my body finally just waved the white flag and my eyes shut.

What a long night.

That's putting it lightly.

And of all things to have happening right now?

Mac is still sleeping.

His head is on my chest.

My bare chest too.

Yeah, I'm still naked from last night.

That part of this was definitely my favorite.

Even though it had a ton of emotion and passion to it.

I'm pretty sure Mac cried a few times but I'm not going to bring that up to him.

He can talk about it if he wants.

All I know is that we've crossed a bridge into a whole new part of our relationship.

Am I a fan of his father?

Not at all.

But even still...

Mac's father is going to die.

Of course we've known this all along, right?

Only this is different.

It's almost official, if that makes sense.

I look down at Mac.

His head resting on my right breast.

His right hand holding my right side.

These big hands of his.

And yet I'm the one now somehow holding him and loving him.

I bite my bottom lip and smile.

Mac suddenly lets out a slow growl.

He starts to stir.

Nuzzling his head up, then his nose and mouth over my breast.

His lips touching my nipple.

It tickles a little and I grit my teeth so I don't wake him.

His right hand moves to my right breast.

He takes hold, firmly.

Almost squeezing tight for a second before letting go.

He nuzzles his nose to my right nipple one more time, then he turns away from me.

He rolls over in his bed, taking the covers with him.

I'm there, naked, and kind of shivering.

I sneak out of the bed, find my clothes from the night before and get dressed.

I stand there for a few seconds and watch Mac sleep.

Remember, this is the guy who never slept until me.

He partly got the nickname *Machine* because he never slept.

I'm happy to see him sleeping.

He needs it.

As I leave the bedroom, I think about my sister.

Not Abby.

Vera was the one who showed up when I needed her.

She was there only for a minute or two before I took Mac into his bedroom.

That means I left my sister alone with Villi.

I owe her such an apology.

I call Vera.

It's Vera... she's going to answer on the first ring.

Which she does.

"Hey," I say.

"Hey to you," she says.

"I owe you an apology."

“No, you don’t.”

“Yes, Vera. I do. I owe you an explanation.”

“It’s fine.”

“It’s not fine at all. I called you for help. You showed up. Then I bailed. And that whole thing was scary.”

“Violet, I’m not saying a thing about it. I’m not going to ask. You can tell me what you want. I promise.”

“Are you drunk?”

“I’m not drunk.”

“Vera, what’s wrong? Your voice sounds...”

“It’s morning. You woke me up.”

“I woke you up?” I ask. “It’s...”

Something’s wrong.

Vera doesn’t sleep in...

And her voice is different.

She’s probably mad at me but won’t say it.

She figures I’ll defend Mac with my life.

“Just for the record, Mac isn’t a bad guy,” I say.

“Okay. I believe you. If that’s what you feel is best.”

“Stop that *mom talk* bullshit!” I cry into the phone. “What is wrong with you right now, Vera?”

“Nothing.”

“Can you just accept my apology?”

“Okay, I accept it. Damn you, Violet. I’m so mad at you right now. You should dump Mac’s sorry ass.”

“Now you’re being mean to me.”

“Let it go.”

“Let it go? I thought you’d be livid right now. Mac was mean and violent, and then I left you stranded with Villi. That I’m sorry about too. I hope he didn’t say or do anything stupid.”

“I made it home just fine. I can handle myself. I will ask one thing though.”

“Sure.”

“How is Mac?”

“He’s hurting. It’s a weird thing, you know? Like you know the guy is going to die from cancer. But now it’s really here. It’s happening...”

“It’s awful,” Vera says.

Her voice is dry. Almost numb.

She’s on the phone with me but I don’t think she’s really *there*.

If that makes sense.

“Okay, well, you should go back to bed then,” I say. “If you’re tired. I wasn’t sure if you’d be mad at me or worried...”

“I trust you, Violet.”

Are you mad that I’m with Mac?

Is that what this is?

Are you mad that I lost my virginity to him?

“Talk to you later, Vera.”

“Yup,” she says.

The call ends.

Yup?

Not even a goodbye?

Now I have anxiety rolling through my body.

I'm really thinking about calling her right back.

Pushing at her.

Or maybe just show up to her apartment.

Bring something to eat for breakfast.

I look at the door and actually consider it.

I hear a bedroom door open.

I smile and turn.

I bite my bottom but quickly stop so I don't give the wrong impression.

"Oh... it's just you..."

VILLI

I WAKE UP WITH SOME RAGING MORNING WOOD.

I leave my bedroom to go take a piss and who do I see?

Violet.

She turns around and looks at me as though she expects it to be Mac.

She's lucky I'm wearing a t-shirt and I turn to the side a little or else she'd have a full look at the tent I'm pitching.

Oh... it's just you...

“Good morning to you, darling,” I say. “Where's Mac?”

“He's still sleeping.”

“You really wear him out, don't you?”

“Wouldn't you like to know?” Violet smiles.

“I'd like to find out.”

Her cheeks turn bright red.

I have to keep my distance until my dick calms itself down.

I can't remember anything I had been dreaming about, but it must have been good.

Of course I can probably guess what I had been dreaming about.

One of those Monroe sisters... or maybe all three...

“Serious turn here,” I say. “How is he?”

Violet swallows hard. She nods.

Her eyes start to well up a little.

She takes a deep breath.

It's very shaky.

“Ah, shit, darling,” I whisper.

I move closer to her.

I send all the signals I can from my brain to my dick to *stand down*.

“Come here, Violet,” I say to her and offer my right arm.

She moves closer to me and I wrap her up and hug her.

I keep her body against the right side of my body.

My hand touches her hair.

I stare at the door to the dorm.

I can feel her tits pressing against my side.

Call me what you want, but I'm not going to ignore it.

Those beautiful and perfect tits... she's not wearing a bra either...

“Villi,” she whispers.

“Yeah?”

“Stop being a perv and just hug me.”

“You got it, darling,” I whisper back to her.

I squeeze her a little tighter.

Her right hand touches my stomach.

This is non-sexual.

Do not get hard.

She’s a friend to you.

You’re a friend to her.

You love Mac.

You’d never do anything to hurt Mac.

And Violet is so vulnerable again right now.

But her goddamn hand...

She curls her hand around my shirt.

She starts to cry.

That instantly strips away all my impure thoughts.

“Come with me, darling,” I whisper to her.

I walk her toward my bedroom.

Again, non-sexual.

I take her right to my bed.

I sit down and take her with me.

My arm around her.

Her head on my shoulder and chest.

She’s looking right down at my dick.

I can't help what's bulging - hard or not.

I use my left hand, touch her face and make her look at me.

She looks stunning with her eyes glossy.

Tears running down her cheeks.

"I hate seeing you upset, darling," I whisper. "You've got Mac twisted up. And now you're doing it to me."

"Easy, boy," she says and smiles.

I wipe a tear off her cheek. "He's lucky to have you right now. But you have to do something for me."

"Villi..."

"No, it's not dirty stuff. It's serious."

"Okay. What?"

"If he gets mad or things get too heavy, you call me. You pull me right into it."

"I promise. I can do that."

"I'm dead serious. Even if I'm in the middle of a hookup. I'd stop just for you."

"Are you positive about that, Villi?"

Violet smirks a little more.

"Oh, yeah. Even if I'm two strokes away from blowing my load. I'd stop myself just for you."

"You mean... just for Mac?"

"No," I say. "For you, darling."

"You are such a vicious flirt."

"It's all I know," I say. "It's a curse."

“Yeah, right.” Violet sighs and inches away from me. “Damn, I’m a mess right now.”

“A hot mess.”

She looks at me and blushes. “Thanks, Villi.” She wipes the corners of her eyes. “It’s just everything at once. That was scary with Mac. I wasn’t scared of him. Just the situation. I’m happy he’s sleeping. Then I called my sister and I figured she would be all over me. Mad at me.”

“Vera?” I ask.

“Yeah. I would never bring Abby into this stuff. She’s not made for this.”

“Why not?”

“Abby? Seriously? She works, screws guys, and works some more. She has no emotional capability to handle anything real in life.”

“Sounds like my kind of girl,” I say, wiggling my eyebrows.

“You stay the hell away from my sister, Villi,” Violet warns.

Which one, darling?

Abby has nice tits like you do... but Vera...?

“Anyway,” Violet says, “Vera was just... weird. Her voice. Tone. I don’t know. Something just sounded *off*. Does that make sense?”

“I don’t know her well enough to say if you’re right or wrong. But you know her.”

“I thought for sure she would yell at me. In a loving way.”

I'm just about ready to tell Violet about my interaction with her sister when my bedroom door opens.

Standing there is a grumpy Mac.

Groggy and annoyed, like a sleepy bear.

"Morning, Mac," I call out. "Look who I've got in my bed."

"I'm not in the mood," Mac growls.

"I am," I say. "Give me a little kiss, Violet."

Violet puckers her lips, then stands up.

She walks right to Mac and jumps to her toes.

He picks her up and kisses her.

I nod. "Okay. I get it. I'm only good enough for certain things."

"Villi," Violet says, looking back. "Thank you for talking. For being there for me. For us."

She touches Mac's chest.

"Yeah, whatever," I say. "Hey. At the very least... for helping..."

I shrug my shoulders and wiggle my eyebrows.

"What?" Violet asks.

I make the motion for her to lift her shirt.

She looks at Mac.

Mac smiles at her.

I have to admit... there's a second or two where I think this is going to happen.

Why not? Right?

Violet is beautiful.

And she has amazing tits.

Why not show them off?

I'm not going to do anything else.

I'm not going to make a move at her or sneak a picture or ask her to do it over and over.

In fact, if there's one person in this world that she should flash?

It's me.

I rub my hands together, ready for this sight...

Mac picks up Violet and they start to kiss again.

The smile on my face drops.

Mac carries Violet out of my room.

No tits.

Nothing.

I look down at my shorts.

"Sorry, dude," I whisper to my dick.

Is it so much to ask to see one of the Messy Monroe sisters naked?

VERA

I'M LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE AN ADVISOR FOR MY CAREER.

I meet with Margaret occasionally to talk about what I'm doing and what I'd like to be doing.

Margaret has done everything in life.

She owned a business.

She went to law school.

She was a professor.

She lived overseas.

Now she's tenured to Puckford and does a little bit of everything.

That includes offering career advice to those *younger ones* as she calls people like me.

I'm honored to be considered *younger* since I live in a world of college students.

Most of them just turned the legal age to drink last week.

Not really, but you get my point.

One thing about Margaret.

She's always busy.

There's no relaxation.

No down time.

There's no room for anything to go wrong.

"Big picture," she says to me.

She has got to be in her seventies.

She fights time admirably.

Her blood-red lipstick is that of a woman just dumped who is going out to find someone new to steal away her pain.

She obviously gets work done to her face.

It's not full on plastic but you can tell she's throwing punches at time with every paycheck she collects.

Funny enough her hair is black but has plenty of sprinkles of gray in it.

You'd think out of everything to control, your hair would be easiest.

She lets that part go.

Margaret is a mystery.

"Vera," she says. "Come on. Forget whatever is going on in your head. Big picture."

"Well, what I'm doing right now."

"If you came here to lie to me, then just leave," she says. She picks up her phone. "I've got apps ringing and dinging here. Dating apps. What do you think of that?"

I force a smile.

It's not my business but if someone like Margaret is on the same dating apps that I have...?

I suddenly feel even more pathetic than usual.

"You would not believe the amount of guys in their twenties who have a *thing* for women my age," Margaret whispers. "It's remarkable."

"Big picture?" I ask in a nervous voice, desperate to change the subject.

Margaret laughs. Then she stands up. "Give me something, Vera. You're too worried about your family."

"My sister."

"Right."

"My sister is..."

"She's not paying the bills."

"She's going to law school," I defend.

"Are we here to talk about you? Or *Lavender*?"

I smile.

Margaret always calls Violet *Lavender*.

She teases me for being so protective.

"I had something for you," Margaret reminds me.

She lifts an eyebrow.

I look down.

So quick story.

Six months ago there was a job offer coming from Oregon.

A really nice offer too.

Margaret talked me up to the hiring person and even teased me with pictures of the campus.

Freaking Oregon.

So beautiful.

Right near the water too.

A small campus but a really good job offer.

Actual money.

And I would be on my own.

A 'real' professor.

The job was as good as mine.

All I had to do was fly up there for a quick in-person interview and a tour of the campus.

They were even willing to pay for my housing.

I'd have an entire house to myself near campus.

A house!

For free!

What did I do?

I skipped the flight, stayed back home, and spent the day with Violet.

"I'm sorry, Margaret," I say. "I really am. You know how I feel about..."

She nods. "You know, anyone else I would have shown the door a long time ago. But I believe in you. I see you as a strong, confident, single female. I want this for you."

"I'm like a pet to you then," I say.

"Want a treat?" Margaret asks.

I swallow hard.

“Big picture, Vera,” she whispers. “That’s all I care about. And, hey, if you want to be right here, that’s fine. You just can’t build yourself up and then not go for something. You’re wasting my time. There are others I can be helping. I’m sure you realize that.”

“I do realize that, Margaret,” I say. “And I do appreciate everything you’ve done for me. I know I have to look past the —”

My phone starts to vibrate in my bag on my lap.

It starts to vibrate over and over.

I slowly place my bag on the floor.

“What I’m trying to say is that I want—”

My phone vibrates again and again.

I feel myself tighten up.

“Just look at the damn phone, Vera,” Margaret says. “You’re worried about your sister.”

I reach into my bag with speed and glance at the screen.

My heart sinks and I stand up.

“I better just go,” I say and turn.

“Vera,” Margaret calls out.

I sprint out of Margaret’s office.

I look at my phone again and hope it’s just some kind of joke.

I can’t help how I feel though.

That horrible spider-climbing feeling across my back and throughout my body.

Like goosebumps but more evil.

My phone had been going off over and over with the same text.

From Blake.

CANT WAIT TO SEE YOU TONIGHT, VERA!

Over and over...

It's a little scary.

Which is what psycho Blake probably wants.

Desperate for me to respond.

I take a deep breath and slip my phone back into my bag.

Like Margaret just said to me...

I'm a strong, confident, single female.

I can't let anything rattle me.

I refuse to.

There's no way Blake would actually try to do anything to me...

VILLI

WE CRASH ONE OF THE FRAT HOUSES BECAUSE KEVIN OWES US a favor.

We got him some tickets to a hockey game a while back and he brought some girl from his high school to show off how well he's doing now in life.

I guess this girl was the *it* girl back in the day.

Kevin had been crushing on her since middle school.

She came to the hockey game and Kevin spoiled the hell out of her.

After the game he brought her to the locker room, trying to show off some more.

I cannot confirm nor deny that this beautiful girl - *Shayna* - and I ended up in a spare office next to Coach Damon's office...

I'm not sure you want to know what was done in that office.

I'll put it this way, when we were finished with each other, it was quite the treat to see her go back to the locker room and kiss Kevin on the cheek.

Knowing where those lips had been...

Anyway.

We've got the frat house to ourselves.

For the most part.

I guard the door, leaving it open, letting whoever shows up come inside.

Jax put out a notice to the freshmen on the hockey team that they needed to provide food and booze or else they'd be off the team.

Mac and Violet are clinging to one another.

Gabriel is here but he's in a pissy mood.

Dude just needs to get laid if you ask me.

Ruby shows up, winks at me and goes right to Violet.

Mila isn't too far behind.

Of course she has Ward with her.

This douche won't even look at me.

"Hey there, darling," I say to Mila.

I pucker my lips and wink at her.

That gets Ward's attention.

"What did you just call her?" Ward asks.

"Got a problem?" I ask.

"Violet!" Mila calls out instantly.

From the corner of my right eye I see Jax not just approaching, but charging.

I smirk.

Knox appears from nowhere and gets in front of Jax.

“Don’t think this is the right setting for you, buddy,” I say to Ward.

“Yeah, I can see that,” Ward says. “I’m only here because Mila says we need to be.”

“Tugging on that leash, huh?” Jax asks Mila.

Now in some aspects, I do feel bad for Mila.

She’s friends with Ruby and Violet.

She wants to be here.

But damn is she stuck to this Ward guy.

Or maybe he’s stuck to her?

Maybe we should just call Ward by a different name... how about Wart?

Ruby comes back to the door and stands there.

She’s feisty as hell but I know she’s not going to stick up for Ward.

Right?

Ruby points at me. “Can you turn down the asshole meter?”

I guess I’m wrong.

She’s sticking up for Ward.

No, she’s sticking up for Mila. Who is attached to Ward.

“I called her *darling*,” I say. “He’s got his thong twisted up.”

“Oh, you stupid fuck boy,” Ward says to me.

“Fuck boy?” I ask. “That’s what I am?”

“Everyone knows it,” Ward says.

“Ward, that’s enough,” Mila growls. “Come into the other room. I want to see Violet and Mac. We’re here for Mac.”

Which is the truth.

The whole point of this party is to hang with Mac and let him know he’s not alone.

Let him have the chance to talk about his father and all that.

“You’re lucky,” Ward mutters as he starts to walk again.

I grab his arm. “This fuck boy is looking at your girl’s ass. And my oh my, I can see my cock sliding against that ass... over and over...”

Ward lets go of Mila’s hand and turns.

I’ve had a million hockey fights in my life.

I know when a punch is coming.

I also know that Ward has zero experience in fighting.

A quick move to my left and Ward punches a wall.

He yelps in pain and I start to laugh.

“Dude, that was a weak punch,” Gabriel calls out.

“Can you not?” Ruby yells at Gabriel.

“Why don’t you make me?” Gabriel asks.

“I’d rather get drunk and spend the night hanging over a toilet,” Ruby says.

“Oh, come on, get the guy some ice,” Jax says. “His poor little hand is swelling.”

Ward looks at Jax and takes a step.

“That’s enough of that,” Knox says.

He’s the only person coming to their senses.

He motions for the door and shuffles Ward out onto the porch.

I follow and I see someone else on the steps.

So cute and innocent looking.

Glasses on her kind of pale face.

But very flirty eyes.

“Willow,” I say with a nod.

“Party not going so hot?” Willow asks.

“Your brother is getting into trouble already,” Knox says.

“Fuck you,” Ward spats. “I didn’t do a thing. He started it.”

Ward points at me.

I show my hands.

I look at Willow. “I called his girlfriend *darling*. What would happen if I called you that? Huh... *darling*?”

“Don’t flirt with me, Villi,” Willow says.

“I know. Apparently I’m a fuck boy. Ward would lose his mind if I fucked his sister, right?”

Willow gasps.

Ward looks ready to kill me.

“Just get the fuck out of here, dude,” Knox says.

“Mila!” Ward bellows.

“She’s not your property,” I say.

Mila exits the frat house and stands there, annoyed and confused.

“Can you help?” she asks Willow.

“Damn,” Willow says. “Another party busted...” She goes up two more steps and grabs Ward’s shirt. “Come on, idiot. We’re out of here. Leave Mila here.”

“Leave her at a party with a bunch of fucking jocks?” Ward asks.

“Screw you, Ward,” Mila says. “What do you think is going to happen? I’m going to get naked, spread my legs and let them have a turn?”

“Who knows?” Ward asks.

“You piece of shit,” Mila says.

She turns and darts back into the house.

Knox and I instantly go shoulder to shoulder, making it known Ward is not going in there after her.

“Sorry you’re going to miss the party,” Knox says to Willow.

“Make it up to me some other time,” Willow says as she pulls at Ward’s shirt.

Poor Willow drags her brother away.

Knox and I look at each other.

“You know you started that, right?” Knox asks.

“Of course I did,” I say. “Do you think anyone wants that guy here?”

Knox exhales a breath and laughs. “You really are a villain, you know that?”

“And a fuck boy...”

VERA

I DECIDE TO MAKE MYSELF A DINNER AT HOME.

A nice, simple dinner at that.

Some pasta.

Sauce.

Regular white bread.

All the butter I can get on that bread.

Carbs and butter for the win.

Only I'm the one with sauce and no pasta.

How the hell do I not have a box of pasta?

I tell myself it's fine.

I'll just warm up the sauce and dip bread in it.

It's going to be that kind of night for me.

With the day I've had?

I need this.

Or better yet, I can just go for a bottle of wine and hot bath.

Eat first, Vera. Or else you'll be dumb drunk like that night you ended up having to apologize to Abby.

I heat up some sauce in the microwave.

Like I'm a classically trained chef!

I open the drawer and take out the loaf of bread.

Through the clear wrapping I see specs of dark white and green.

“Mold,” I whisper.

So I'm the one with sauce but no pasta and no bread.

The microwave beeps and I open the door to find a nice saucy mess in there.

Spots of red sprayed all over like a crime scene.

I slam the microwave shut and rub my forehead.

This is a perfect time to just break down and cry.

Collapse to the kitchen floor, ball up and just let it all out.

Weep until my body can no longer produce any tears.

I glance up at the cabinet and think about the wine.

Or... Vera... strong... you are strong...

I walk out of the kitchen and find my phone.

It's officially an order out kind of night.

In fact, it's an order out for delivery kind of night.

Which means I order, then drink wine as I wait for my food.

“Perfect,” I say out loud.

I call my favorite pizza place which is only a couple minutes away.

I say the word *delivery* with pride.

I order way too much food for one person.

Large plain pizza.

Fries.

Turkey wrap, extra mayo.

Then I get punched in the gut with being told I'll have to wait close to two hours for delivery.

I feel like freaking the hell out.

Screaming at the girl on the phone.

Why didn't you tell me that before I said what I wanted?

I take a deep breath.

Change of plans.

"I'll come get it," I say. "If that'll be quick."

"You're still looking at close to an hour," the girl says. "I'm really sorry. We're swamped tonight!"

I curl my lip.

Now here's one of the downfalls of living so close to campus.

Some nights places get really busy really quick and don't let up.

A part of me wishes there was a hockey game.

Then I'd get food quicker.

For some reason I get mad at Villi.

As though he can control the hockey schedule.

That just means I'm hungry and delirious.

It also means I need to leave my apartment and go get food.

I chase away all thoughts and think about food.

Yummy, delicious food.

The hot, salty fries.

The gooey cheese on the pizza.

I know I'll take half a bite of the turkey wrap and save the rest of it for lunch tomorrow.

I have money, keys, and my phone.

Then I'm off.

To get some food.

And then to have another crazy night all to myself.

Meaning I'll be full, tipsy, and probably asleep before eleven.

It's a wonder I'm single, huh?

VILLI

SO HERE'S MY CURRENT VIEW.

Violet is sitting on the edge of a table.

Legs and feet dangling.

Hands gripped to the side of the table.

Her arms pushing those tits together.

She's leaning forward, smiling, her eyes mesmerized by the story Mac is telling.

You want to talk about obsessively in love...

Then there's Jax.

Sitting on a counter, a bottle of booze between his legs as he looks around.

He's doing what we call *Jax thinks*.

He's like a deadly snake.

Always observant, waiting to attack.

Knox and Gabriel are locked in on Mac's story.

I guess I should be too.

Mind you there are about another dozen people here at this party.

Or whatever the hell this is for Mac.

He's drinking.

He's calm.

Poor guy just looks so confused and sad though.

"... that's when I put him into the boards," Mac says. "Then Villi rushes over and grabs me. Remember that, Villi?"

"Yeah, man," I say with a nod.

"You told me we couldn't lose me," Mac says.

All eyes then go to me.

I guess that means I'm supposed to finish the story.

Mac nods at me.

We've always had this thing about telling stories like this.

We used to bounce off one another to get a crowd around us.

Of course, the entire purpose was to find the prettiest girls at a party.

The issue now is that Mac has Violet.

And I have no desire for anyone at this party.

That part is the scariest of them all...

Villi? At a party? And not eyeing someone up?

That's usually my cue to leave.

Go find a bar way off campus and have my fun.

Find someone sitting there alone.

Someone ten years older than me.

Maybe more.

Twenty? Sure.

Thirty? Why not?

“Villi,” Mac says.

“I’m thinking,” I lie. “Okay, yeah, got it. So I pull you away from the guy. Tell you we need you. Then you tell me that something needs to be done. It felt like a fucking mob movie or something. What was the guy’s name again? Anderson? Right? Something like that?”

“I don’t remember,” Mac says. “Some punk third liner from, what, Colorado?”

“Yeah,” I say. “He turns and looks up at me. There was something about that look. I slammed my right hand down to his face, dirty from The ice, water, sweat, it’s fucking disgusting. He starts to gag like he’s choking.”

“They stopped the game!” Mac cries out, clapping his hands together. “Turns out the guy had a fucking panic attack. He was so claustrophobic that when Villi covered his face, even for a second, it made him go nuts. And then they wanted to bring in some serious disciplinary action against Villi.”

Everyone looks at me again.

I shrug. “I’m used to it.”

I wink.

Everyone laughs.

Mac goes back to his story and I look at Violet.

I motion for her to come to me.

I'm surprised that she listens.

She jumps off the table and she follows me into another room.

Of course I choose the room where Ruby and Mila are sitting, talking.

Mila is working on a drink.

Ruby looks annoyed.

She stares down Violet and mouths *it's your turn*.

"I have to deal with this," Violet whispers to me.

"I'll go with you," I say.

"Oh. Well, what did you need from me?"

"You know what I need from you, darling," I whisper.

"Villi."

Ruby pops up off the couch and hurries away.

She points to Gabriel and then grabs for his shirt. "You. Hockey jock. Get me a drink right now!"

Gabriel follows Ruby with his tongue practically hanging out.

"Poor Gabriel," Mila says. "Ruby hates jocks."

"Ruby is a spoiled little bitch," I say as I plop down next to Mila.

She gasps and looks at me.

"I don't hold back," I say.

"I can see that," she says.

“And I’m not sorry about earlier. That guy is a loser. A fucking hothead. Not cool at all. You know what I mean, darling?”

“Villi,” Violet says. “Mind if I talk to Mila alone?”

“Oh, right,” I say. I eye Mila up and down for a second. “Hey, if you need someone to get you away from him, I’m your guy. I specialize in ruining relationships. Violet will tell you. She’s secretly in love with me. We’re waiting for the right moment to crush Mac’s soul. Right, darling?”

“Is that what you jerk off to at night?” Violet asks.

“Every night,” I say.

Mila lets out a nervous laugh.

She takes a deep breath. “This is supposed to be about Mac.”

“It’s fine,” I say. “Really.”

“My father is a doctor,” Mila says. “I asked him about it. I don’t know what kind of cancer Mac’s father has. But I…”

She shakes her head.

“What?” I ask.

“I don’t know. Maybe there’s a miracle somewhere.”

“Can your father help?” I ask.

“Villi,” Violet says. “No. He’s not that kind of doctor. And there’s nothing that can be done. Believe me. It’s been mentioned once before.”

Violet and Mila look at each for a second.

Which tells me they’ve talked about Mila’s father somehow saving Mac’s father.

Probably impossible though.

“You two keep staring like that and you better kiss,” I say.
“Give me something to think about later.”

They both look at me with disgust.

That’s my official cue to walk away.

I debate on my next move.

I can’t handle anymore drunken Mac stories.

He’s going through it right now.

Obviously his entire life has revolved around hockey since he was a kid.

Forced by his asshole father.

The one thing he loves more than life itself (but maybe not Violet) is the one thing that’s going to make him very wealthy for the rest of his life.

And now his father is definitely dying and they have no real relationship other than hockey...

Believe me, I care.

I’m not that much of a piece of shit.

I love Mac. I really do.

And this ride is going to be horrible for all of us.

But if I’m being real here - *which I should be since this is my fucking story, right?*

If I’m being real, I have something else on my mind.

It’s like a little breadcrumb that can possibly lead me along a trail.

What the fuck does that mean, Villi?

Are you in some fairy tale?

Maybe I am.

Because my mind races back to Vera.

I keep thinking about what Violet said.

That Vera sounded *off* on the phone.

That something's wrong with her.

Now I would safely assume that pre-Mac tearing up Violet's sweet cherry, she would have been there to check on Vera.

But now?

I can't help but wonder who is checking up on Vera.

I hear Mila choke up as she calls Ward a *fucking moron*.

Mac is trying to tell another story but his *s*'s are all slurred.

One peek and I see that Jax has been feeding Mac booze.

Fucking Jax.

Knox is talking to someone I don't know.

And Gabriel... he leans across the counter to say something to Ruby.

Ruby throws her drink in Gabriel's face, cup and all.

Then she slaps him.

She grabs a bottle off the counter, turns and struts away.

All in all, it's a pretty normal party I suppose.

There's plenty to go around.

Booze and girls.

I just can't seem to shake the thought of Vera.

I tell myself if I can figure out where she lives, then I can check on her.

I go outside and can't believe how easy it is to find Vera.

Maybe it should feel wrong. Or weird. Or something...

Her name is searchable.

Everything is public.

And there's a picture of her holding a key, smiling ear to ear outside an apartment building.

I can't help myself.

Let's be clear, darling, I am not a stalker or creeper.

There's just something I'm feeling...

I just need to know Vera is okay tonight.

VILLI

EVEN FOR ME, THIS IS BONKERS CRAZY.

I keep telling myself to just leave.

Go back to the party.

Find someone cute and ready and have a great night.

Fuck, find Valerie.

Remember her?

She was topless and grinding on you...

Better yet, if I really want to satisfy that secret urge of mine, there's plenty of places to go to right now.

I have some clothes in the backseat of my car.

A bottle of cologne in the center console.

Toss on a blank shirt or hoodie, wander into a bar and do my thing.

Plenty of beautiful women out there tonight feeling a little bit of sting on their hearts. That lonely feeling. Looking for an

adventure. Something to tell their friends or to just keep to themselves as a deep, dark secret.

I'm fine with being your deep, dark secret, darling.

I grip the steering wheel and take a deep breath.

If only I got to the party for Mac and just started drinking like everyone else.

Then I wouldn't have been able to drive.

That's what hits me hard too.

Almost as though there's some kind of subconscious thing going on here.

Ever just have a feeling? Like that wild gut feeling?

That's what I have right now.

I'm not being some creepy kind of guy or anything like that.

This isn't some college guy obsessing over a professor.

Fuck that.

I'm a grown man.

Vera is a grown woman.

Years older than me? Sure. But who cares, right?

I tell myself one more minute.

That's it.

Now I would be a liar if I didn't admit somewhere in my mind I'm thinking about Vera in a different way too...

I walk up to her door.

I knock.

She's pissed that I'm there.

Demands to know how I found out where she lives.

I show her my phone.

Tease her and tell her she's too easy...

I chase away those thoughts.

I can save them for a later time.

Either when I'm alone or when I'm with someone else -
and pretending it's Vera.

That's when I see her.

I see Vera.

She's getting out of her car.

She's carrying a paper bag by a handle.

And a pizza.

It looks like a decent amount of food.

All for herself?

Probably not.

Which means...

I take a deep breath and feel a rumbling in my chest.

Vera goes into the apartment building.

Not even five seconds later another car pulls up.

A guy steps out of the car.

He looks around and runs his hands through his hair.

He seems jumpy. Nervous.

He quickly crouches and checks himself in the side mirror
of his car.

Then he walks forward and looks into Vera's car.

It's... weird...

The guy looks up at the apartment building.

My gut sinks.

My heart sinks.

Something just doesn't feel right here at all.

As the guy approaches the apartment building I quickly get out of my car.

My hands ball up into fists.

Villi. Sorry, dude, but this is jealousy.

This is pure jealousy right now...

Maybe it is.

I'm not exactly used to feeling jealousy.

I don't get jealous ever.

Even with Violet as an example.

Of course I want to see her tits.

And of course I want to play with them, kiss them and nuzzle her nipples.

But it's fine that it won't happen.

She's got Mac. Mac has her.

I love teasing them both and that's it.

This feeling I have now though...

She's got a guy coming over.

You saw all the food she had.

She just got back home and is trying to make it seem like she's been waiting a while for this guy.

Maybe it's one of those fuck-me-one-night-stand things from a dating app.

Guy is coming over to eat a slice of pizza, then eat her pussy.

I curl my lip.

I shake my head.

Just seeing that guy for a few seconds, there's no way he knows what to do with Vera.

Not that I have any experience myself.

I beg myself to just get into the car and leave.

I know what's happening now...

Vera is having some guy over.

They'll eat, talk, drink, and fuck.

Maybe he'll spend the night and they'll fuck again in the morning.

Or maybe he'll toss his load into a condom, then leave.

I can't bring myself to leave though.

Jealousy aside... there's just... something...

I tell myself the worst thing now?

I knock on the door.

She answers.

I say something dumb, just being myself

Flirty and maybe a little mean.

Just to know she's okay.

Even if she's going to fuck this loser of a guy.

Villi... you sound like a full-blown stalker now...

I feel like I belong on some Netflix show.

It's just that I can't help it.

My gut instinct is never wrong.

And right now my gut instinct is telling me this guy isn't right.

Something is wrong.

Something is very wrong.

I can't just leave now.

I have to see Vera...

VERA

I STRUGGLE WITH MY KEY TO UNLOCK THE DOOR.

I can easily just put something on the floor and make this process easier.

But I'm stubborn.

Somewhere in the recess of my soul I'm demanding a victory.

I couldn't make myself dinner.

I couldn't get dinner delivered.

So - dammit - I'm going to open my fucking door while balancing all the food in my hands.

I stick my tongue out and wince as I try to find the keyhole.

A hand touches my hand.

"You don't need to do that alone," a voice says.

I don't know how I manage to keep holding onto everything.

I turn my head and Blake smiles at me.

Yeah. That Blake.

The crazy psycho who's been texting me...

“Let me help,” Blake says. “That’s what I’m here for.”

He sticks the key into the lock and turns it.

“By the way, it would be really stupid to scream right now,” he whispers. “Not sure you want to chance what happens then.”

Chills race down my back.

Blake opens my apartment door.

“Well, let’s go inside,” he says. “See what you got us for dinner. That sure is a lot of food. I mean, if it was just for one person. Right?”

My teeth chatter as Blake basically pushes me into my own apartment.

I know there’s the thing called *flight or fight*...

But I have to admit.

I’m frozen right now.

I’m trying to figure out what Blake is doing here and why and what he wants and how this is going to turn out.

I’m not sure I have the guts to throw food in his face and run to the kitchen to get a knife.

That kind of stuff seems sort of easy in a movie, doesn’t it?

Like you know the person isn’t going to get hurt.

They’re the main character!

This is real life though.

Blake walks right to the kitchen.

I kick my door shut and follow him.

“Blake,” I say. “You shouldn’t be here.”

There you go, Vera.

The voice of reason!

That sounded in Abby’s voice.

If this were Abby she would have attacked Blake in the hallway.

But not me.

Nope.

I let Blake open my door and push me inside.

Now I’m watching him open the cupboard door and reach for wine glasses.

He knows where they are.

This was kind of a routine for a minute for him. For us.

“Blake?” I ask.

He turns around. “Yeah?”

“I said you shouldn’t be here,” I say.

Blake places one glass on the counter behind him.

The other one he purposely hits off the counter, breaking it.

He holds the glass up and smiles. “Look at how easily that broke...”

“Blake. I’m not sure what you think...”

“Oh, it’s not about the past, Vera,” he says. “It’s about right now. I’ll pour you a glass of wine. We’ll sit down and eat. We

can talk. See where the night goes. I think I'm worthy of that, don't you?"

"No," I say. "I have food only for myself."

"For yourself. All that for yourself?"

"You think someone is coming over here?" I ask.

"Should I check the rooms?"

Blake steps toward me, broken glass in hand.

I toss the food on the counter and step back.

My heart is racing.

Or maybe it's been racing the entire time but I'm just noticing it.

I don't know what to do here.

Barricade myself in a room?

Run out of the apartment?

Scream for help?

He said not to scream for help though.

That could be a trick.

Or maybe he's got a weapon...

"Oh, am I worrying you?" Blake asks. He drops the broken glass to the floor. "I don't want to worry you. See?"

He shows me his hands.

"You should just go," I say.

"Do you have someone coming over? Are you fucking someone else? Is that what it is, Vera? Huh? Are you really fucking cheating on me?"

"There's no cheating," I say. "We're not together, Blake."

“Says who?”

“Says me.”

“I don’t have to accept that.”

“Blake, just leave. Please. Please don’t make this worse. Please don’t have something bad happen.”

“Are you threatening me, Vera? I don’t like to be threatened. I get nervous. I get jumpy. I get... mean...” He steps toward me. “I get fucking mean.”

“I’m calling the police,” I say. “You can deal with them.”

“The fuck you are,” Blake growls.

He lunges for me.

I jump back and run toward the couch.

Why not the door?!

You dummy!

Now I feel like the helpless girl in a horror movie.

Blake runs toward the couch.

He thinks about jumping over it but pauses.

I run across my apartment and back into the kitchen.

I made a quick grab for a drawer and now I have a knife in my hand.

Blake runs into the kitchen and I turn.

“Holy fuck, Vera!”

“Bastard,” I manage to say. “You leave... right now...”

“You won’t do a thing with that,” Blake says. He smiles. “You’re a pushover, Vera. You’re easy. Don’t be stupid right now. You stab me? What did I do wrong? I didn’t break into

your apartment. You're acting crazy. Help! She's got a knife!"
His voice gets louder. "Hurry! Someone! Vera! No!"

"You fucking psycho," I whisper.

I keep retreating back.

Out of the kitchen.

Into the living room.

"I'm going to ruin your life," Blake says. "You can't stop me either, Vera. I hope you stab me right now. I really do. We're going to be in each other's lives forever. You need to get over yourself. Whatever this little rebellious thing is. You think you can dump me? No. I'll make that decision."

I'm close to the door.

Close enough to make a move.

It feels weird though leaving my apartment.

Leaving Blake in here.

I look for a second at the door.

Blake charges at me.

I let out a scream.

He's inches from grabbing me.

I freeze up again and can't even muster the nerve to stab the crazy asshole.

VERA

IT WAS THE SECOND TIME BLAKE AND I HAD SEX THAT HE grabbed my arms.

Hard.

He pressed my body down to the bed with force.

I grabbed his wrists instantly and shook my head.

That kind of move I did not approve of.

Without hesitation, Blake opened his grip, let my arms go, then touched my face. Gently.

And we had sex.

I think about that as Blake has my arms in his hold again.

We're obviously far from having sex... *or are we?*

My heart is beyond climbing up into my throat.

My heart is all over the place.

I'm not sure if I'm going to die or be... assaulted.

Either way, it definitely had the undertones of some kind of death.

Whether it's all of my soul or just a piece.

And I'm still holding the knife in my hand.

I'm sure if I thrust it forward I can hurt Blake.

Even that... that move... is life changing.

Stabbing someone. Hurting someone.

Putting myself in that position.

All I picture are police, then detectives.

Me sitting in some small room with a shitty cup of coffee, being questioned up and down.

Missing work.

Needing to take some kind of leave of absence.

I have no protection or tenure at the university so I'll lose my job.

Rumors will spread too.

Miss Monroe stabbed a guy!

It's terrible that my mind is acting this way as Blake is holding me and pushing me toward a wall.

"Either drop the knife or I'm going to make you kiss it," Blake growls. "You think you can break things off with me? Just forget about me like that?"

"You were mean to the waitress," I blurt out. "And you didn't tip her!"

Blake throws his head back and laughs. "Now that's rich. That's the craziest fucking excuse I ever heard for dumping someone. Look at you, Vera! Look at how sweet you are! I

can't live without you." Blake pulls me closer to me. "We'll go out right now. Order the most expensive thing on the menu. I'll tip the waitress the cost of the meal. That's a one-hundred-percent tip. How's that?"

"If you don't let me go in three seconds, I'm going to knee you in the balls and then stab you," I say.

Finally! Some fire!

Get him, Vera!

I hear that in Abby's voice.

I have no idea why there's this sudden rush of *fight back* in me.

"Oh, I want you to touch my balls, Vera," Blake says. "I want you to lick them too. I want you to put them in your mouth and pretend they're ice cubes."

I feel like I'm going to vomit.

In my head I've already counted to three two different times.

I finally lift my left knee and—

Blake's right hand moves down and pushes my knee away.

Now I have to stab the bastard.

The knife shakes in my hand as I give myself a one second window to just do it.

The apartment door suddenly opens.

Like a category five hurricane reaching landfall.

The door smashes against the wall.

I let out a scream.

Blake looks back for one second.

I lose my breath and ability to make any more noise.

Villi is in my apartment.

VILLI

I JUST KNEW...

The vibe in me when I throw open the door...

Then I see everything clearly.

This guy holding onto Vera.

Vera holding onto a knife.

A knife!

The look in her eyes...

Pure and utter terror.

I know she's going through her last thoughts, thinking she's about to die.

I have no idea who this guy is.

A burglar? A stalker? A crazy ex?

I just know if I don't get him away from Vera *right fucking now* something awful is going to happen.

There's a very small second of time when both Vera and this guy completely freeze up.

I launch myself at the guy.

I know nothing about him.

I don't know if he has a weapon or not.

It doesn't matter to me.

All I know is that he's trying to hurt Vera.

My right hand fits right around his throat.

His eyes go wide with shock.

He tries to punch me in the stomach but it does nothing to me.

I thrust my right arm with all my force and throw the guy off his feet.

I quickly turn my head. "Name."

My voice growls.

Vera gasps.

"Blake," she says and then she covers her mouth.

I turn back and charge toward him.

Blake.

Blake grabs a bag of food and throws it at me.

I punch the bag out of the air, sending what I assume is Vera's sandwich sailing through the air.

Then I pick up my pace because I don't want this guy to have a chance to get a knife or some glass to throw at me.

Speaking of which, I see a broken wineglass on the floor.

I catch up to him in a second and grab his shirt.

I pull him toward me.

“Listen, dude,” Blake says.

I pick him up with ease and slam him to the floor.

His back arches and he groans in pain.

I bring my right foot into the air and stomp down on his stomach.

He rolls to his right.

I grab him by the back of his shirt and pull him to his feet.

I punch him in the ribs with my right hand, then my left.

His hands are fumbling all over the place.

Trying to swing at me.

Trying to find something to lean on.

The terror that had been on Vera’s face is now on his face.

“I’m just getting started, you piece of shit,” I say.

My left hand grabs the top of his shirt and I pull him toward me as I punch with my right.

That’s the best kind of punch if you ask me.

You get the strength of your own punch and the momentum of pulling the person toward you.

Blake’s nose explodes like smashing a strawberry against a wall.

His head snaps back and he lets out a crying sound that makes me laugh.

I peek over my right shoulder and see Vera watching.

That tells me she wants me to keep going.

That tells me this guy deserves this beating more than I can possibly understand.

It also hints that this guy is probably an ex or a soon-to-be ex.

Then I think about this guy *with* Vera.

That's right.

Together.

Fucking.

His hands touching her body.

Fingers sliding between her legs.

Mouth moving over her tits.

It enrages me even more.

He's just standing there now, cupping his face.

His eyes staring at me.

"Not done yet," I say.

"Please, fuck, no," Blake cries out.

I jump toward him, my right hand open wide.

I slam my hand to his face, driving his head back against a wall.

My left fist punches him in the ribs again.

I swear I feel something crack or shatter.

Blake turns, grabbing for his side.

He's trying to fall to his knees.

I grab the back of his shirt and keep him standing.

He looks at me.

Terror washes across his face.

He shows me his hands.

“Please, man,” he whispers. “I swear. She’s all yours.”

“You think this is for her affection?”

Blake shakes his head. “No. I just... I just meant...”

“You’re not tough anymore, Blake. Why? Can’t handle a fight with someone with a cock? You can only scare women?”

“That wasn’t...”

“Don’t lie to me, Blake,” I say. “Or else you’ll never talk again.”

“Vera?” Blake whimpers. “Vera? Can you...”

“Fucking loser,” I say.

I punch Blake in the stomach.

His knees give out.

I’m still holding him by the back of his shirt.

I finally release my hold and let him fall.

I drop down to my right knee and take a deep breath.

Then I unleash.

A fury of left uppercuts, hitting him wherever I felt like it.

Blake cries.

He literally cries.

Weeping and begging and mumbling to himself.

I pat his back. “Okay, Blake. Time to talk now. Look at me.”

Blake has his hands flat against the floor.

He turns his head and looks at me.

His face is fucked up.

Good.

As far as I'm concerned, he's lucky he can see and move his jaw freely.

"This is how it works," I say. "You'll never forget me. You'll never forget tonight. This moment. That's a good thing. I'm offering you a good thing, Blake. I'm actually a good guy here. How about that? But I have to be mean for a second. Is that okay?"

Blake nods.

I get closer to him. "If you come around here again, I'll have to kill you. I'd kill you right now but Vera is watching. Afraid. You scared her. And you're never going to scare her again."

I jump up and Blake cries again.

I pick him up to his feet one last time.

And I show him the door... literally.

VERA

YOU JUST LET HIM IN AND DO THIS?

Are you insane?

First off, he's a student at the college.

He's in your class!

He's one of the biggest college hockey stars in the country!

What the fuck are you thinking, Vera?

This isn't college.

This isn't high school.

You're an adult.

There's a way to...

Nothing of that makes sense at all.

Not with the way Blake had been looking at me and grabbing me.

And now?

Villi tosses Blake against the door.

The heavy thud makes me jump.

Blake stumbles back a couple steps and looks at me.

I gasp at the sight of his face.

His nose looks crooked and swollen.

His right eye has a deep half circle under it that's a sickening color purple.

A deathly looking purple color in fact.

It looks like Blake wants to say something to me.

I lift the knife up and point it at him.

He's defeated.

He stumbles toward the door.

Villi opens it for him and just like that, Blake is gone.

Villi shuts the door. He locks it.

I stare at the door.

I can't help but just stare at the door.

I can't blink.

I can't think.

Apparently I can rhyme though, huh?

A hand touches my right shoulder.

I let out a scream and turn and thrust the knife at Blake.

Wait.

It's not Blake.

It's Villi.

He somehow jumps back and the knife cuts air and not his shirt and skin.

At the exact same time - somehow - Villi places his right hand to my wrist.

He turns me a little so the knife is pointing away from him.

“That’s right, darling, just look at me,” Villi says. “You just stare right at me. And don’t worry about it. You’re not the first person to want to stab me, Vera. I bet you’re going to want to stab me many times as we get to know each other.”

He smirks at me.

My hand is shaking.

Villi touches the knife. “Pretty sure we should get rid of this. No need for it. Not with me around. Okay?”

I slowly start to nod.

My jaw quivers.

I open my hand and Villi takes the knife.

“I wasn’t going to...” I manage to say.

“I get it, Vera. I’m not questioning a thing. You’re tough.”

I shake my head.

“Are you fucking serious? Look at you? Defending your apartment the way you did.” Villi inches closer to me. “And nothing like that is ever going to happen again. Ever.”

Villi grabs my hand.

He has this amazing firm, strong grip.

But it’s not a mean grip though.

It’s protective.

I look down at our hands touching.

A million thoughts race through my head all at once.

Villi steps closer to me.

I look past Villi.

Somewhere in my brain I can't comprehend the entire moment.

Vera, hello?

This wildly hot guy named Villain just saved you.

And you can't be this stupid... can you?

You know why he's getting closer to you...

He's scared you were going to get hurt.

You have the moment of a lifetime right now!

That voice fades and fades.

I look at the kitchen.

I nod.

I can feel Villi closer to me.

I can smell him.

I feel safe.

Just rattled over what happened, that's all.

Plus, this isn't some dirty movie where a guy shows up, helps out, and then everyone gets naked.

But it could be!

I pull my hand from Villi's grip.

He doesn't protest for a second.

"I have to clean up," I whisper.

I walk right by the sexy college hockey player who may have just saved my life.

If he was smart, he would just leave.

I'm not the woman Villi thinks I am.

I can feel him staring at me as I walk to my kitchen.

I already know he's not going to leave yet.

And I'm secretly okay with it.

VILLI

I GIVE HER SPACE FOR A LITTLE BIT.

I just watch her.

The way she hurries into the kitchen and then freezes and looks down at the floor.

There's food on the floor.

Glass on the floor.

I'm sure there's got to be a handful of droplets of blood too.

I can't look away from Vera and I can't find a good excuse to leave either.

In my fucked-up head I figure Vera and I should be naked by now.

You know the drill...

I save her life.

She's all amped up.

Next thing I know we're in her bed.

She's clawing at my back.

Begging for my cock.

Demanding I fuck her harder and harder.

I remind myself that Vera is a woman.

A real woman.

I watch as she wraps her hand in a large collection of paper towels.

She wets the paper towel.

Then she crouches down and gently wipes the floor.

Collecting the small pieces of glass.

I look around her apartment and check for any other damage.

There is none.

Which means I made the right decision.

Or maybe I was too late.

I could have ran after Blake and stopped him before he got to her apartment.

My jaw tightens.

I can't go back and change a thing.

I walk into the kitchen and crouch down next to Vera.

"Hey," I whisper.

She looks at me.

A red color floods her cheeks.

"It's okay," I say.

You don't have to be embarrassed. Or afraid.

“I have to get this all cleaned up,” Vera says. “These little pieces of glass are a pain to deal with. Stepping on them would suck.”

“I bet. Let me help you out.”

I reach for the floor and Vera swats my hand away.

“You should go,” she blurts out.

My back stiffens.

That’s it? I’m supposed to leave? Just like that?

After what she’s been through I know I probably should just stand up and leave.

It’s just...

I can’t.

I can’t leave her like this.

I may not be an expert on the inner workings of the beautiful Vera Monroe but I can tell a lot just by the few times I’ve seen her and talked to her.

She’ll clean her entire apartment and do everything in her power to convince herself nothing is wrong. That nothing bad happened.

She won’t get a wink of sleep.

She’ll be a wreck tomorrow and it’ll make things spiral.

“I can’t leave you, darling,” I whisper.

“Villi...”

“I said I can’t,” I say.

I reach for her hand.

She doesn’t pull away.

That's what I thought, darling.

I'm not going anywhere.

“I can at least help you get things cleaned up,” I whisper.
“It’s not fair to just bail on you like this.”

“Villi...”

Look, I can stay all night and listen to her repeat my name
over and over.

I slowly tighten my grip on her hand.

Letting her know I’m here.

I'm right here.

She takes a deep breath and looks down for a second.

She gasps.

“Villi,” she says in a louder voice. She now grabs my
hand. “Your hand. Your... knuckles...”

I glance down.

“Oh, yeah,” I say.

My middle and ring finger knuckles are tore up.

They look worse than they feel.

Skin torn up. Bleeding.

All thanks to hitting Blake’s face and body over and over.

“You’re bleeding,” Vera says.

Her voice shakes a little.

She’s unsure of this.

Unsure of me.

She’s not a fan of violence at all.

I'm not saying I am a fan of it... but hell, sometimes in life... things happen...

She won't stop looking at my knuckles.

She won't stop gently shaking her head either.

I reach with my other hand and gently touch under her chin.

I make Vera look at me.

Her eyes are bright. Kind of innocent. Fucking adorable.

She's way out of her element.

That's okay.

I might be too.

“Don't worry about it,” I whisper to her. “That guy? He's lucky I didn't kill him. Because believe me, darling, I wanted to kill him.”

She blinks a few times.

Her lips quiver.

Seems like a fucking perfect time to offer my professor a passionate kiss, huh?

VERA

LOOK, I MAY BE THE IN BETWEEN KIND OF MONROE WHEN YOU look at me and my sisters.

Violet was a virgin up until about three minutes ago, right?

And Abby?

Sometimes I swear when she gets wet it must taste like ice cold beer the way guys flock to her.

Now me?

I'm in between.

Far from innocent and yet far from pointing to a stranger and fucking him in a bar bathroom without ever finding out his name.

(And then be panicked that I'm pregnant because I'm ten days late... which means I call my older sister for advice and then make her buy seven different pregnancy tests, which are all negative, and then cry and worry and finally get my period three days after that and just send my older sister a text message of a blood droplet emoji and that's it...)

Anyway, I can tell Villi is going to make a move on me.

And I can tell all the thoughts running through his head.

I don't teeter on the line between right and wrong.

I don't get anywhere near it.

In other words, I quickly stand up and walk away from Villi.

If he wants to have some sick fantasy of banging his professor he can go home, close his eyes, and stick his hand down his pants.

As I think that, a sudden, warm chill tickles my lower back.

It blossoms and climbs up to the back of my neck.

Goosebumps tattoo my skin as I throw out the paper towels covered with invisible shards of broken glass.

Great. Now I'm thinking about Villi in his bed, touching himself.

I grab more paper towels, dampen them and go back to the same spot.

Villi is standing now.

That's not a great angle either.

I'm crouched down in front of him.

And he's standing way too close to me.

I know he's doing it on purpose.

I know he wants me to look up at him.

I tell myself the guy has watched way too much porn.

I'm not going to look up at him, then reach for his jeans, open them and pull his thick co...

"Okay then," I announce, scrambling the thoughts in my head. "Good enough I guess. I can clean it better later or tomorrow. I'm tired."

I stand up, then look up at Villi.

I need to thank him but I can't find the words right now.

I don't want a single thing taken the wrong way.

For some reason the word *pizza* pops into my head.

And slips out of my mouth.

"Pizza..."

"Pizza?" Villi asks.

"Yeah. Pizza. I ordered a pizza. My eyes were bigger than my stomach I guess. Well, actually I was planning on taking the sandwich to work tomorrow."

I let out a nervous laugh.

Villi just stares at me.

"But, yeah, you should take some pizza with you," I say. "Take a slice. Take two!"

My voice goes up in volume and I even touch Villi's right pec.

Through his t-shirt my fingertips feel rock-hard muscle.

I quickly pull my hand away from him but Villi moves quick.

He grabs my hand.

Swiping it out of mid-air and grabbing tight but not so tight that it hurt me.

That's when time completely freezes up.

My mind makes this weird snapping sound...

... and I see Villi attacking Blake.

Villi was protecting me.

Keeping me safe.

Whatever the reason behind it, he still did it.

For me.

To help me.

I see Villi throwing Blake.

He literally threw the man!

Blake flew through the air like someone crumpled up a piece of paper and tossed it toward the trashcan.

I see Villi just tossing Blake around like he was nothing.

Punching.

Blake bleeding.

Villi telling Blake what to do.

It's just a lot.

All at once too.

I tell myself to make a decision.

And make it fast.

Hurry the fuck up, Vera!

I pull my hand away from Villi. Again.

I step away from Villi. Again.

The voice of reason and the one that can quell any urge with simple reality... that voice gets suddenly silent.

I hurry and turn away from Villi.

For a split second I have an entire plan of walking through my apartment, away from Villi, and telling him to leave again.

I don't make it half a step when I feel Villi grab my arm.

This time with a little bit of daring force.

He spins me around.

He pulls me toward him, releasing his grip on my arm.

His hands touch my face.

This is all happening too fast.

He's so commanding.

He's so... in need of me...

I feel his fingertips gently pull at the back of my head.

I manage the most pathetic whimper ever.

And then, Villi kisses me.

VILLI

I FINALLY FUCKING HAVE HER.

My hands touching her face.

My lips against her lips.

She parts her lips and lets out a soft sigh.

I part my lips to allow my devilish tongue a taste of her.

The tip of my tongue gently flicks against her lips.

My fingertips dig harder into the back of her head and neck.

Not with force.

With protection. Care.

Making it known how fucking patiently I've waited for this moment.

I overpower her lips with mine.

I pull back and allow that sweet wet kissing sound to echo around the kitchen.

I allow a second to pass by, our eyes locking tight.

I search for regret behind those honey looking eyes of hers
and there's none.

I kiss her again.

This time, harder.

My tongue sweeps across her lips.

Teasing her mouth a little.

I feel her chin quiver as she opens it.

I drop my hands down from her face.

My body is on fire.

I'm not sure I know how to explain what this feels like.

It's not like the other women I've been with.

The unhappy wives.

The frustrated and burned-out mothers.

*Women who felt forgotten by the lives they committed to
and just needed a reminder that they were capable of feeling
something.*

I touch her arms.

Then I grab her by the sides.

I pull Vera against me.

Our kiss breaks.

She lets out a small groan.

I kiss her again.

Our tongues collide at the same time.

I swear I feel her teeth begin to nibble at my top lip.

A growl escapes from the depths of my throat and soul.

My cock rages, no choice but to climb down the right leg of my jeans.

Thickening, throbbing, the muscles in the backs of my legs tightening.

My brain and cock sending signals to one another.

The almost instinctual need to *fuck*.

I feel my hips wanting to *fuck*.

I pick Vera up with ease.

Our kiss breaks once more.

She lets out a gasp.

Her eyes grow twice as big.

Her lips now red, puffy, proof of the kisses we've shared.

I lift her even more, allowing her to be taller than me.

I feel the right side of my lip curling up.

Evil. Mean.

I'm *Villain*.

But the thing is - I would never hurt her.

I would never hurt Vera.

Not for a second.

My lip curl is only because I want to protect her and I would kill for her.

I feel her fingers claw at my arms as I hold her up in the air.

I can fucking stand here all night.

Holding her.

Showing her how strong I am.

Showing her how safe she is.

But if I hold her above me, then I can't kiss her.

I can't touch her.

I can't get everything I'm craving right now...

I take a step and gently sit Vera on the counter.

She's eye level with me.

I move between her legs.

I bump against the counter, then move my left hand to the small of her back and pull her closer to me.

I want to feel her against me.

I want to feel that impossible warmth between her legs.

That sweet and juicy honeycomb...

And I want her to feel the swell of my cock.

Pressing against the inside of my jeans and against hers.

I kiss her again.

This time it's much more familiar.

I kiss her hard.

My tongue flirts a little deeper.

Her tongue is cute... the way she moves...

I can't wait to feel her tongue against my cock.

My hands find a comfortable resting place just above her hips.

Oh, Miss Monroe, these hips of yours...

I don't want to think about any other men who have had the honor of touching you here.

Naked.

Bare hands against bare hips.

It'll drive me insane with jealousy.

We keep kissing.

She has yet to stop me.

And I've kept my composure too.

It's a shock she's not naked from the waist down and I'm not writing my name - *VILLAIN* - with the tip of my tongue against her clit.

My right hand however is ready to make another move.

My fingertips gently move one by one, curling under her shirt - like the legs of a spider...

Mischievous and perhaps deadly.

My hand climbs under her shirt, touching soft, warm skin.

Inside my jeans, my cock is pulsing.

Raging and throbbing.

I growl deep in my throat.

I nibble at Vera's bottom lip and pull away from the kiss just so I can see her lips before I kiss them again.

I've never wanted to go so slow yet fuck so fast in my entire life.

And in the middle of my chest there's a fluttering of excitement.

Wondering just how far this is going to go tonight.

VERA

THERE'S A MOMENT WHEN I CAN'T FORM A SINGLE THOUGHT.

Mostly because there's no need to form any thoughts.

I'm caught up in a moment.

I think I like being caught up in a moment...

Villi.

You're with Villi.

How does he know how to kiss so good?

How does his tongue move the way it does...

Oh, wait, there are the thoughts!

Has anyone ever had an orgasm just from making out?

Did I really just think that?

Making out?

I'm making out with Villi?

His hands are tame yet flirty.

One hand holding my side.

The other starting its exploration under my shirt.

He's not *grabby*. He's not over-the-top and moving like he's never done this before.

You know what I mean by that, right?

You know how some guys are all calm and cool and then at the first thought of touching a boob they forget how to act.

They turn into almost like cavemen and just start grunting and grabbing and smacking their lips together at the thought of touching, seeing, and kissing a nipple.

Villi is not like that.

His large, strong hand is touching my ribs now.

Now that I've let the thoughts do their thing, they are running wild.

Villi's tongue swirls inside my mouth in a way that I don't even know how to describe.

He gently bites at my bottom lip and pulls back.

The sound of the kiss echoes around the kitchen.

He puts his forehead to mine.

Now we're just staring at each other.

My lips are tingling. I think they're even throbbing.

It's almost like I got stung by a bee or something.

Nope. No bee.

Just stung by Villi's lust.

He turns his head a little and brushes his lips against mine.

As he does so, he sighs.

He. Fucking. Sighs.

He like sighs into my mouth... if that makes sense...

A chill works its way through my entire body.

He kisses me again.

A slow but very hot kiss.

He has total control because he wants it. And because he takes it.

Villi is not shy. Villi is not afraid.

And maybe this is Abby's voice talking but is there anything hotter than when a man knows what he wants and just takes it?

As Villi kisses me again, his right hand begins to move.

Up.

Up my shirt some more.

Fingertips touching my bra.

He begins to trace the line of my bra.

My skin dances with goosebumps.

My brain swims, struggles, spins...

Villi's fingertips begin to move under my bra.

A switch goes off in my head.

One that's going to make everyone groan and hate me.

But that's okay.

I hurry and place my hands to Villi's chest and push him away.

He steps right back and his hands leave my body.

There's a sudden ache of abandonment but I ignore it.

“Villi, no,” I manage to say. “You have to leave.”

“I can’t do that,” Villi says, showing off his rebellious side again. “I cannot leave you alone, Vera.”

“This isn’t going to happen.”

“I’m still not leaving.”

“Villi.”

“What I just witnessed? Are you fucking kidding me?”

Villi moves closer to me again.

His hands touch my face.

I freeze up and gasp.

I can’t help but admire this situation.

How stubborn and mean and protective Villi is.

How I’ve never had someone act like this before with me.

I feel like I’m the only person in the world.

I come to my senses once more, grab his wrists and pull his hands from my face.

“You’re sleeping on the couch, okay?”

Villi smiles. “What?”

“You want to stay? Fine. You’re going to sleep on the couch.”

There’s a pause.

My mind feels loud.

What are you doing, Vera?

Even if he sleeps on the couch, this is wrong!

Villi laughs and shakes his head.

“Something funny to you?” I ask.

“Very. I have never once in my life been asked or told to sleep on a couch.”

“Oh?”

“If I’m in a woman’s place and I can take her sweet tongue and taste her lips and I’ve felt her body... I’m not sleeping on the couch.”

“This time you are,” I say.

His eyes widen.

I jump from the counter, then go up to my toes.

I have no idea what I’m doing at first... or why...

I plant my lips against Villi’s cheek.

I guess I’m the one taking charge now.

Villi grabs my sides and squeezes.

I gasp, then suck in a deep breath.

There’s a surge of *something* that collides inside my body.

Instantly, my nipples are tight. Perked. Pressing against my bra and shirt.

I quickly jump away from Villi.

“You’re my student,” I remind him.

“I’ll drop the class,” he says.

“No, Villi. No.”

I step back from him.

“I guess I’m sleeping on the couch then,” he says.

That gives me relief.

Knowing I won't be alone tonight.

I can't come right out and say that.

But just knowing...

Because of that relief, the entire night quickly plays through my head.

Strip away Villi being here, kissing and touching me, and trying to feel me up...

I think about Blake.

What happened.

How close I had been to getting hurt.

Really hurt too.

Something really bad was going to happen tonight with Blake if Villi didn't show up.

I feel it crush my chest.

A tightness from my throat down through the chest and down into my stomach.

I mouth the words *good night* to Villi, then turn and hurry away.

I have to get away from Villi.

Not because of all the touching and kissing.

I don't want Villi to see me cry.

VILLI

I MAY BE SHALLOW AND RUDE AND WHATEVER ELSE ANYONE
wants to call me, but I'm not an idiot.

The look on Vera's face as she turned away.

The way she took off.

Running toward her bedroom.

I know she's about to cry.

Maybe I should let her go to her bedroom and cry alone.

But I'm here.

I said I'm staying.

This is part of me staying.

I hurry after Vera.

I catch up as she opens her bedroom door.

There's a split second where I catch a glimpse of her
bedroom.

Something about that sends chills through my body.

Chills?! Me?! Getting fucking chills over seeing a woman's bedroom?!

There is just something completely different about Vera.

I slide my right arm around her body.

Pulling at her belly gently, letting the back of her body crash into the front of mine.

I don't say a word but I know when it's time to talk and when it's time to just shut up.

This is a *shut up* moment.

Vera is definitely replaying the entire night in her head.

That's just who she is.

That's her personality.

She wants to rethink the entire night and figure out what could have been done differently.

That's the analytical side of her.

And why in the world am I thinking about that?

I don't know.

Vera turns around to face me.

She doesn't push me away and rush into her bedroom.

She looks right at me.

I hug her.

She grabs for the back of my shirt as she hugs me back.

I feel her body gently shaking.

She's crying.

That fucking psycho has her crying again.

I want to find him and rip his jaw off his face.

I know my place at the moment and that's to just stand there and hug Vera.

The beautiful Vera.

The assistant professor.

Technically now one of my professors.

Older than me.

Checking off all the boxes I need to satisfying my needs and my secret.

Vera pulls back from me and lets out a long breath.

“I'm sorry, Villi,” she whispers. “I shouldn't have-”

I touch under her chin. “Shh, darling. It's okay. You just went through something fucked up. It's okay to lean into it. I'm right here.”

Vera nods.

Her eyes are full of fire and lust.

And hurt.

I don't like that combination.

That's the combination that makes me want to rip her clothes off and make her forget everything except my name.

That's all she needs for proper vocabulary as far as I'm concerned.

I inch closer to her, going in for just one more kiss.

I think we both know that this *one more kiss* is the one that sets this entire thing off for good.

Vera exits my grasp and shakes her head.

“No, Villi,” she whispers.

She keeps saying that.

As though I’m some naughty dog.

Want me to wag my tail at you, darling?

Want to watch my tongue hang from my mouth as I stare at you, darling?

Vera slips into her bedroom and gently shuts the door.

I wait a moment to hear the click of the lock but it never sounds.

I grin.

I retreat across the apartment to the couch.

As I look around I take it all in myself now.

How I had been at a party for Mac and now I’m here.

How I had the strange gut feeling that something was way off with Vera.

I don’t know what that means.

I’m not the kind of guy that gets involved.

You know that already.

You know my type.

Give me the minivan mom with stale crackers in her purse who just needs one intense orgasm to recharge her batteries.

Not an affair.

Not a fling.

Just a fuck.

That’s me.

I'm the fuck.

Or am I the fucker?

I sit down on the couch and smile.

There's a perfectly folded blanket draped over the back of the couch.

I grab for it.

I feel like it's too early to sleep.

Not to mention I'm completely sober.

I look at Vera's apartment door and I nod.

I made a promise to her and I intend to keep it.

But there are other intentions too.

Do not get this wrong.

Do not paint me as a good guy.

As a loving protector.

Do not mistake what the name Villi means.

It stands for Villian.

And this Villian has made a decision.

After everything that happened tonight?

I'm going to fuck Vera.

I don't care if she's my professor.

I don't care if I'm her student.

I have no choice.

The taste of her mouth is lingering on my tongue.

Fucking with my head.

I feel like a *villain*.

I feel like a *fucking beast*.

More so than any of that...?

I know that Vera wants me to fuck her.

VILLI

I SIT BACK UP ON THE COUCH AND GIVE MY BODY A SECOND TO fully wake up.

I have to admit the couch wasn't all that terrible to sleep on.

A little short for me but I made it work.

I slowly stand up and walk to the apartment door.

It's locked.

I look over my shoulder.

Everything seems to be in place.

I can't imagine a scenario where that nut job guy would come back to try and mess with Vera again.

There's a part of me that wants to do some snooping.

And I'm not a snooping kind of guy at all.

I want to know what kind of milk Vera drinks.

What kind of cereal she has in her pantry.

Does she use farm fresh, free range, brown eggs or just the cheapest white eggs she can get?

What about coffee?

Is she a hazelnut girl?

Or does she use French vanilla creamer?

I also know there are pictures around here of her.

When she was younger.

Better yet, there are pictures of Violet around here too.

Those thoughts are my instant cue to get the fuck out.

I'm not here to wake up on the couch and wait for Vera to wake up like I'm some loyal puppy dog.

That doesn't mean I can't go check on her.

Open her bedroom door and make sure she's okay.

As I walk toward her bedroom, I catch myself thinking...
fantasizing...

I open the door and Vera is sleeping.

The covers are pulled down just enough to show off that she's topless.

Better yet, she sleeps naked.

Naked, sleeping, waiting for me.

I think about fairy tales.

Wasn't there one with some guy who kisses a sleeping princess to wake her up?

Maybe we can rewrite that story.

I stand at her door and carefully open it.

Just enough for me to step halfway into her bedroom.

And there she is.

She's on her right side, the covers pulled up to her chin, fast asleep.

A bottle of water on her clean and organized nightstand.

Her phone plugged in, charged overnight.

Her room smells like lavender.

The covers on her bed are a dark purple color.

The room is very clean.

Not a thing out of place.

I really have no idea why I'm looking around her bedroom, picking these things out.

I stand there for a couple seconds.

Anything longer and I'd be a creeper.

She's asleep. And she's safe.

I pull the door shut and back up.

I walk to the kitchen and of course she has a magnetic notepad on the front of her fridge. Ready for the next grocery list.

I smile.

Vera is a far cry from any woman I ever wanted before.

There's a magnetic pen too, right next to the notepad.

I click the pen with my thumb and write Vera a quick note.

It's time for me to leave. For now.

If I see her sleepy eyes and messy bed head, I'm going to lose my mind for good.

I try not to think about my feelings from the night before either.

What I need now is to find something to eat and drink.

And maybe find some sleepy, college beauty to give me an hour of her time to chase away whatever the hell this is I have for the sweet and sexy Vera.

VERA

MY EYES SLOWLY OPEN.

I blink a few times and then instinctively reach for my phone.

Halfway to grabbing for it, my hand freezes.

One thing pops into my head.

Villi!

I gasp and roll to my back and press my hands to the bed.

I hurry to sit up and the covers fall off my body.

What else has fallen off my body is the thin strap of my shirt.

Down my left shoulder and well down my arm.

I feel a slight chilly tingle against my breast and look down and let out a whimpering yelp when I see my boob hanging out of my shirt.

It's not like I have huge boobs that just escape from their tops (like I've been told from others, like my sister Abby...).

But there it is.

One boob.

Just there.

Exposed.

I freeze in place.

As though Villi is standing at my door, watching me.

The door is shut.

I'm alone.

I have complete privacy.

I finally reach and pull the strap back up over my shoulder and now I'm fully covered.

I throw the covers off my body and jump out of bed.

I spring for the closet, grab a hoodie and wrestle that over my head.

Now I feel mostly dressed.

At least appropriate enough to walk through my own apartment.

Because Villi is asleep on the couch.

A student of mine. On my couch. Sleeping.

Now that sounds much worse than it really is.

“Oh, Vera, what did you get yourself into?” I whisper.

I try hard not to think about the night before.

Blake. Villi.

Villi beating the hell out of Blake.

Me standing there the entire time with a knife in my hand.

My nerves start to shake.

I take a deep breath and open my bedroom door.

I slowly shuffle toward the couch.

It feels like it takes an hour to be able to look and see...

Villi is gone.

“Gone,” I whisper.

I look at the door.

I look at the couch.

I reach for the blanket on the couch and pick it up.

Without even realizing it I’m bringing it closer to my face.

Like I’m going to smell the blanket.

Like I want to smell Villi on my blanket!

I drop the blanket.

I force myself to nod.

“This is good,” I say. “This is really good. I like this.
We’re on the same page then.”

And that’s the truth.

Villi and I on the same page.

Yes.

He slept on the couch as a *just in case* kind of thing.

He woke up and knew it was best to just leave.

Now should I think about what could have been?

Villi waking up.

Coming to check on me.

Imagine if I woke up to the feeling of him touching my face.

Waking up and finding a big, strong, college hockey player standing over me.

And then what if he unzipped his jeans...

“Vera,” I say.

My next quest is the kitchen.

I need to make some coffee and let time work its magic.

Each second that goes by pushes last night deeper into the past.

But the past still feels so fresh to me.

I keep seeing Villi hitting Blake.

A part of me wants to feel sick from witnessing it.

I want to feel freaked out, scared of Villi, but I can't.

I think about Villi kissing me.

Me kissing him back.

How much I wanted that moment to be... *that moment...*

The way Villi just grabbed me and picked me up.

I never had someone do that before.

So easily?

Are you fucking kidding me right now?

It was hot.

Too hot.

A part of me wishing Villi was older.

Closer to my age (*not that we had a forty year gap or anything... and even if we did, would that really be wrong?*)...

Then again by the time Villi is my age he'll be a seasoned pro hockey player with more money in his bank account than he can ever spend.

He'll have all the women in the world he wants.

And I'll probably still be teaching here at Puckford University!

Go Pirates!

I sigh and walk into the kitchen and stop in place when I see the note on the fridge.

The handwriting is *boyish*... or better yet... *manly*...

It's scribbly.

Messy.

Big letters that smash together.

Written fast.

Written by someone with a large hand...

I'm not even sure that makes sense.

But I know it's Villi's handwriting.

I get closer to the note.

THANKS FOR THE SLEEPOVER.

See you in class, Miss Monroe.

LOVE, VILLI

WARM CHILLS RACE THROUGH MY BODY.

My cheeks tingle with heat.

My inner thighs... *let's not talk about that right now.*

All I can do is stare at the note...

As my jaw slowly drops, inching closer to the floor.

GABRIEL

MY PHONE VIBRATES WITH A CALL.

I do a quick glance.

You know - the just in case glance.

Just in case it's my agent telling me I can bolt the fuck out of PU and go play for the big boys.

Just in case it's that girl I met last week in the coffeeshop a few blocks from the campus. The one with the nose piercing and the colorful wrap things in her hair. The one with the huge blue eyes and the even huge-r tits.

Just in case it's...

It's a number that I don't know.

Those are the worst calls.

Those nonsense calls.

Trying to scam people with car insurance or late payments on things that don't exist.

I even heard about some scam where people use recordings of family members and cut out certain words to make sentences to make it seem like your mother or father or brother has been kidnapped.

The world is nuts, huh?

I silence the vibration.

I switch from walking to jogging to get to Mac's dorm quicker.

It's been a minute or two since I've checked up on the guy.

This stuff with his father is crazy too.

I knew about the cancer.

Always something Mac never wanted to talk about.

The thing about his father - he's been built into the hero-slash-villain status for so long...

Even looking at him.

Big Matt always wears big clothes.

Long coats.

Looking rich, powerful.

Looking like the villain from some spy movie.

Now the guy is for sure going to call it quits on life.

Not his choice either.

I've tried to think about his situation a few times myself.

Being that sick and knowing you're going to die.

It scares the hell out of me.

"Gabriel!"

I turn my head and see a redhead beauty waving to me.

Creamy skin.

More freckles than stars on a clear night.

She puckers her lips and touches her right hand to her lips and blows me a kiss.

Now, anyone reading this, you're about to see a move of mine that works every single time. Okay? Never fails me. Ever. Just know that I'm not as dumb as I may look in the next few seconds. It's just part of a bigger plan.

I snap my head to the right and I touch my cheek.

I stumble forward, then to the side.

Then I turn and I stumble some more.

I gently walk into a bench and trip over it.

All planned.

I'm fine.

No worries.

I hurry to pull myself to my feet.

And guess what's happening now?

The sexy redhead girl is hurrying toward me to check on me.

“Are you okay?” she cries out as she gets closer to me.

“That kiss, love. It knocked me right off my feet.”

I rub my cheek and smile.

Her cheeks are a little flushed.

She points at her chest. “Amber...”

You named your left breast Amber? What about the right one?

“Amber,” I say, trying to make it seem like I knew her name all along.

I step over the back of the bench, onto the seat part.

Then I step off the bench and get close to her.

“Amber with the red hair,” I whisper as I reach and playfully curl my right middle finger into her soft hair.

She practically melts in front of me.

“Sorry to cut this short, love, but I’m going to see Mac.”

“I heard about his father. That’s so sad. Will you tell him I’m thinking about of him?”

“Of course I will.”

I’m not going to do that. I’m not a messenger.

“Thanks, Gabriel,” Amber says.

“Hey,” I say. “Before you leave me, love.” I turn my head a little and point to my cheek. “If you blowing me a kiss knocked me off my feet, what does the real thing do?”

Yes, it’s an absolute cheap way to get a kiss from a girl...

But it works.

Amber blushes, jumps to her toes and kisses my cheek.

I collapse down to the bench and touch my chest.

“That’s not fair,” I say to her.

“Wonder what else would happen,” she whispers and then bites her bottom lip.

And that - *you sexy reader reading this* - is how I work my magic.

I get her number.

I text her as she walks away.

She looks back and smiles.

Then I set my sights back on Mac's dorm.

As I walk toward the door, I look at my phone.

There's a voicemail waiting.

From the number I didn't know.

I open the voicemail and it starts playing.

By the time I get it on speakerphone...

"... Gabriel. We regret to inform you that we are unable to-"

I stop listening.

I tell myself there's nothing to worry about.

Things in life have a way of working themselves out.

"WHERE IS VILLI?" I ASK.

Mac laughs.

Violet looks away.

"Okay," I say. "So it's not just me then. You two notice it."

"I live with him," Mac says.

"What's going on with him? He's acting a little different. Right?"

"Villi is Villi," Violet says. "I mean, to be fair, he still asks me at least once a day to show him my boobs."

Mac growls.

“You think you’d be smart and just do it,” I say. “Get it over with so he leaves you alone.”

“Over my dead body,” Mac says.

“Maybe he has a girlfriend,” I say. “A secret girlfriend.”

“Villi?” Violet says. “A girlfriend? One girl? No way.”

“Can you imagine if...”

I’m interrupted by the door opening.

“There he is,” I say as Villi walks into the dorm.

“What the fuck is this about?” Villi asks, curling his lip.

“You got a girlfriend?” I ask in a bold tone.

“Yeah,” Villi says.

“What?” Mac almost squeaks.

“Really?” Violet asks.

“Yeah,” Villi says. “Gabriel’s mother.”

Violet starts laughing.

Mac shakes his head.

“Yeah?” I ask. “Are you banging my mother?”

As if some stupid joke about someone sleeping with my mother is going to bother me.

Honestly, there isn’t much that bothers me.

I can play into anything to twist things around on someone else.

“Yeah,” Villi says. “Just banging her all the time. Your mother is wild in bed.”

Mac groans. “Okay, that’s enough.”

“What’s wrong with my mother?” I ask Mac. “Are you saying she’s ugly?”

“Gabriel,” Violet says. “Take it down a notch.”

“What did I do?” I ask. Then I quickly look at Villi. “Wait. If you’re banging my mother, that makes you my stepfather, right? We’re related.”

“Don’t think that’s how it works, Gabriel,” Villi says.

I close in on him and he puts a fist as a warning to not touch him.

“Since you’re my stepfather now, Villi, can I borrow some money?” I ask. “I could really use it.”

Villi actually flickers a smirk.

Mac and Violet actually laugh.

I hurry and make sure I laugh too just so nobody thinks I’m being serious.

VERA

AFTER A HOT SHOWER, I SIT ON THE EDGE OF MY BED,
brushing my hair.

Slow, long strokes, fighting through knots I'm not
supposed to have because I pay a lot for shampoo and
conditioner that aren't supposed to allow knots to happen.

That's not what's really on my mind though.

There's one thing on my mind.

One person on my mind.

I don't even want to say his name in my head...

Villi.

I shut my eyes.

As soon as I do that, I picture Villi kissing me.

I picture his strong hands grabbing my sides and picking
me up.

Sitting me on the counter.

His hands sliding under my shirt.

I open my eyes.

I stand up.

I realize my brush is in my hair and I'm not longer holding it.

My knees tremble for a second.

I'm squeezing my legs together tight.

That's when I catch my reflection in the mirror.

I shake my head.

“Vera Louise Monroe,” I say to myself. “Are you out of your mind? This cannot happen and it will not happen. Get a freaking grip on reality. Stay off the dating apps too. Meet someone in your environment. Someone getting coffee. Someone sitting and reading a book. That's what you need. Got it?”

I nod at my reflection.

I wrestle the brush from my hair.

I know what I need to do now.

What I need to do next.

Finally, a sense of reality has hit me square in the face.

As far as I'm concerned, this Villi thing is done and over with.

I MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH VILLI FOR A SPLIT SECOND AS HE sits there without a laptop, notebook, pen or pencil.

Nothing.

He just sits there.

I finish my lecture and gently shut my laptop.

I stand behind the desk.

I've kept most of their attention today, which is a victory in my book.

"I thank you all for showing up and listening," I say. "I'm more than aware that some lectures on business can be boring. But I promise you, everything we're talking about matters. No matter what career path you choose, this is usable. In business, there are several variables to look at. A healthy balance sheet. Your basic financials of profit and loss. Your cash flow. To me, that's the biggest. Of course that depends on the size of the company, but understanding cash flow is very important. Even in life..."

Their eyes are fading.

I'm about to lose them.

I point to the door and nod.

They jump up and run like the building is on fire.

That's okay.

I need to handle some personal business.

My mouth goes bone dry.

I swallow air.

I demand some extra saliva in my mouth.

"Villi," I manage to say in a stern voice. "We need to talk."

He walks down to my desk.

Casual. Confident.

I stay behind my desk.

I hold myself together.

“Miss Monroe,” he says to me.

Chills.

No. Vera. No chills.

No wobbly knees.

Stop that right now.

Between that little voice and then the other one telling me that I’m only a few years older than Villi... *you know, it’s not like you’re twenty years older than him and you’re married and you’re...*

“Whatever happened...” I say. I shake my head.
“Understand?”

“I don’t understand at all,” Villi says.

You cocky prick.

“That was a very dangerous situation to be in,” I say. “For both of us. Emotions were running high. I’m still processing the entire thing. The last thing I want to do though is get anyone else involved. For both of our sakes. Okay?”

“You mean the police?”

“Yes, Villi. You have a bright future ahead of you.”

He smirks. “Oh. You’re giving me that speech now, Miss Monroe?”

Stop calling me Miss Monroe!

But he’s being proper.

And being respectful to me.

“Villi, I’ll just say it like it is,” I say. I find a little more courage. “What happened between us will never happen again.

It cannot happen. Not with the positions we're both in. It's incredibly irresponsible. Simple as that. As far as the other thing goes, I'd prefer if nobody talked about it. Last thing we need is someone finding out about Blake and all that, then it turns into something bigger. What I'm saying is that everything to do with that night? It needs to be forgotten. While I appreciate you showing up and doing what you did, I did not ask for it. I could never live with myself if something happened to you. I mean that. So... yeah. It all needs to be forgotten. Package up that memory and return it back to the sender."

Oh, did I really have to add that last line?

Can I sound anymore pathetic?

I stop talking.

I let the words sink into Villi.

Okay, Vera. You did it. You talked about it. You made it clear.

"Villi, do you understand me?" I ask.

I use my best professor voice.

I'm stern.

Almost mean.

"Okay?" I ask, my voice getting a tiny bit louder.

Villi stares at me.

Then he turns.

He turns and walks to the door.

He slams his hand to the door, leaving a thudding echo floating through the empty lecture hall.

The door swings out.

He disappears when the door shuts.

I plant my hands flat on my desk and look down.

He couldn't have just said, 'Yes, Miss Monroe... '?

He had to turn away and do that sexy, pissed off walk?

He had to punch the door?

More than any of those questions... the one that burns in me the most?

Why does the way he act turn me on so much?

VILLI

MY HANDS ARE BALLED UP INTO FISTS.

I storm out of the building and walk with purpose even though I have no idea where I'm headed.

The logical voice in my head has it right.

Villi, this is the plan.

Take out your phone right now and text someone.

Hell, text Heather.

It's been a while since you've tasted her sweet pussy, right?

Text anyone.

You've got enough in your phone to keep you busy for a long time.

That's the plan.

I'm not going to do that.

All I can focus on is Vera's words.

Her trying to be all proper.

Using her *professor voice* at me.

Package up that memory and return it back to the sender.

That's by far the nerdiest thing anyone has ever said to me.

Yet when I think about it and hear her voice in my head, it almost makes me want to smile.

So I'll keep this really simple for everyone.

Forget about everything that happened?

That's what she wants me to do.

I've got one response.

Two words.

Fuck. That.

VERA

IT FEELS GOOD TO BE SITTING WITH SOME PEERS.

At an upscale restaurant too.

I'm dressed nice.

There's a glass of wine in front of me.

And our well-dressed waiter is bringing our food over.

He places a plate of shrimp scampi in front of me and the smell is heavenly.

A perfect mix of butter and garlic hits my nose.

Plus the subtleness of the pasta and the shrimp.

"I should have ordered that," Leslie says to my left.

Professor Williams...

She insists I call her Leslie.

That's a good thing.

The more I get to know some of the professors, the more I get to network.

And it puts me closer to getting an actual job offer with Puckford. Or another college.

“We can split it,” I say to Leslie.

“You’re too kind,” she says. “I’ll eat my chicken parm, drink three glasses of wine, have Richard drive me home, then I’ll be bloated and miserable and chew on antacids like a kid eating candy on Halloween night.”

She laughs a loud, hearty laugh.

Directly across from her is Richard.

Professor Morrison.

There’s a rumor that Leslie and Richard are sleeping together.

They’re both single so it shouldn’t matter.

But it does strike me to hear gossip amongst adults. Professors.

“So, Vera,” a voice says from across the table. “You got stuck with the worst lectures ever, huh?”

Professor Jenkins smiles at me.

Bill.

He’s a good looking guy.

Mid-thirties but has the appeal of someone much older.

He’s an old soul, put it that way.

He’s got scruff on his face but it’s well kept.

“I don’t mind the lectures,” I say. “Keeping them interested though? That’s a tough one. I’m happy to be there and get the experience.”

“Here’s what I can tell you,” Bill says as he folds his hands. He stares at me for a few seconds and then smiles. “I have no advice. But if I was in that class, I’d love it. I could listen to your voice for hours and never get bored.”

Bill winks.

I’m taken aback for a second.

“Feel like going easy for a moment?” Professor O’Riley asks Bill with a laugh.

Leslie leans toward me. “That was interesting.”

“I’m just being silly,” Bill says. He lifts his glass. “Cheers to all of us tonight. Cheers to Vera. *Miss Monroe*.”

As soon as he says my name, I hear Villi’s voice.

I compare the way he says *Miss Monroe* to the way Bill says it.

“I don’t like being the center of attention,” I confess. “Let’s eat and drink.”

Everyone agrees since we all have hot food in front of us.

The last thing I want is to be the center of attention.

Or to be thinking about Villi.

“I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY,” A VOICE SAYS.

I turn and see Bill standing close to me.

“For?” I ask.

“My *faux pas* earlier. I sort of called you out. I didn’t mean for that.”

“It’s okay.”

“If you allow me to humbly apologize I can then ask to buy you a drink. We can sneak right out of here and go someplace a little less... stuffy...?”

I smile. “So the tweed jacket isn’t part of the normal attire?”

“No,” Bill says. “I would much prefer to wear a hoodie and go to a bar, get a beer and watch a hockey game.”

Hockey...

Everything around here revolves around hockey, doesn’t it?

“What about you, *Miss Monroe*?”

“Vera. Please.”

“Vera.”

“I’m perfectly content dressing however the situation requires,” I say.

Bill raises an eyebrow.

Oh, shoot. Did I say that with some kind of weird sexual undertone?

“You’ll get used to these kinds of dinners,” Bill says. “They seem nice. Maybe they are. But it’s a chance for everyone to sit together and prove we can coexist. It’ll split up soon enough. Groups will form. Then the gossip can begin again.”

“Which group are you part of?”

“I’m a loner.”

“Oh,” I say. “You’re a bad boy rebel then, Bill?”

“Want to know something really bad?” Bill whispers.

“Try me.”

He looks around. He leans closer to me. “Last week at the grocery store... I walked out with a case of water under my cart. I never paid for it. And I didn’t go back inside when I realized it.”

“You are a rebel,” I say.

A part of my brain is so happy right now.

Flirting! With someone who is a professor! Someone who is like you!

Then there’s another part of my brain...

He accidentally stole a case of water?

Can I yawn now?

Then I picture Villi beating the living hell out of Blake.

“So what do you think, Vera?” Bill asks. “Join me for a drink? Just as colleagues. Of course.”

I smile. “I appreciate that. But I have to get some papers graded. And believe me, that’s not an excuse at all.”

Bill touches his chest. “That rejection stings.”

“Consider it punishment for being a hardened criminal.”

That makes Bill laugh.

He says something about a raincheck.

I smile.

The situation resolves itself and we all start to leave.

Bill was right.

We all break up into little groups.

Except me.

I really do have things to grade and work on.

I go straight home and change out of my nice clothes and into pajamas.

I treat myself to one more glass of wine and settle on the couch, then open my laptop to read some papers.

My eyes casually look for the last name... *Steele*.

I swallow hard.

Such a fitting name for a guy like Villi.

I double click his submission and a blank document opens up.

For a moment I think there's been an error.

There's not.

This is what Villi has been doing since our talk.

He keeps handing in blank papers.

He's purposely trying to fail the class.

He's putting me in a difficult position.

I grab my wine glass and I take a sip.

I glance at the blank document Villi submitted.

This is what he wants...

And I have no choice in the matter.

I have to have another private talk with Villi.

VILLI

VIOLET MOANS FOR ABOUT THE EIGHTIETH TIME.

My hands tighten up into fists and I look up to the ceiling.

“Just making her fucking come already,” I growl under my breath.

I have no idea what the hell Mac is doing to Violet.

Is he teasing her or can't he make her come?

Because if it's the second option, I'll get in that fucking shower and slap my tongue so hard against her soft clit, she'll fly so far up into the sky, she'll orbit Neptune by the end of the night.

I walk out of my bedroom and stand in front of the bathroom door.

I have an idea of what this is.

Done on purpose or not, this is Mac getting back at me for all the times he had to listen to the soundtrack of me fucking someone.

But this is getting ridiculous.

My lip climbs up into the air and I reach for the bathroom door.

It's unlocked.

I turn the knob and slowly open the door.

I'm greeted with a cloud of shower steam that smells like flowery shampoo.

Smells like Violet's hair.

I'd be a liar to say my cock didn't twinge when I smell the shampoo.

I walk into the bathroom and stand there for a few seconds.

Behind the shower curtain I can barely make out the faint shadows of the figures of Mac and Violet.

I can see they're both standing.

A part of me wanted to see Violet on her knees, sucking Mac's cock.

Wow, Villi. Really?

Yes. Really.

I hear Violet groan loudly.

I see Mac grab the top of the shower curtain rod.

He grunts and she groans back at him.

I have plenty to call out to make this situation awkward at best, but I opt for something else.

I grab the door and slam it shut.

The thud of door brings on instant silence from inside the shower.

“Don’t stop because of me,” I say. *Okay, I have something to say after all.*

The shower curtain opens a little and out steps Mac.

Soaked head to toe.

Water racing off his body to the floor.

His impressive cock standing tall.

Perfectly erect.

“What the fuck, Villi?” Mac growls.

“What the fuck? To me? What the fuck to you, Mac. What the fuck are you doing in there to her? Can’t you fucking finish her off? What’s taking so long?”

“It’s called patience,” Mac says. “Enjoying the moment.”

“Fuck that. Those groans are desperation from her. Poor Violet.”

“Good morning to you too, Villi,” Violet yells from the shower.

“This isn’t a good morning,” I say. “Not listening to this pathetic attempt at making a beautiful girl orgasm.”

“Aw, how sweet,” Violet calls out.

“Get the fuck out of here, Villi,” Mac growls.

“Something wrong, Mac? Can’t finish the job?”

“What do you want? Huh? Why don’t you have someone over?” Mac asks.

The other side of the shower curtain opens a tiny bit.

Violet pokes her head out.

Her hair, soaked.

Her skin, wet.

She blinks away clinging water droplets from her eyelashes.

I look right at her.

Fuck.

“You haven’t had anyone over in a while,” Violet says. “Something wrong?”

“Nothing is wrong,” I yell. “Why the hell does that matter?”

“It matters because you’re in here right now,” Mac says. “You should be enjoying someone. Not ruining my enjoyment.”

I keep my stare at Violet. “Do you enjoy it?”

“Very much so,” she says. “Mac’s cock is amazing.”

“You have nothing to base that off of,” I say. “You’ve only had one cock inside that precious body of yours, darling.”

“One is all I need,” Violet says.

“You think that,” I say. “You could let me in there for a minute and I’ll show you—”

“Villi,” Mac growls.

He moves toward me.

I jump out of the way.

I’m good for a little bit of crazy, but I draw the line when my roommate and his stiff cock are chasing after me.

“Are you done here, Villi?” Mac asks.

“I hope you finish her soon enough,” I say to him. “I feel bad for Violet. She should be on her fourth orgasm by now. Or,

let me rephrase that, when she finally lets me inside her... she would be by now. With me.”

“What a well thought out statement,” Violet says.

I look at her again. I smirk. “How about you just open the shower curtain? Just for a few seconds. I promise, I’ll just look.”

Violet sticks her left hand out of the shower and lifts her middle finger.

A second later she disappears back into the shower.

“That’s your last warning,” Mac says.

“Just finish her off, man,” I whisper. “Get on one knee and get right under her. Have her put her left leg over your shoulder. Flick your tongue against her clit with some speed and take your middle and pointer fingers and—”

“Get out,” Mac growls.

I back up and open the bathroom door, then turn and leave.

Mac slams the door shut behind me.

And then he locks it.

I stand there for a few breaths.

Mac and Violet start right back up.

And now that I’ve pissed them off, what do they do?

They make even more noise.

Violet is practically howling.

Mac is grunting like an animal.

As for me, I can’t believe what I’m feeling.

Jealousy.

Me. Jealous.

Jealous?

There is nothing in the world that can make me jealous.

Except I'm feeling it.

That feeling rushing through my body.

I'm not jealous of Mac. Or of Violet.

It's the situation.

Some steamy shower sex before class.

And, yeah, face it, I can have the shower when they're done.

And I don't have to be alone either.

I'm choosing to be alone.

Maybe that's the craziest part of it all.

I'm choosing this stupid jealousy inducing fate on my own.

Why?

What the fuck am I doing here... waiting for a certain someone...?

VERA

I STAND BEHIND MY DESK AND I'M READY FOR ANOTHER lesson in the world of business.

Yes, it's a boring lecture about *EBITDA*...

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization.

It'll be hard to keep their interest.

I should care more.

I really should.

From the corner of my eye I watch as everyone piles in.

Of course you know I'm waiting to see one person.

Villi isn't the last to come into class but far from the first.

When I see him, chills race through my body.

I tell myself it's not *those kinds of chills*.

I just need to get through this lecture and then I need to talk to him again.

This is much easier than I'm making it out to be.

Villi hasn't done a lick of work in this class.

And it's my job to let him know he's going to end up in trouble.

That's not my fault.

That's his.

And we're going to settle this thing once and for all.

It's really that simple.

“AND WE’LL START SLOWING THERE,” I SAY. “JUST REMEMBER the overall picture. We’re looking at the profitability of a company by getting rid of non-operating expenses. Now, there are plenty out there who don’t like the metric. Which I can’t argue one way or another. I think it’s best to know it all. The overall figure can be misleading since you’re leaving out expenses... interest, taxes... all that need to be paid. Well, or should be paid, right?”

I get a random chuckle here and there.

I look up a little and I see Villi.

Top row, in the middle.

Just sitting there, staring right at me, like he’s done all class.

Now, I cannot fairly make something out of that because I expect everyone to look at me while talking.

But it’s Villi.

He just sits there.

No laptop again.

No paper, pen... pencil...

Just sits there, looking big, mean, strong, protective.

His eyes are extremely dangerous too.

I keep trying to steal a glance and see if he's blinking at all.

Yeah, his staring is that intense.

“Look, understanding this stuff is important, but in the real world with real business, it's not all black and white. Let's finish up there. I appreciate only a few of you sleeping through class today. I'm winning you over.”

I shut my laptop.

That signals the end of the lecture and class.

There's not a single person wanting to ask a question or hang back.

My lectures are that great...

I keep an eye out for Villi so I can tell him to stay.

I have to watch my tone of voice too.

Or do I?

Does it even matter?

I already know what I'm going to do here.

It's actually simple, really.

He needs to smarten up.

He needs to not only show up to class, but participate.

Do the work.

Write the papers.

And, look, I get it.

He's the hockey star.

That whole group of Puckford Pirates players...

Believe me, I see it.

Violet is in love with Mac.

Those guys love to act untouchable.

Maybe they are.

But if I have to go in front of the athletic board and the dean and show them that Villi is handing in blank papers...

What am I supposed to do?

“Miss Monroe?”

I blink and realize someone is standing at my desk.

“Yes?” I ask, pretending like nothing is wrong.

His name is Charlie.

He runs his hand through his messy hair.

His eyes confess he hasn't slept yet from the night before.

“All this stuff... like... we're cool if we use our phones and all that?”

“In reference to?” I ask.

Charlie stares. “I mean... exams...”

“Go study,” I say. “Get some coffee and go study, okay? Sound good?”

“Right on,” he says.

He turns and starts to shuffle away.

A little bit of panic creeps up the back of my throat.

I look to the door and have no sight of Villi.

Worst scenario for me right now is for Villi to slip out of class without me talking to him. Leaving me with that weird feeling in the pit of my stomach.

I take two steps and pause when I realize something.

I look to the seats.

All the way up to the top row.

Right there in the middle.

Villi hasn't moved an inch.

He's still sitting there the same way he's been the entire lecture.

From the corner of my left eye I see the last couple people file out.

The door closes with its finality thud.

I realize I don't have to tell Villi to stay after class.

He's already made that decision on his own.

VILLI

YOU'RE A LIAR, MISS MONROE.

The worst kind of liar too.

You're the person who lies to themselves.

Coincidence she wore a dress to class today?

Not some 'professor dress' where it comes down to her ankles and all that.

She's wearing a nice dress.

The kind that...

I mean...

She wants to constantly check up on me too, huh?

Looking right at me.

Definitely irritated that I'm not taking diligent notes for her class.

Definitely more behind those eyes and that stare.

I stay after class.

I know she's going to ask me to stay anyway.

All I did for her now was make breaking that ice a little easier.

An ice that shouldn't exist.

I respect why that ice between us exists.

Vera is a *good girl*.

Just like Violet.

Maybe not a virgin... but still...

I've got fading cuts on my knuckles as a reminder of the guys Vera dates.

She tries to dabble in something fun, maybe a little risky, but what happened? She ended up with a psycho clinger wanting to hurt her.

She doesn't know if I'm any different or not.

Can't blame her there.

My name is Villian after all.

I slowly stand up.

I reach for my bag and pick it up.

Then I begin the slow descent down the steps toward her desk.

She's behind her desk, looking at me.

I can feel the millions of thoughts raging through her mind right now.

Good thoughts. Bad thoughts. Sane thoughts. Naughty thoughts.

When I get to her desk, I drop my bag on the floor.

It's just us.

Me and her.

Alone.

"Villi," she says with a nod.

"Miss Monroe," I reply.

Her cheeks flush.

Hey, I'm just being respectful, that's all.

"You know why we need to talk, right?"

"I think I have an idea," I say.

"Transferring to this appears to have been a big mistake on your part. I do have an idea, Villi. You can drop the class and go right back to the-"

"I'm not dropping this class," I say. "Ever."

"Villi..."

"I have to be here."

"You *have* to be here?" Vera asks. "Why do you have to be here?"

I lean against her desk.

I get just a little bit closer to her.

"To protect you," I whisper.

All color leaves her face.

Without exaggerating too much, I swear I hear her panties getting damp.

I'm waiting for her to spew the normal *good girl, this is wrong* bullshit routine.

You know what that sounds like, right?

Villi, I don't need you to protect me.

Villi, I thought we said we were going to forget about what happened.

Villi, it's not your job to protect me.

Villi.... Villi... Villi...

“Villi,” Vera whispers.

Something inside me breaks when I hear her say my name.

It's no different than the other times she's said my name.

This time...

I walk around the desk with purpose.

I move at her like an animal about to pounce.

Now let's be completely fair here.

If Vera wanted to... she could run off.

She doesn't run away from me.

She turns and bounces her sexy ass off her desk.

She gasps, reaches for the desk and grabs it.

I grab for her.

My hands sliding against her curved hips.

I waste not even a second before I bend my knees a little and press my body against hers.

Vera's lips part and she exhales a loud breath.

Her face is thirteen shades of red.

Her lips soft and tender.

The most kissable lips I've ever seen in my life.

Yes, I've kissed them before.

And, yes, I plan on kissing them a whole lot more.

This is no longer temptation.

This is desire.

Deep seeded need.

Falling into the pit of risky decisions and not knowing how it will pay off, if at all.

To me, that's what life is all about though.

You want to grade papers, work for promotions and go from an apartment to a house, then meet some guy your age and go on boring dates, and then fall into the comfortable trap of time, end up getting engaged because 'it's time', then getting married because 'it's time', then tossing a few kids out of your slit because 'it's time' ...?

Fuck, darling, those are my favorite women...

So think about it.

Either way, we're going to hook up.

We can do it now on your desk or we can wait ten years for you to be miserable and have me take you into the backseat of your leased minivan and eat your pussy so good you'll forget all about your boring, shitty life.

That's the look in my eyes.

That's the look in her eyes.

I quickly brush my lips to hers.

Then I straighten my legs, towering over her.

I know she likes this.

She likes that I'm tall. That I'm strong.

She likes that I'm fucking wild too.

I run my hands down her.

Touching that dress.

Touching those legs.

My lips hover above hers.

She has her head back, lips parted, looking so vulnerable and desperate.

This fucking woman has my cock twisted up and ready to pop a load in my jeans.

Which is something that has never happened to me. Ever. Not once. Not even fucking close either.

But Vera...

Miss Monroe...

The smell of the room too.

The slight hint of old, musty wood from the desk.

The smell of the floor.

That cheap linoleum smell.

Just the air in the room...

It smells like college.

But Miss Monroe feels like a real woman.

I stop my left hand for a moment before gently moving it around toward her ass.

I dip my mouth down to hers, just for a taste.

The sweet taste of her shivering tongue as I greet hers with mine.

Vera then does something very interesting...

She releases her hold on the desk.

And her hands fly through the air.

Up, grabbing at my neck.

The back of my neck.

Grabbing at my hair too.

Fingers curling, nails clawing.

I have to admit - the desire to just fuck her on her desk is slowly overtaking my body.

Which for me isn't that much of a shock.

The shock is that I don't want to fuck Vera. At least not right now.

Not here.

Not like this.

But that doesn't mean I'm going to stop.

Don't get me wrong.

The name is still Villian.

My right hand curls over and over.

I'm lifting her dress.

It doesn't have very far to go from where my fingertips are, meaning it's only a matter of seconds before I'm touching bare skin.

Her bare leg.

I can't believe how this is all making me feel.

As though I've never touched a woman before.

My fingertips glide against her warm skin.

We're magnetic.

I'm meant to be touching her right now.

Just like this.

I kiss her again.

Harder this time.

Then I break the kiss.

I stare into her eyes.

Her perfect eyes.

Her perfect gaze.

I catch myself gently running the tip of my tongue against my bottom lip.

Then I feel the line of her panties.

A tight, firm hold from her panties to her body.

Somehow it all feels like a warning.

Do not cross this barrier, Villi.

I smile.

Because it's too fucking late now.

Too late to think about rational thoughts or any of that bullshit.

I hook my middle finger against Vera's panties.

She sucks in a breath.

Her fingers are still digging against the back of my neck.

The secretly sultry woman has zero interest in stopping this moment at all.

So I keep going.

Soft, warm skin.

That leads to a little prickle on my fingertip.

“Oh, darling,” I whisper with a growl.

I drop my mouth down to Vera’s.

We kiss.

Fast.

Aggressive.

I add my middle finger to the fun and now I’m pulling her panties to the side.

Wetness clings to my fingertips.

It’s sudden. It’s beautiful.

I have her now.

I feel her now.

The lips of pussy against my touch.

This is really happening.

No need to second guess or question a thing.

Vera is soaked, almost dripping.

My fingers are just getting started exploring her.

My cock rages inside my jeans.

And, yeah, I’ll be the one to say this.

This is the best fucking class I’ve ever had in my entire life.

VERA

VILLI'S MIDDLE FINGERTIP STROKES MY CLIT.

I think it as I feel it.

My body instantly goes numb for a split second.

Pleasure takes over, rushing like a dam broken open by a historic flood.

I rise up to my toes and my legs start to shake.

My calf muscles twist and tighten so hard I'm sure both are going to explode.

Villi pauses.

He pauses touching me.

He pauses kissing me too.

I can't even tell you how good his lips taste. How wild his tongue is in my mouth.

Everything he does has purpose.

My fingers manage to release their hold from Villi's neck.

I lower my hands and grab for the desk again.

The desk.

Vera, the desk!

You're in a classroom! A lecture hall!

You're in a building meant for teaching! For studying!

What in the world are you doing right now?

We can be caught at any second.

The door is not locked.

That door can open at any second.

And it can be anyone that steps through.

A professor. A student. A custodian.

Could be two college lovers looking for an empty place to fool around before their next class...

“Vera,” Villi whispers.

I swallow hard. “Villi.”

“I’m not going to stop,” he whispers. “Unless you stop me right now.”

What does that mean?

Does that mean just today? Just right now?

Oh, what the fuck am I getting into...?

Yet as I’m staring up into his gorgeous eyes, I feel safe and protected.

It’s probably the worst kind of feeling to have though.

Knowing that Villi protects via intense violence.

But I need that right now.

I fucking need it!

I make a move to kiss him and Villi shakes his head, smirking.

“What?” I ask.

“I want to look at you,” he says. “I want to see your face... your eyes... I want to watch your mouth... as I gently fuck you with my fingers...”

My thighs tremble.

My body signals for more wetness, which I don't necessarily need.

I'm at the point now I've never been this wet in my entire life.

I can't believe Villi is talking to me the way he is.

For a quick second I think about my last two boyfriends.

How they were both vanilla.

Mediocre on a good night.

The way they flicked at my pussy, thinking they were touching my clit, smiling, acting cool.

The way they fucked me.

Generic thrusts.

The stupid faces they both made when they came.

Like cave men drooling, no real formation of a functioning brain.

I think about all the times I wasted away my time, unfulfilled...

“Stare into my eyes, darling,” Villi commands.

I listen.

I listen intently.

His middle finger touches my clit again.

My hips buck and I suck in a breath.

“Amazing how guys can’t seem to find the magic button, huh?” Villi asks.

His smirk is cocky.

He’s reading me like a book.

I kind of hate it but it turns me on too much to really care all that much.

“Your pussy is soaked, darling,” Villi says.

My cheeks burn hotter.

He talks dirty?

I’ve never been... talked dirty to...

I nod.

“Tell me your pussy is soaked,” Villi whispers. “I want to hear the words slip off your lips. I want to fucking breathe your words, Vera. I want to taste your fucking words.”

Villi moves his lips closer to mine but he doesn’t touch.

Between my legs however, he’s touching.

His middle finger is ever-so-softly touching my clit.

Teasing, but such a good tease.

I’ve never had someone touch me like this either.

Anytime I was lucky enough for a guy to actually find my clit, he would scratch it like a lottery ticket.

“Vera,” Villi says in a mildly deeper voice.

I snap out of my trance and he has my full attention again.

“Say the words,” he whispers. “Now.”

I lick my lips and nod. “My...” My cheeks are hotter than ever. I almost feel like giggling. “My pussy is soaked. For you. Villi.”

“That’s a good girl,” he says to me.

That comment makes me melt.

Villi slides one finger into me.

Slow, firm, commanding.

My body jumps at that feeling of pressure.

Villi hooks his finger and presses...

My jaw instantly drops.

He’s stroking inside my body... he’s...

My hands leap from the desk to his shirt.

“Villi,” I groan.

“Looks like someone has never had their *G-spot* taken care of either,” he whispers. “Fuck, darling, you’re almost a virgin, aren’t you?”

“Shut up,” I manage to say in a shaky voice.

Villi adds another finger between my legs.

He thrusts hard.

Using much more force.

My butt presses against the desk.

The desk scratches a little to the floor.

I look down and can’t believe what I’m watching.

Villi's hand up my dress.

Villi's fingers inside my body.

My pussy clenching against his fingers, wanting more.

Villi knows how to move too.

Which shouldn't surprise me at all.

His thrusts are relentless.

He doesn't slow down.

He doesn't get tired either.

In fact, the more he fingers me, the faster and harder he's going.

I'm watching veins in his forearm slowly grow.

Pumping, thrusting...

All that strength and muscle...

"Look me in the eyes again, darling," Villi orders.

This time as soon as I look at him, he kisses me.

He presses his body against mine, his fingers still inside me.

His left hand touches my lower back, holding me where he wants me.

Now before anyone is thinking it...

Yes, I feel his cock.

Pushing through his jeans.

Pressing against my body.

His cock pushing at my stomach.

I tell myself there has to be some exaggeration here. I must be feeling his jeans and whatever else too... right?

Because if not, if this is how... *big*...

I groan into Villi's mouth.

I have no idea what's going to happen next.

I am at his mercy.

He holds the pleasure of my body in his hands.

None of that bothers me one bit.

I can't fathom how it's possible I trust someone the way I do Villi in this moment.

His fingers plunge deeper.

Deeper!

How is that possible?

A sudden collision happens in the secret depths of my belly.

My hips push forward, seeking a mix of relief and more.

I suck in a breath and tilt my head back.

I break the kiss.

Villi isn't done kissing me yet though.

His lips graze my neck.

His tongue flickers against my skin.

My left hand grabs for his right wrist.

I manage to somehow make eye contact with Villi as his removes his mouth from my neck.

The stare in his eyes...

He knows.

I don't have to say a word.

Of course Villi knows.

This is all Villi's doing. Villi's fault.

I've allowed it to happen.

And now...?

I start to come all over Villi's fingers, hand, and wrist.

VERA

OKAY, SO THAT'S THAT THEN.

I engaged in sexual activity with a student...

Well, *engaged* indicates past tense.

I'm in the present tense because Villi is still touching me.

His fingers have slowed. So perfectly slow.

Stroking the inside of my warmth.

Allowing me to *finish* the way I want to.

Not stopping too soon to celebrate that he made a woman orgasm.

Yes, I am again comparing Villi to all I've known.

That might be the biggest trouble I'm in.

The fact that nobody compares to Villi.

"Deep breath, darling," Villi whispers.

His lips gently touch mine.

I start to smile, feeling that euphoric burst soar throughout my body.

Then I feel...

I gasp as Villi presses his thumb to my clit.

“Villi,” I moan.

“Do you really think I’d let you walk away with just one?”

“Villi, I can’t...”

“You can’t come twice, darling?” Villi smirks.

“I’ve never...”

Villi kisses me. “You haven’t been properly living then. This is tragic. I cannot allow this to stand. Not when I promised to protect you...”

The protection thing?

It gets me.

It hits me.

I start to melt again.

Still soaked.

Villi’s fingers gently moving.

It’s that thumb though.

The way he presses it against my clit.

Beginning to make small, soft circles.

I take a breath. I sigh.

The circles are getting bigger now.

My hips are wavering, rocking back and forth like the agitator of a washer.

The tip of Villi's tongue flicks against my top lip.

Then he dips down and kisses my neck.

As he does so, he growls.

His teeth graze my neck.

No! You can't bite me! Are you an idiot?! I can't show up to work with 'sex bites' on my neck!

I thrust myself forward.

Villi laughs.

The pressure on my clit grows more.

Villi looks into my eyes and says one word.

“Now.”

I don't want him to command my orgasm - or maybe I do.

But when he says *now*...

He rubs his thumb up and down against my clit.

He curls his fingers deep inside me.

And that's that.

That's the combination.

Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time ever, Vera Monroe is experiencing multiple orgasms!

I'M TRYING HARD NOT TO SIT ON MY DESK AND PANT.

I don't want to look as desperate as I feel.

My panties are sort of back in place.

My dress back down my legs, where it properly belongs.

I have to admit I don't know the protocol in this situation.

I turn my head and I see Villi walking up toward the desk he sat at during my lecture.

I nibble on my bottom lip for a few seconds.

Villi grabs his bag and turns.

I stop biting my lip but I don't stop staring.

He walks down the steps.

I wonder if he's going to throw his bag over his shoulder and leave.

I'm not sure if that would be sexy or not.

Villi doesn't go anywhere.

He places his bag on my desk and unzips it.

He reaches in with his left hand and gives me a folder.

By the time I open the folder, there's another.

And another.

I look at the papers and...

"It's the work," I whisper.

"All done, Vera," Villi says.

"What..."

"I did the work. I'm not dumb."

"I never said you were dumb. I never thought it. I just can't believe you would hand in blank papers and then..."

"I wasn't sure what I was going to do with them," he says.
"But now you have them."

I look at the papers again.

I actually start to read the top one.

Then I see Villi crouch down and reach for my bag.

Before I can say anything he takes out my cellphone.

My teeth chatter.

He looks at me. “No passcode. Risky.”

I can’t believe he’s touching my phone.

I can’t believe I’m not doing anything about it.

Villi opens my texts.

He opens a new message.

His thumbs are moving fast.

His right thumb... touching the screen of my phone... the same thumb that was just touching my clit...

A few seconds later he drops my phone into my bag and stands up.

“There,” he says. “I just texted myself from your phone.”

My jaw quivers as I realize just how sexy it is the way he did that.

Now he has my number.

Now I have his.

Villi closes in on me again.

He leans in and brushes his lips against my cheek.

“That was fun, Miss Monroe,” he whispers. “We should do it again sometime soon.”

That’s when Villi grabs his bag and tosses it over his shoulder and walks to the door and leaves.

I lean against the desk, jaw dropped.

And I can't believe I'm admitting it...

... but right now, even after finishing twice, I've never been so turned on in my entire life.

VILLI

I RUB MY FINGERTIPS AGAINST MY THUMB AND I SMILE.

I'm walking like I'm two feet taller.

There must be a cocky grin on my face a mile wide.

I realize I'm acting completely foolish.

Face it, all I did was finger fuck someone.

Yeah, okay, it was Vera.

Miss Monroe.

Technically one of my professors.

I get that part.

That part is wild and exciting.

Super risky too.

But at the end of the day...

I can't stop thinking about her leaning against her desk.

My fingers climbing up her dress, touching her leg, peeling her soaking-wet panties to the side so I can touch her.

Sliding my fingers into her warmth.

Her tight slit teasing me, making my mind race to wonder just how in the world am I going to fit my cock into her when the time comes.

Or how about the fact that no man has properly touched her?

How is that fucking possible?

These fucking losers out there have no idea how to stroke a woman's clit? Or how to touch and play with the *G-spot*.

Especially someone like Vera.

I can't stop thinking about her coming.

The wetness...

Almost spraying all over my hand.

On the other side of that, there's me.

My cock to be exact.

I never walk away from a situation without... *emptying the tank*...

I pause walking and look down.

There's still a bulge in my jeans.

Nothing I can do about it.

It's just how I was made.

But I have to admit... it aches a little.

My balls ache.

My cock feels tortured.

"Are you admiring your own cock again?"

I look forward and Jax walks toward me.

“Fucking right I am,” I say. “Just look at it.”

“Showing off,” Jax says.

We hit fists and skip the hug.

Respectfully to Jax I don't want his body getting too close to my cock right now.

“Where are you coming from?” Jax asks.

“Class,” I say. “Had to hand in a shit ton of overdue work.”

“You never can just do things on time, huh?”

“The work gets done. That's all that matters.”

“You really think the world revolves around you.”

“Did you track me down to start a fight?”

“Nah,” Jax says. “You're better than me, Villi. My grades are in the toilet right now. I've got the main office up my ass.”

“Do they give you lube first?” I ask.

“You're a fucking dick.”

“So I've been told.”

Jax and I start walking with no destination in mind.

I kind of want to be left alone to bask in the wildness of what just occurred with Vera.

I'm used to my *woman older than me* hookups lasting a little while and being done. But going through all the motions though. All the touching. All the kissing. All the sucking and licking and fucking. Then just leaving her right there on the bed she shares with her husband.

This thing with Vera is very different.

“Hey, Gabriel just texted me,” Jax says. “We've got to go.”

“Problem?”

“Party.”

“It’s the middle of the day.”

“Sorority.”

“Fuck,” I growl. “I don’t want to do that.”

“Come on. It’ll be fun. All those sexy and prissy girls.”

“You think I mesh with that crowd?”

“You don’t mesh with anyone,” Jax says. “Now stop being a prick. Not much else to do. Besides go to class.”

“I don’t have any more classes today,” I say.

“I do,” Jax says. “I’m bailing on them.”

“Man, you’re really a rebel, huh?”

“Fuck yourself. What’s the craziest thing you’ve done today?”

All I can do is smirk.

No way I’m going to tell Jax about how I fingered my professor on her desk.

MILA POINTS RIGHT AT ME.

I point back at her.

“We need to talk,” she says.

“I don’t think we do,” I say. “Anything to do with Mac and Violet, I don’t care.”

I start to turn and Mila grabs my arm.

I look at Jax and curl my lip.

“Whoa,” Jax says, jumping in. “Let’s skip the touching and grabbing.”

“Are you telling me what to do?” Mila asks Jax.

“Keep it calm,” Jax says. “We’re all just hanging around. Having a good time.”

For the record, Jax is two drinks deep.

In the middle of the afternoon.

Not a bad idea at all to be honest.

The *little gathering* at the sorority is slowly becoming more and more like a party.

All focused around us.

The Puckford Pirates hockey team!

I can do without it.

“Seriously,” Mila says to me.

“Seriously, what?” I ask.

She releases her hold on me. “Your buddy Mac. He’s got to leave me alone. Okay?”

“Leave you alone?” I ask. “What do you mean? He’s texting you? Is he trying to fuck you?”

I feel a faint glimmer of hope.

Mac? Not wanting Violet?

I’ll take her!

I’ll take Violet and her sister!

Hell, throw in the crazy third sister too!

I’ll take on all the Monroe sisters...

“Everything is instantly sex with you idiot jocks,” Mila says.

“What else is there in life?” Jax asks with a smirk.

Mila rolls her eyes. “I’m trying to be serious right now. Okay? Mac is driving me crazy about my father helping his father.”

“Oh,” I say.

The conversation is now actually serious.

“Yeah,” Mila says. “Believe me, I feel bad. It’s heartbreaking to think about what’s happening. But my father can’t do a thing about it. There’s not some magic pill or surgery or cure. I wish there was. But there’s not.”

“What do you want me to do?” I ask. “Mac doesn’t listen to me. Or anyone.”

“Did you talk to Violet?” Jax asks.

“Why didn’t I think of that first?” Mila asks. “You’re a genius, Jax!”

“That’s sarcasm, isn’t it?” Jax whispers to me.

“Big time,” I whisper back.

“Violet has tried talking to him too,” Mila says. “He’s hard to reach when it comes to this stuff. Which, again, I understand.”

“I’m not his guardian, darling,” I say to Mila.

She takes a deep breath. “I don’t need flirting.”

“I’m not flirting,” I say.

“I’m in the mood to flirt,” Jax says.

He bites his bottom lip and smiles at Mila.

Not even a second later... Ward appears.

His hands slid around Mila's waist. "You done talking to these guys or what?"

"*These guys?*" Jax asks. "Something wrong, Ward?"

"Nothing at all," Ward says. "My life is fucking perfect."

He kisses Mila's cheek.

Jax curls his lip. "Hey, Ward. Is your sister around? She's got that cute little badass attitude of hers. Would be fun to see how she acts in my bed."

Mila quickly spins around and pushes Ward back.

She looks back at Jax. "Asshole."

"You just can't help yourself, huh?" I ask Jax.

He shrugs his shoulders. "She doesn't belong with him."

I laugh. "You're the relationship police now?"

Jax makes a weird *woo woo* sound like he's trying to sound like a police car siren.

I feel my phone vibrate and I casually move to look.

When I see Vera's name on my screen, I can't help but grin ear to ear.

VILLI

I WILL REVIEW THE SUBMITTED WORK AND GRADE IT appropriately. I don't believe there is anything else to talk about at the moment.

Oh, Miss Monroe, there is plenty more to talk about.

I smile.

I picture her typing that text message and deleting it probably a hundred times.

Waiting for the right moment to send it.

Making sure the wording didn't implicate her or mislead me.

Vera is smart.

Beautiful. Sexy. Smart.

Reading that text message, I can see her being nervous and cute about the entire thing.

All the while still wearing the same panties that had to be still damp from her orgasms.

Remember that, darling.

Plural

Orgasms.

Back to back.

Something you apparently never experienced before.

I debate for a second how to respond.

What to say.

I mean, I couldn't just respond with a simple *ok* or something generic.

And there's no way in hell I wouldn't bring up what my fingers did to her body.

"There he is," a voice calls out.

I look up from my phone and here comes Knox.

Walking between two pretty girls.

Sorority girls.

One, short blonde hair, blue eyed sweetheart.

Another with chocolate-brown hair, eyes to match, a little taller than her friend.

Knox between them with that look on his face.

I hurry to tuck my phone into my back pocket.

"Knox," I say.

"I brought you something," he says.

Sorority chicks?

Really?

We never...

“This is Ariel,” Knox says as he nods to the blonde. Then he looks to the brown haired girl. “This is Elsie. Fucking sexy, huh?”

“Yes, Knox,” I say.

“They are huge fans of yours,” Knox says. “They wanted to meet you. Personally. Privately.”

I touch my jaw.

“You should follow us,” Ariel says. “There’s something we want to show you.”

She breaks away from Knox and walks to me.

She touches my bottom lip and keeps going.

Knox’s eyes go wide.

He’s begging me to go along with whatever this is.

“You definitely should follow us,” Elsie says.

She puckers her lips and kisses the air.

She and Ariel are walking away.

Knox gets up close to me and gives me a little push.

“Come on, man,” he growls. “These two...”

“Sorority?”

“Trust me.”

I don’t trust Knox.

I don’t trust anyone.

But I walk with him anyway.

I am still *Villian* after all.

If these two sorority beauties want to get crazy and go down on each other in front of Knox and I, who am I to say

no?

We turn the corner and end up in a small room.

A guest bedroom that's never been actually used.

It's clean, smells like fresh sheets, and both Ariel and Elsie walk toward the bed.

My interest is heightened.

Us and some of these sorority girls do not get along.

There's a handful that hate the rough and tough hockey players.

They prefer the baseball players.

Clean cut, strong jaws, those pretty boys assholes.

As far as I'm concerned, if you want a real man to fuck you, you need a hockey player.

Knox stands next to me and elbows me.

He smiles and nods.

"We really are big fans of yours, Villi," Ariel says. "We've always talked about hooking up with you."

"Both of us," Elsie says. "At the same time..."

"Then what's Knox doing here?" I ask with a grin.

"I'm working this deal out," Knox says. "This is all about having fun."

"We just wanted to wish you good luck," Ariel says. "Maybe give you a little motivation to play really good?"

"You have a game tomorrow," Elsie says. "You can think about us. And then after the game..."

"I love college," Knox whispers to me.

“I’m not one for playing games,” I say. “Get to the point.”

Ariel and Elsie look at each other.

They smile.

Then at the same time they reach for the bottoms of their shirts and up they go.

Bras too, of course.

Knox claps his hands together in prayer and sighs with relief.

I’m staring at two beautiful sets of tits.

Ariel’s are bigger. They’re creamier. Softer looking. Rich pink nipples. Thick. Delicious.

And then there’s Elsie.

She has small, perky nipples.

Almost the same color as her skin.

She knows her tits are smaller than Ariel’s but she owns it.

I love when a woman can own her body.

They both stand there, enjoying this moment as I stare.

My eyes going back and forth.

“For good luck,” Ariel says.

“More after the game,” Elsie says.

“Or,” Knox calls out. “Or... we have a little appetizer right now.” He elbows me. “What do you think, Villi? Pregame ritual...?”

I look at Knox.

Then I look back to the beautiful sets of tits on Ariel and Elsie.

An idea hits me.

A great idea.

I grab Knox by the left shoulder and smile.

“You take good care of Knox,” I say to Ariel and Elsie.
“Don’t let me down.”

I turn and hurry out of the room.

Knox calls out my name.

I ignore him.

I can’t believe what I’m doing here now.

Bailing on two sexy college beauties who are already
topless waiting for me...

And for what reason?

I have to text Miss Monroe back...

I don’t want to be rude, right?

VERA

HOCKEY GAME. TOMORROW NIGHT. YOU HAVE TICKETS.

Villi sends the text while I'm seated in a small breakfast restaurant that has the heavenly smell of coffee and bacon lingering in the air.

I'm mid-bite into a fattening croissant and I freeze.

I blink.

My eyes read the text and then move to the left to read it again.

Like my eyes are a typewriter.

I take the bite of croissant and put it down on my plate.

I reach for my coffee and stupidly punch it right over.

It's half full, not too hot, not that it matters.

My coffee splatters all over the table and spills over the other side.

I jump up and put my phone into my back pocket.

A moment later one of the baristas is at the table with paper towels.

“I’m so sorry,” I whisper as I grab for some napkins.

“Did you get burned?”

“No. I wasn’t paying attention. Don’t text and drink, huh?”

The young woman smiles at me.

“I could use a drink right now,” I say.

She just stares. Then she says, “I’ll get another coffee.”

I feel small.

Embarrassed.

I just stand there.

I remember the text.

Now I have my phone in my hand again.

Reading the text again.

It takes me a few seconds to realize how I must look.

I don’t care.

I just keep reading the text.

Villi wants me to attend the next *Puckford Pirates* game.

Which is today, Vera. Today.

I’m not one for college athletics and all that.

Plus, it’s no way appropriate for me to show up and be anywhere near Villi.

Not after what happened.

Two tickets, darling. Stop reading the text ten thousand times. Bring a guy if you want. I don’t care.

I laugh out loud.

More people stare at me.

Imagine if I brought a guy? Villi would lose his mind.

My thumbs are poised to respond.

Someone says my name.

I quickly turn...

... and bump into my freshly poured cup of coffee.

The barista has to let the cup go so she doesn't end up with severe burns on her hands.

To make things even worse, I reach into my pocket, take some money and hand it to the barista as though she's a stripper.

Then I run out of the breakfast place, knowing I can never show my face there again.

I have a one track mind though.

Villi.

The *Puckford Pirates* hockey game.

I've been to games before.

It's really not *that* big of a deal.

Except you and I both know it's a really big fucking deal.

“WANT SOME POPCORN?” I ASK VIOLET. “A DRINK? A SHIRT or something? Anything?”

“No, thanks,” Violet says. “We're not tourists. There's plenty to do after the game if I need...”

“Right,” I say. “Those hardcore college popcorn parties, right?”

“Do you have to be such a nerd all the time, Vera?”

“Ouch.”

“I know. Sorry.”

“You’re the one who is just as bad as me. Or at least you were.” I lean closer to her. “Until Mac.”

“Look at Mac on the ice and tell me it doesn’t do things to you,” Violet whispers back to me.

I laugh.

I shake my head.

No way I’m going to look at Mac like that!

I would never do that!

Are you kidding me?

Of course I’m not going to look at Mac...

I’m going to be looking at Villi.

“Vera, seriously though,” Violet says. “What in the world are we doing here?”

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t do this. You don’t come to these. Ever.”

“I’ve been to hockey games before.”

“Besides the forced one each season when all the employees have to show up?”

I shrug my shoulders. “Why does it matter?”

“Why now?”

“Why not?”

Violet rolls her eyes. “You’re being weird.”

I laugh. “I’m not being weird at all. I’m embracing this place. You want to know the truth, Violet? I’ve been so focused on work... and you.”

“Me?”

“Yeah. But I’ve realized that you’re an adult. Obviously. You can go to a bar and buy a drink.”

“Right.”

“I don’t know, I just...”

“Are you having a midlife crisis?” Violet asks.

“What? No! Midlife? I’m barely thirty!”

Now Violet is the one laughing. “I don’t know! You’re an old woman now, Vera.”

“Ouch again. Like I really need to hear that.”

“I’m just saying...”

“Yeah, you’re *just saying*.”

“You need a man.”

“Oh, here we go. No offense to you, little sister, but you screw one guy and now you’re an expert on sex and relationships?”

Violet narrows her stare. “When was the last time you had sex?”

“I am not talking about that with you.”

“That’s what I thought.”

The lights dim, ending the conversation with my sister.

Music starts to blare through the speakers.

Everyone stands up and begins to cheer.

The announcer bellows through the speakers, demanding more noise for *our Puckford Pirates hockey team!*

The place is vibrating with yells.

I feel my heart racing.

Just caught up in the moment I suppose.

The team skates out onto the ice.

For a second or two they all look the same to me.

These big college hockey players.

Their uniforms, helmets on, sticks in hands, skating in circles on their half of the ice.

The only player that looks different is the goalie.

He's wearing much bigger pads, has a bigger stick, and a hockey mask.

My eyes suddenly feel like they clear up.

I'm looking...

... and looking...

I swallow hard.

The music fades a little.

The lights turn back on.

I'm looking right at Villi now.

Everyone slowly begins to sit back down.

The cheers calm down too.

The guys are just skating around.

I assume this is some kind of warmup thing.

My eyes won't leave Villi.

I'm not all that far from the ice.

The seats Villi got for me are close.

Villi skates behind the goalie net and around.

I tell myself to not let my head tilt.

To not let my tongue fall out of my mouth.

Definitely to not drool everywhere.

It's almost impossible not to do it.

I feel the wires in my brain starting to short out.

The part of my brain that's supposed to remind me of what's good and bad.

But I can't help it.

I just stare.

I just enjoy the moment.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with looking.

Villi skates a little faster, making another lap.

Then he turns and stops.

Shavings of ice kick up into the air.

Villi looks right at me.

He obviously knows where I'm sitting because he got me the tickets.

He doesn't even know if I'm there... I never said I was going to show up.

But I'm here.

So is he.

He's looking at me with smoldering, *hockey* eyes.

Deep, intense, and way too hot.

It's more than hot.

It's sexy.

Just pure, plain sexy.

Villi is deadly sexy... and I'm headed for some serious trouble with him.

VILLI

COACH DAMON GRABS THE BACK OF MY JERSEY.

I feel his breath on my neck before he starts to scream in my ear.

“No fucking fighting! Less than a minute to go. Do not fuck this up! No bullshit. They’re going to come after you. Let them! Be the decoy!”

The idea of not fighting...?

It pisses me off.

The ref blows the whistle.

We all take our position.

We’re playing *Leversburg* and they just pulled their goalie for an extra attacker.

Mac wins the face-off.

He passes it right back to Gabriel.

Gabriel passes it to Jax.

Jax passes it to me.

It's almost like we're in the middle of a practice.

Half the other team comes for me.

I smack the puck off the boards near center ice, just as Mac breaks away.

Three guys are ready to pounce on me and I just stand there, as told, to be the decoy.

I take a shoulder check and barely move.

Mac has the puck on his stick and scores an empty-net goal.

That seals the game.

I look for Vera.

She's jumping up and down with Violet.

They're cheering.

And surprisingly enough, I'm actually looking at Vera.

I'm not looking at Violet as she jumps and those tits of hers bounce...

I smile.

"Nice fucking game, pussies," I say to some of the *Leversburg* guys.

They all come after me.

Punches are thrown.

I have to defend myself.

Even if Coach Damon is going to want to cut off my head.

Cheers, laughter, Coach Damon giving his post-game speech.

He's done his normal routine of sneaking away for a drink or ten.

He's got to be buzzed up a little to talk to reporters.

When he zeroes in on me, I'm ready for the hell he's going to unleash.

Instead of calling me out, he walks toward me.

He puts a hand to my right shoulder.

"I said no fucking around," he said. "But I understand. I get it. You do what you gotta do." Coach Damon then gently slaps my face and laughs.

His breath reeks of booze.

He turns and gently sways, dancing to a song that isn't playing.

Telling everyone they did a great job.

Giving hugs and handshakes, then he wanders off to probably down some mouthwash so his breath is minty fresh, so he can answer questions about the game.

That's one nice thing about being a college athlete.

We're protected by the university for the most part if we don't want to talk.

I know that'll change the second I go pro.

I already know how my first professional game will go.

I'll be the cocky bastard who gets a sweet eight-figure deal.

Then I'll come out swinging and shooting.

A fight. A goal.

I'll make my mark.

But before that, I have other *marks* I want to make.

I step away from the small celebration and find my phone in my bag.

I'm sitting on a cushioned chair, right on the *Puckford Pirates* logo.

I take one quick gaze around, then I get to work.

Did you like the game, darling?

My message is sent and instantly read.

That means Vera has her phone in her hand.

Nice win!

How cliché of a thing to say.

I like to celebrate after a win. Come down to the locker room. I'll let you in.

Vera reads the text.

She's already typing a response.

You know I can't do that. Don't be silly.

Silly.

How adorable of *Miss Monroe*.

I'm not being silly. I'm being serious. Sneak in. I'll take you right to the showers. You can help wash the game off my body.

Now I know I'm being too flirty for Vera's normal routine.

I don't care.

Villi. Stop.

She knows I'm not going to stop.

Think about how naughty it would be, darling. Me. Naked. Wet. You could watch me. You don't have to touch. Even though you do owe me. ;)

Now I've crossed the line completely.

Acknowledgment in text that I did some naughty stuff with one of my professors.

To be fair, Vera is my only female professor.

And she's an assistant professor.

It's only sort of wrong... right?

I'm smiling as I see the bubbles on the screen.

I can only imagine how fast her heart is racing.

I wonder if she's still with Violet.

Probably trying to hide her phone.

I can't imagine if Violet saw the texts...

Then again Vera might not have me saved in her phone.

I'm just some random number.

But I am talking about the locker room.

Villi. We both know I cannot go anywhere near the locker room. Or you. Not in this setting. I assume you're just flirting and trying to make me flustered. If that's the case, then you win. Okay? Now please stop texting before we get caught.

I respect that answer.

She's standing up to me in a cute way.

Fair enough then.

No locker room.

If that's the case, then we need to take this off campus. Maybe after I'm showered I'll stop by your place. Just for a visit.

The text is read.

The reply bubbles pop up.

They go away.

They pop up again.

They go away again.

Then they stay away.

She's not responding to me.

Now maybe some guys would take that to heart.

Take it as a rejection.

Me?

As far as I'm concerned, Vera didn't say no.

She did not tell me to not come over to her apartment.

So what the fuck do you think I'm going to do next?

VERA

THERE'S TWO REASONS I DON'T RESPOND TO VILLI'S TEXT about showing up to my place.

The first... well... I kind of got pushed into walking.

Violet in front of me.

Meeting up with her friends - Mila and Ruby.

I could not run the risk of anyone seeing my phone.

Accidentally or not.

So that's reason one.

I'm now getting out of the hockey game, then I get back to my car so I can go back home.

Now.

The second reason?

Probably a much more obvious reason.

Villi?

Coming over to my place?

Sort of unannounced...?

That's just insanity.

Bad enough he has been texting me to come to the locker room.

To meet him in the shower.

He wanted me to watch him shower.

That alone produces thought after thought.

Villi being naked. Villi touching himself.

The smell of his soap.

I'm sure he uses something that's coarse.

Something smelling manly like pine or something too.

No. I can't do that. No.

Those thoughts keep coming to me.

Over and over.

The idea and vision and fantasy of Villi showering.

I turn up some very loud music on the drive home.

When I arrive, I find myself almost sneaking around, wondering if Villi is already at my door.

He's not.

I get into my apartment and I lock the door behind me.

My cheeks warm up a little as I rest my back against the door.

I take a deep breath.

Somewhere inside my head I wish Villi would just kick open the door...

No.

I shake my head and walk right to my bedroom.

I'm in for the night.

That's it.

I'm done.

I socialized.

Went to a hockey game.

Go Puckford Pirates!

Now I'm home.

Safely home.

To prove it even more to myself that nothing is out of the ordinary, I hurry and strip out of my clothes.

Right down to my bra.

I pause for a second and look in the mirror.

I smile.

I reach back and off goes the bra.

That amazing feeling of just *ahhh...*

I honestly wonder sometimes why I bother wearing a bra.

Especially with a hoodie.

It's not like I'm my sisters and packing GMO gigantic watermelons.

I find my favorite pajama bottoms - the ones that are purple with white octopuses on them.

I grab a tank top.

A hoodie over that and *boom.*

I am officially done for the night.

Not going anywhere.

Not doing anything.

When I get hungry I can order out for delivery or I can find something frozen and toss it in the air fryer for a little bit.

Done.

Over.

Finished.

I walk as though I've grown a foot taller.

On my way to the kitchen to make the decision on what to eat for dinner, there's a knock at the door.

I freeze in place.

I try to convince myself I did not hear a knock.

My mind is just messing with me.

I hear the knocking again.

I swallow hard.

I lick my lips.

My jaw quivers for a moment.

"Wh... who is it?" I call out.

Of course in the pit of my stomach I already know who it is.

"It's Villi..."

NO PANTIES. NO BRA.

These f-ugly pajama pants.

I can't believe this is happening.

I know I can just tell him to go away.

He can't just stand outside my door and wait.

Then again, knowing Villi, he'd wait there.

All night.

Just to make sure I was safe.

Or to prove how badly he wants to get into my pants.

"Villi," I call out. "Wha... what are you doing here?"

"Can you open the door, darling?"

I cringe.

That's a good plan.

Last thing I need is for someone to start questioning things.

I rush to the door and open it.

There he is.

Villi.

The smell of his clothes, cologne, and soap all hit me at once.

My toes curl.

My thighs tremble.

My nipples instantly become tight buds, hiding inside my hoodie and tank top.

His hair is still wet, just tossed wherever it wants to go.

This is not happening.

A voice in the back of my mind reminds me that we already have crossed the line.

Sex is sex.

Or isn't it?

Is fingering sex?

“You look fucking stunning right now all dressed down and chill,” Villi says.

Oh fuck.

I reach for his shirt and pull him into my apartment.

He shuts the door and locks it.

Oh fuck times two.

Villi moves my hand from his shirt and he grabs me by the hips and pulls me against his rock-hard, freshly showered body.

I feel him start to pick me up.

So effortlessly too.

His lips are drawing nearer and nearer with each passing second too.

“Villi,” I whisper.

“Vera.”

“We cannot have sex,” I say.

I really have no idea why I say that.

It doesn't matter.

Fingers, tongue, or cock... sex is sex.

And this is naughty sex.

This is forbidden sex.

“Okay, darling,” Villi says with a slight growl. “No sex. I can play that game.”

Villi actually willing to listen to me and respect me... just makes me want to have sex with him even more!

VERA

ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN ON THE *THIS IS FUCKING WILD AND hot* meter, Villi is approaching a twenty-seven. And fast.

He has me in the air still.

Just holding me.

Even if he's not showing off how strong he is... he kind of is.

The smell of his clothes and skin gets to me.

I'm not usually that kind of woman.

Colognes most of the time irritate my nose.

Villi isn't doused in cologne.

He's just... *himself*.

Rugged, assertive, and he really doesn't give a fuck about anything but me right now.

I can see it in his eyes.

He doesn't have to say it for me to believe it.

And now I toss this nonsense *no sex* rule at him and he's willing to go along with it.

Which leaves me wondering one thing...

I wonder what he's going to do to me first?

HIS HANDS CRADLE MY ASS.

My legs wrap around his strong body.

My hands grab his shoulders tight.

I'm doing my best not to shake and shiver.

I don't want him to think I'm vulnerable.

Which I am not.

I am not vulnerable at all.

I'm fucking turned on by this guy... no matter how wrong the situation may or may not be.

Oh, Vera, this is wrong. This is way wrong.

Villi is a student on campus.

He's a big time college hockey player.

You're a lowly assistant professor.

I quickly chase that nonsense away.

As far as I'm concerned, we are two adults in the midst of some flirting passion that's going to test limits.

Villi makes his move and gently kisses my neck.

I throw my head back and let out a loud groan.

It's so loud you'd swear I haven't been kissed in seven years.

Villi opens his mouth and growls.

I feel his teeth - *his teeth!* - run across my neck.

One side to the other.

Then he pulls away.

I look at him.

I feel myself in need of taking a few deep breaths.

My chest feels like someone is squeezing it.

"Bedroom," I say.

I'm the defiant one now. I'm making the rules.

"Detour," Villi whispers.

"What?" I ask.

Villi turns and walks me into the kitchen.

I remember my kitchen is where we shared our first kiss.

The night of the broken glass and a butcher knife, an attack and fighting and...

The night Villi saved my life.

Villi lifts me up even more.

Now I'm taller than him.

My breasts are right in his face.

I wish I wasn't wearing a hoodie right now...

"Get us something to drink, darling," he says.

I gasp.

Now this is hot.

You have to admit it.

Villi carries me into the kitchen and lifts me up so I can find something for us to take into the bedroom to drink.

My right hand shakes as I open the cabinet.

“I’ve got wine,” I say. “That’s usually all I-”

“I didn’t ask for a fucking explanation, darling,” he growls. “Grab the bottle. Now.”

He orders me around like I’m his little pet.

And I like it.

I grab for a bottle of wine and Villi lowers me back down to his eye level.

My left hand moves to the back of his neck for more balance.

His fingers dig tight against my ass, through my stupid ugly purple, octopus pajama pants...

He walks me to my bedroom.

Carrying me. Holding me. Protecting me.

I know soon enough he’s going to love me.

Not real love.

That’s a different kind of love.

The love when you hold hands for fun and go on a walking date or something.

This kind of love is for our bodies and pleasure.

I feel fire dancing throughout my body.

Villi kicks the bedroom door shut with force.

The slam rattles the entire apartment.

I know for sure my neighbor hears the slam.

Old Miss Woodsen will be waving a fist at my bedroom wall for sure!

Now Villi doesn't throw me to my bed.

As much I would be okay with it, Villi drops down.

He places me ass first on the bed.

He moves to one knee in front of me.

I grab for the covers on my bed.

He quickly kisses me.

It's a fast kiss.

Deep and possessive.

I peel my hands off the bed and scratch at his face.

I want the kiss to be deeper even though it can't be.

His hands easily slide under my hoodie, then up and off it goes.

Villi moves so smoothly too.

My hoodie doesn't even hit the bed before Villi's hands are touching my shoulders.

His strong fingertips against my soft skin.

Villi starts to move the straps of my tank top from my shoulders, down my arms.

He keeps going too.

The top of my shirt begins to pull down.

I bite my bottom lip and arch my back.

There's a moment of terror that hits me.

Of Villi seeing me...

He leans in, almost reading my mind, and he brushes his lips against mine.

“Fuck, darling, how can you be so fucking sexy all the time?”

I groan deep in my throat.

Villi pulls the front of my tank top down.

The air touches my nipples first.

They tighten even more.

Hard buds waiting for Villi...

He smirks at me and looks down.

He lets out a sigh and an *oohhh* sound.

“Fuck, darling,” he growls. “So fucking perfect.”

Before I can attempt to protest, he inches down and goes for my chest.

My hands hit the bed and I lean back a little.

I look down.

My jaw begins to drop.

Villi’s tongue flicks against my left nipple.

I swear angels begin to sing above me.

They dance above me too.

I’m convinced I’ve smacked my head against a wall and I’m dreaming this entire thing.

Villi’s left hand grabs my right breast.

With force.

Ownership.

Telling me that for a little while, my body is his.

His mouth engulfs my left breast.

I feel his teeth graze my skin.

His teeth then come together at my nipple.

He gives a little playful tug and then pops away.

He looks up at me. "Can you be anymore fucking perfect right now, Vera?"

I grab his hair with my left hand. "Shut up, Villi. No need to hear you talk right now."

He growls at me.

I reach for the bottom of my tank top and lift it up a little.

Villi takes the hint and strips me out of it.

Now I'm topless in front of him.

Villi wastes no time in running both hands over my breasts.

Squeezing them, cupping from under them, his thumbs stroking left to right against my nipples.

My legs ache and shiver.

I manage to reach over Villi and claw at the back of his shirt.

He knows what I want.

He stands up, towering over me.

I look up at him.

Villi touches the bottom of his shirt.

He's flirting with me.

I swallow hard.

I nod.

Villi takes his shirt off.

He does it with one hand.

Tearing it up and over his head.

Showing off muscle flexing, twisting, tempting more than ever before.

I sit up straight for a moment and then inch closer to him.

His skin smells clean.

A clean, rough smell.

He smells like a man.

He is a man.

I gently kiss just above his belly button.

His stomach rock-hard, packed tight with muscle he's earned through exercise and playing hockey.

I kiss a second time.

Villi then grabs my hair and pulls me away.

“Not yet, darling,” he whispers. “You first.”

He releases his hold on my hair and drops down to his knees.

As if I need any other hint of what he has planned next, Villi slowly licks his lips.

VILLI

SHE'S DELICIOUS. PERFECT.

She's like fresh squeezed lemonade on a hot day.

Or like a shot of whiskey that burns all the way down,
making your eyes water and making you want more.

I hold her by her sides.

I stare at her beautiful perky tits.

I know she's worried about them.

She thinks they aren't big enough.

They're perfect for her.

I nuzzle my nose against her right nipple.

Her hips arch just a little.

A soft thrust, as though I need to be reminded of her sweet
pussy, waiting for me.

“Oh, darling, you're begging for me,” I whisper to her.
“How bad do you want my tongue inside your cunt?”

Vera gasps.

“Is that a bad word to you?” I ask. “Huh? You don’t like that word?”

“Why are you still talking?” Vera asks.

She’s got a little bit of a crazy look in her eye.

My hands grab the sides of her pajama pants.

Purple. Octopuses.

I don’t bother making a comment.

No need for laughter right now.

This is about business.

The business of Vera’s orgasms.

I can only imagine how deprived she must be.

It takes a real man to go down on a woman and know how to properly take care of her.

She lifts her ass off the bed so I can strip her pajama pants down.

I look at everything.

The soft creamy color of her skin.

The shape of her hips.

When she sits back on the bed this way, new curves suddenly appear.

It actually makes me want to ball my hands up into fists and scream.

She’s that fucking beautiful.

For a second my head feels scrambled.

I touch the backs of her legs, just behind her knees.

I open her legs and watch as her delicious flower blooms before my eyes.

Wet labia, glistening, almost dripping like summer flowers with morning dew...

They peel themselves apart.

Thick honey is almost string-like.

Calling to me.

I'm like a traveler on a five-hundred-mile journey through the desert without a sip of water.

I don't even know what I'm trying to say at this point.

I lunge forward, gently rolling a growl down my throat.

My tongue laps up the wetness waiting.

Vera groans and thrusts herself at me.

Fucking hell, darling. You've got a wild side hidden somewhere, don't you?

I lick again.

Then again.

My left hand moves up and I grab her hip.

My right hand teases the inside of her thigh and I trace a line up to her slit.

She's soaked.

My fingertips lose a short battle of temptation.

I watch as my pointer and middle fingers cling together and begin to enter Vera's body.

She groans again.

My fingers disappear into her sweet cave.

I curl my fingers and she thrusts and cries out.

That's her spot...

I ease my fingers out of her and playfully rub her warm honey all over her stubbly mound and up to her belly button.

My mouth quickly latches to her pussy.

My tongue moves between her labia and curls up, teasing at her clit.

Instantly she grabs for my hair and wants me tighter against her body.

Her hips rock.

Not soft and gentle either.

“Villi,” she purrs. “I’m already close. I’m so sorry...”

I growl loudly and pull away from her. “Don’t you ever be sorry for enjoying your pleasure with me, darling. Now I’m going to make your sweet cunt all mine.”

She lets out almost a nervous scream at that dirty word.

And then I go back for more.

I know I’ll be far from getting my fill before she comes and that’s okay.

It’ll be just another subtle *thing* that keeps me coming back for more.

Which I never do.

I never return to the scene of the crime.

I fuck and I leave.

I never show back up.

Especially with women older than me.

They have lives. They have baggage.

But with Vera...

My tongue slaps against her clit and she cries out.

I move my lips and gently close them against her nub and suckle.

At first, it's soft and quiet.

Her hips shake.

My precious angel is about to explode and I'm ready for her.

She claws at her own bed.

I feel her wanting to resist.

Wanting to wait and enjoy this more.

There's no need for that.

We have more time than she knows to keep going...

I hold her hips tight. I keep her in place.

She screams my name once.

Villi.

Her voice bouncing off the walls.

She tries to scream again but loses her breath.

Her body begins to levitate off the bed like she's possessed by a demon.

In reality, she's just possessed by my tongue.

My tongue is the devil.

Her cunt is sweet and innocent... *no more.*

Her warm honey rushes from her body.

I stay with her, suckling for a few seconds, then kissing.

Now is not the time to slow down and get all soft and romantic.

I pull away from Vera's sweet pussy and stand up.

Her body is still throbbing.

She's shaking as she clutches the covers on her bed tight.

"Now it's your turn, darling," I say.

With my right hand I open my jeans.

But as I begin to unzip, Vera makes her move.

She boldly swats my hand away.

She slides from the bed, dropping to her knees before me.

Fully naked.

Beautiful as ever.

Her eyes glistening with lust.

Just like her pussy.

"I'll do it," she purrs.

And she does.

She unzips my jeans.

She pulls them down with force.

I hear her gasp when she's expecting my cock to jump free but it doesn't.

Got to pull my jeans down more than that to see it all, darling.

When she finally does unleash my stiff thickness, the groan she makes has my cock pulsing.

And let's be fair here for a second.

I've felt Vera come with my fingers.

In that lecture hall.

Remember that?

And I did not get myself off either.

Nobody else touched me.

I didn't even touch myself.

And now I've tasted her.

Her honey still laces my lips and tongue like a clingy drug.

I'm just building the scene up here because I know when her mouth wraps around my cock, I'm a dead man.

That's okay.

I want to watch Vera play with my cum.

I want to see what she does with it.

Her right hand suddenly touches my cock and all my thoughts are erased.

Her fingertips scale up my length.

She teases my forgiving tip with her thumb.

Staring up at me.

She straightens her back and arches it a little.

Thrusting her chest up toward my cock.

My eyes grow wide as I watch her grip my cock and gently flirt with it against her left nipple.

"Oh, darling," I growl. "Are you teasing me...?"

"You'll see," Vera whispers.

Her hand begins to pump my cock.

She's playing with my cock against her nipple.

Over and over.

I suck in a breath and exhale.

As soon as she sees the first droplets appear at the tip of my cock, she paints her nipple with it.

Miss Monroe... where is this coming from?

She then looks up at me and groans.

Not even a breath later her lips press against my cock.

Her tongue flicks against my tip, savoring all that pre-cum delight.

I reach for her hair, sliding my fingers into it.

I let out a groaning breath.

I pull her toward me some more, guiding her lips over my thickness.

She moves with ease.

No hesitation at all.

Her lips and tongue greeting me.

Feeling the warmth of her mouth.

A groan that vibrates in a very unfair manner.

“Oh, fuck,” I whisper. “I want to fuck your mouth, Miss Monroe.”

She shakes her head. *With my cock in her mouth.*

She reaches for my hands and pulls them from my hair.

I have to admit.

I'm a little bit in shock watching this.

She doesn't want me to touch.

To guide.

To fuck.

Vera slowly closes her eyes and keeps going.

Taking more of me by the second.

She reaches a certain point where I know she's going to stop.

But she doesn't.

She keeps going.

I slowly hunch forward a bit and I feel my knees ready to give out.

Holy fucking hell...

My hands curl up into fists.

Vera slowly inches back and goes for it again.

And again...

And... again...

I can't help myself as I slowly thrust forward at her mouth.

We find a motion together that works.

I'm not touching her. And her mouth is fucking my cock.

I swallow hard and look up to the ceiling.

I feel that impending, unstoppable rush deep inside me too.

Far too early for my reputation, but this fucking game we've been playing has taken its toll on me.

I lick my lips and I taste her pussy.

Damn you, Vera.

I groan and look down at her.

I grunt and feel myself *right there*.

I suck in one more breath and I know she knows it's about to happen.

She has plenty of time to slide her mouth off my cock and stroke me if she wants.

She doesn't do that either.

Instead, Vera groans and goes for more.

My legs flex and I let go.

The explosion makes me growl louder than I intend to.

Vera takes it.

Takes me.

She takes it all.

Her mouth moving up and down on my cock as I finish.

This fucking woman is going to bring me to my knees with her mouth.

My cock keeps pumping.

Pulsating with warm desire.

And Vera keeps going along for the ride.

I stare down at her, watching those sexy lips of hers moving.

I picture her standing in front of a whiteboard, giving a lecture on taxes and interest and what a healthy balance sheet looks like.

Vera finally inches her way back and her mouth pops off my cock with a loud noise.

She presses her back against the edge of the bed and slides right back up onto it.

Sitting there as though nothing just happened.

I stare down at her, my lip starting to curl.

I fucking hate her rule of no sex.

VERA

HE'S STARTED A FIRE IN ME I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED.

I've never done *that* like *that* before.

My jaw aches in the best way possible.

I keep swallowing, tasting him over and over.

My body shivers from the inside, head to toe.

Villi reaches down for me.

He grabs my hips and pulls me from the bed.

Picking me up.

Placing me on my feet.

Fast. Commanding.

Without speaking a word, he uses his right hand to push his jeans down to the point where he can freely step out on his own.

I'm well aware at that exact moment he and I are both naked at the same time.

I'm also well aware that my rules of *no sex* means absolutely nothing and I want nothing more than for Villi to push me down onto the bed, spread my legs, and fuck me until I can't remember my name.

Villi touches under my chin with his right hand.

His thumb strokes my bottom lip.

"Nobody has ever made me come that fast before, darling," he whispers.

"I guess I'm just that good then," I say with a smile.

"I'm not smiling, Vera," he says. "You should be punished for what you just did to me."

"P-punished...?"

"That's right. Punished."

I swallow hard.

Villi gently moves me out of the way.

I watch as he walks around my bed toward my nightstand.

I watch his cock - still so thick and hard - trying to sway.

The size... it's just...

I touch my jaw.

I have no idea how I did what I just did.

Villi climbs on top of my bed.

He sinks down into the bed, over the covers, resting his head against my pillows.

His cock standing like a skyscraper.

I've never seen a man orgasm the way he just did and still be rock-hard.

“Climb onto your bed, darling,” Villi says.

I inch toward the bed.

I slowly climb onto it on my hands and knees.

I prop myself up on my knees.

“I didn’t say to stop,” Villi says.

I swallow hard, knowing for sure that if I keep moving closer to him we’re going to break the *no sex* rule.

Not that there is a rule for that.

Not that it matters.

I crawl toward Villi.

I can’t help myself as I look at his entire body.

The size of his feet.

His legs.

His tree trunk sized thighs, packed with muscle.

Of course, his cock. Duh.

Muscles everywhere on him.

Lines and cuts of lines and shapes and just...

Villi grabs me by my hips and pulls me up toward him.

I groan.

My mouth hovers over his.

I’m taking deep breaths.

“I think the most suitable punishment for you, Miss Monroe, is another orgasm,” he says.

My toes curl.

I melt.

“Seems fair to me,” I say.

I gently lower my hips, ready to take his cock.

I truly can't wait to feel him open me.

I can't believe I'm thinking this stuff...

Villi slips his right hand between us and stops me.

“No, darling,” he says. “Your rule. No sex.”

“Oh, Villi... fuck that rule...”

“I have to follow the rules.”

“You never follow the rules.”

“Maybe I'm turning over a new leaf, Miss Monroe.”

I bite my bottom lip.

He's torturing me now.

That's my punishment.

Villi's left hand climbs up my body and he cups my right breast.

A tight handful and I feel warm chills dance through my body.

Villi moves his right hand.

“Look down and watch, darling,” he tells me.

I listen to him.

I look down and watch as he grabs his cock.

Holds it tight.

And he presses it against my body.

Against my...

My cunt.

I blush as I think that terrible word.

Such an awful word.

But with Villi it's just so hot.

Sexy.

Dirty.

Wrong.

But it's right.

He moves his cock back and forth against me.

Not thrusting. Not entering me.

Teasing my tender, wet labia.

Playing with my eager clit.

My body feels so...

Free. Relaxed.

I feel loose and... in tune with my pleasure...

I don't even know if that makes sense at all.

"Now look at me, Vera," Villi says.

I move my gaze to his dark and evil eyes.

"You're going to come all over my cock," he says.

"Without me entering you. Understand?"

I can't take it anymore.

I lower my mouth down to his.

I kiss him harder than I ever kissed someone before.

My hips start to rock, finding a balance between instinct and need.

I can feel Villi stroking himself.

Pressing that thick head of his cock against my clit.

My toes feel permanently curled and locked.

Villi's left hand grabs my ass and he pushes me up a little.

Making it so my breasts are his for the taking.

I reach out and place my hands flat against the wall.

I throw my head back and groan.

I don't care who can hear me.

Fuck it.

It just feels so good.

Villi doesn't stop for a second.

Using his cock to tease my clit to make me come.

It's like some insane mathematical equation but it all makes sense.

My hips start bucking at him.

"Villi," I groan. "Villi... I'm..."

He moves his hand at the last second and both hands grab my ass and he pulls my body down against his.

His cock presses between us as I start to climax.

My hips fuck.

They don't rock or thrust.

They fuck.

They fuck with force.

I groan. I call out his name.

I think I even grunt at one point.

Villi's fingers dig harder into my ass.

Making me grind his cock with more force.

He then lets out a grunt and I realize...

Oh, fuck.

He's coming too.

I suddenly feel a hot spurt between our bodies.

Then another.

And another.

His cock throbbing, forcing hot, fresh cum between us.

All the while I'm coming too.

Climaxing at the same time.

Look, Villi, another first for us!

VILLI

HERE I AM, CLIMBING OUT OF VERA'S BED, NAKED, MY OWN cum clinging to my stomach, and here I am, walking to the bathroom to clean myself up.

Something that never happens.

A kind of impossibility, like snow when it's eighty degrees outside.

You know what I mean?

First off, there are never any *messes* with me.

If you want me, darling, you're going to get me.

That means you're the one taking it.

But damn does Vera make everything different.

I kind of just went for a move for fun for a second or two and she kept going with it.

Pressing her body against my cock.

Pressing my cock against my body.

Two warm bodies.

Her groans.

The taste of her breath.

The feel of her body in my hands.

What the hell was I supposed to do?

Vera has me feeling that my well will never run dry.

I'm normally good to go as many times as needed, not a problem.

I step into the bathroom and look around.

It's perfectly clean and organized.

There a square tissue box on the back of the toilet that says *HAVE AN ISSUE - TAKE A TISSUE*.

I look down at myself.

Oh, I have plenty of issues right now.

And trust me, one little tissue isn't going to clean this up.

Even if it's one of those super fancy ones with the lotion and all that.

My next choice is a towel.

Sorry, darling.

I swipe a bath towel off the rack next to the shower.

I consider this my *leave behind*.

At some point, Vera will have to wash the towels.

And she'll find a random one that's all crusty and she'll wonder what the hell is on the towel.

Then she'll remember me.

Her.

Her body.

My cock.

I wipe from my cock up to my stomach.

Collecting as much of my own cum as I can.

I fold the towel over and do it again.

“I have towels in the bedroom.”

I turn my head and Vera is standing in the doorway.

Wearing a hoodie.

Wearing nothing but a hoodie, which she shows me on purpose when she reaches up for no good reason other than to make sure the hoodie lifts up and shows me her delicate pussy.

That beautiful yet evil pussy that has my head spinning in all directions.

“Thanks for telling me now, darling,” I say with a smirk.

“Oops,” she whispers.

She just stands there, admiring me. Not hiding the fact that her eyes are dancing all over my body.

Not that I care one bit.

She can eye fuck me all she wants.

Or she can just let me fuck her...

“Can’t say I’m not a rule follower now,” I say.

“That’s true. Although you pick a terrible one to listen to.”

I grit my teeth.

She’s begging for it.

She wants me to grab her, throw her to her bed and stuff my cock so deep in her cunt it’ll honestly be like losing her

virginity again. Properly though.

I finish cleaning myself up the best I can - *face it, with cum, you need a hot shower.*

I roll the towel up and drop it into a basket that Vera has just for used towels.

She's so proper. She's so organized.

My cock sways between my legs, still semi-hard.

The damn thing is almost hitting my knees at this point.

I turn and face Vera.

She's blocking the doorway.

Again, nothing but a hoodie.

Hair a little bit messy.

The look in her eyes...

"This is normally my cue to get dressed and take off," I whisper.

"Oh? How many professors of yours have you fucked, Villi? Is this how you pass your classes?"

I step closer to Vera. "First off, darling, we never fucked. My cock has never been inside you. Second off, I've never done a thing like this before."

"So I'm your... first...?"

I smile. "You keep teasing with that pretty mouth of yours... watch what happens..."

Vera blushes.

She looks down at her feet.

There's no need for this to be awkward.

“I’ll be out of here in a minute,” I say.

Vera looks at me.

She doesn’t just look at me.

She... *looks at me*.

Doesn’t say a word either.

Doesn’t move out of the way either.

Standing there, staring at me.

Slowly, she grabs her bottom lip with her top teeth.

Something has her suddenly nervous.

I step closer to her.

She doesn’t move.

I have to admit my first thought is that she wants me to fuck her.

I know she wants me to fuck her.

She wants me to shatter that silly rule she made in the heat of possible regrettable passion.

Then I realize what this actually is.

Oh fuck... she wants me to spend the night with her.

VERA

ARE YOU THAT CRAZY RIGHT NOW?

A few orgasms with this guy and you're sharing your bed with him for the night?

You're going to do... what...?

Cuddle?

Play the game of figuring out how each other sleep?

Do all the playful cute stuff of who wants what covers and who snores and who wants to be touched or left alone...

This is dumb, Vera.

This is so dumb.

Yeah, that's Abby's voice in my head.

Her theory is to fuck and run.

Which isn't a bad one at all.

And I'm well aware that it's best for Villi to leave.

He's even offered it.

He's not some clinger.

You know how some guys are.

They come once and next thing you know they want to hold your hand all night and whisper that they love you.

Villi knows what to do at every turn.

He finished.

He went to clean himself up.

And he was poised to leave.

I'm the one who said stay.

And whether Villi is being cute or respectful of me, he keeps listening to me.

Don't listen to me! Stop respecting me!

It's too late now.

We're in bed.

In my bed.

We're in my bed, together.

I'm wearing my hoodie and nothing else.

Villi put his jeans on.

I'm on my side of the bed.

Well, the entire bed is mine.

But I'm in my normal sleeping spot.

Facing my nightstand.

Villi is behind me.

Not grabbing and squeezing and pulling me against him.

His left hand is touching my side, over my hoodie.

That's all I need right now.

He understands that without me saying a thing.

It's almost perfect. Almost too perfect.

“Close your eyes, darling,” Villi whispers. “Nothing has to be worried about right now.”

I agree with him.

I shut my eyes.

I take deep, silent breaths.

I try really hard not to think about the fact that Villi is right next to me in my bed. And all the trouble someone finding out will cause.

With his hand touching me, I drift off to sleep.

I'M RUNNING THROUGH MY KITCHEN.

I have no voice which means I can't scream.

I look behind me and Blake is no longer chasing me.

By the time I look forward, Blake is there and he grabs me by my arms.

“Hey, whore,” he growls.

He picks me up and throws me across the kitchen.

For some reason he has new found strength.

And he moves faster than gravity and reality should allow.

He's somehow almost on top of me.

He picks me up and licks his lips.

“I’m going to claim you,” he says. “I’m going to bite your neck and you’re going to be mine. You’re going to worship me. You’re going to love me and nobody else! Do you understand me?”

“No,” I manage to finally speak. “What do you think you are? A vampire?”

This just shows how crazy Blake really is.

He opens his mouth.

Two fangs drop down from his upper teeth.

Long, sharp, thick like canine fangs.

Pointed like tips of a tall gate, wanting to keep intruders out.

“Holy fuck,” I say.

“Nothing holy about this, Vera,” Blake says.

He growls and slams his mouth to my neck.

The fangs cut through my skin like a knife through warm butter.

I scream and jump...

... And my eyes pop open.

I suck in a breath.

My body shivers.

I reach up with my left hand and touch my neck.

It was a dream. Just a dream, Vera. A weird, stupid dream.

I take another breath.

My heart starts to calm.

My fingers are still touching my neck, searching for the bite of a vampire.

Oh, Vera. Stop...

That's when I feel a hand touch my hand.

I probably should scream but I quickly remember that Villi is in my bed.

I bite my bottom lip.

Villi slides my hand down my body.

It's in a very non-sexual way but with Villi everything is sexual.

His fingers do not interlock with mine.

He curls his fingers around my fingers.

Total holding and protecting.

His right hand slides under my pillow and under my body.

He curls his arm and slides me toward him with ease.

My body touches his.

For a second my teeth chatter.

This is hot...

... and this is dangerous.

VILLI

IT'S MORNING AND I'VE GOT VERA IN MY ARMS.

The sleepover game is far from my norm, but I get why people might enjoy it.

You just need the right person with you to make it feel normal.

I feel like I'm also losing my fucking mind.

Thinking things the way I am.

Saying this stuff in my mind.

It's crazy.

Too crazy.

But living in the moment of crazy, I don't move an inch.

I just take it all in and enjoy the company of a woman close to me.

Of course I wish Vera was naked right now.

That would have the moment be just a little bit better.

My thoughts must be a little loud because she slowly opens her eyes.

We look at each other and there's not a single attempt at awkwardness.

Well... fuck...

"You're still here," Vera whispers.

"I'm just as surprised as you are," I reply.

"How sweet of a thing to say."

"I'm just a villain who speaks the truth."

"Not sure those two things go together."

"Are you saying it's wrong? Kind of like us?"

Vera smirks.

Her body does this little wiggle thing.

Maybe she's just waking up. Maybe she's just stretching out.

Whatever it is...

I move in and gently kiss her.

I want to taste her *good morning* lips.

So I do.

They're warm. Sleepy.

Sleepy like her eyes.

I kiss her again.

After the third kiss, she touches my face.

Claws just a little.

I'm keeping this all calm and tame... but you bring the claws out... you're asking for the beast to come out...

I slide my hands up and grasp her face.

I hold her in place and kiss her much more properly now.

She's hesitant at first, to really kiss me.

The whole game of worrying about sleepy breath.

OVERRATED.

I want to taste Vera.

All of Vera.

The morning version of Vera...

A growl escapes my throat.

She breaks the kiss. Pulls away.

We stare for a second.

We go for each other at the same time.

My hands go for the hoodie.

No. Wait.

I go for her body first.

I pull Vera on top of me.

She straddles me.

Then I go for the hoodie.

As I do so, she opens my jeans.

She sighs into my mouth.

My hands move up her body with ease.

I skip the flirty pleasantries of playing with her tits.

At least not yet.

First things first - this hoodie has to fucking vanish off her body.

Vera makes a wildly sexy move.

She sits on me.

I feel her...

Fuck.

I feel her pussy just below my belly button.

She's warm.

She's wet.

Oh, fuck, darling, you've woken up soaked, haven't you?

I watch as her hoodie goes up and over her head.

Her perfect-handful tits are free.

Her sleepy, creamy skin.

Her nipples are tight knots already.

My eyes explore the shape of her body.

Curves I am maybe enjoying too much.

My hands cup her tits.

She puts her hands to mine.

"Make me touch you, darling," I whisper.

I smile at her.

She lowers my right hand down between her legs.

I don't need the guidance but I appreciate the journey with her.

As soon as I stroke her awakened clit, she leans forward and reaches down, finishing opening my jeans and pushing

them down.

I use my free hand to help the situation.

Then I kick my jeans off.

They're lost in the covers somewhere.

Not that I give a damn.

I move my hands to Vera's sides and pull her up.

Her tits are right above my mouth.

Her skin smells like a warm, comfortable slumber.

My mouth greets her left breast first.

Engulfing her without any help needed.

I pull away with a wet kiss and move to her right breast.

I slide my hand up and cup under her, squeezing. Tight.

Her body jerks toward me and she groans.

My teeth tease her nipple.

I roll her nipple carefully, listening to her take deep breaths, hissing, enjoying it.

I have the urge to pull her up... to bring her wet pussy to my lips...

Vera reaches down and grabs for my cock.

The feel her fingers and hand down there...

This is what heaven is like.

All the sins I've committed... I have to repent to have heaven forever...

Yeah, my thoughts are all fucked up because of Vera.

I feel her tugging at me.

Trying to grip me tighter.

Then I feel her pull...

And her hips are suddenly moving down.

Closer...

A blanket of heat teases me and then I feel her wetness.

Our eyes lock tight for a second.

I tell myself she's going to play the game we did last night.

She'll rub my cock against her clit and come. That's all.

Or maybe...

Maybe she wants to fuck.

I feel the way she's pulling at my cock.

And lowering herself down...

There's a slight second where penetration faintly begins.

My hands grab her ass and I lift her up.

I growl and roll Vera to her back and move on top of her.

I'm between her legs.

Her left leg bends and I grab for the back of it.

I'm hovering.

I never hover.

I'm not a hovering guy.

But here I am hovering.

Then to make things even more interesting, Vera grabs for my face.

Then I lower my mouth down to hers.

We start to kiss wildly too.

Nothing is making much sense.

Not until Vera breaks the kiss and bites at my bottom lip for a second.

Then she looks me in the eyes and whispers, *“Break the rules, Villi. I thought you were a bad boy.”*

I don't hesitate for a second when I thrust toward her body.

My cock is suddenly engulfed with warmth.

A tight warmth.

I pause just for a second to see the reaction on Vera's face.

The realization that all lines have been crossed.

Not that I need the seal of approval here, but Vera's nails dig into some of the muscle built on my back.

I offer her more of me.

She groans and her back begins to arch.

Her tits bounce as she takes deep breaths.

Her head turns slightly to the right and she bites at a pillow.

Her nails scratch from my back to my arms.

Scratching up and down my arms.

Really hard.

Cutting deep.

And all that did was make me want her more.

I slip my right hand to the back of her neck and make her look at me.

I brush my lips to hers.

Then I give her the rest of my cock.

She now has tip to root buried in her.

I keep thrusting.

She bites at my bottom lip again.

I sweep my tongue across her top lip.

I begin to pull back between her legs and she groans into my mouth.

We kiss again.

I start to pump.

Vera grabs the sheets and squirms under my body.

I break the kiss and move my lips to her ear.

“Come for me, darling,” I whisper. “Don’t hold back. Don’t wait. You know I’ll keep taking care of you.”

I slide my left hand around her body.

I’m holding her like I’ve never held someone before.

The lower half of my body doesn’t stop moving for a second.

I’m like a machine now.

My purpose - *my job* - is to provided endless pleasure to Vera.

I’m the guy who protects her.

And now I’m the guy who fucks her.

VERA

WE'RE A MESS OF MORNING AND SEX.

A sleepy, seductive combination that has me wishing I could stop time just for a little bit.

Not forever.

Just a little bit.

Of course time can't stop.

Our legs are tangled up.

Villi holding me in ten different ways.

He steals the occasional kiss.

I do the same.

There's a look in his eye that provides just enough warning to my body that we aren't exactly finished yet.

That's maybe the best part of Villi.

He's not like other guys I've dated.

Guys my age...

I hate thinking about it that way.

I hate thinking that when a guy reaches his thirties, the idea of *once and done* is a normal thing.

Villi's heart is pumping strong.

His blood must be thicker than fresh maple syrup.

I swear his cock is never soft either.

The thing just pulses and gets hard...

Villi is the one who makes the move from my bed.

He does some kind of rolling over gesture and next thing I know he's standing up and holding me in his arms.

I wrap my legs around his body.

I'm well aware of how vulnerable I am in this position.

Naked.

His hands cupping my ass.

Villi smiles at me and begins to walk me toward the bathroom.

He leaves the door open.

I don't know why that matters but I like it.

We have total privacy here.

This is our own little world.

He walks us right to the shower.

He doesn't put me down either.

Not as he turns on the water.

Not as he waits for the water to turn hot.

Not as he turns the shower on.

When the water hits our bodies, he kisses me.

I'm the one who unlocks my legs from around him to seek the comfort of the ground.

My toes touch the wet shower floor.

My body rubs against Villi's cock.

Hard again. Shocker.

My hands touch his chest.

My knees bend without me even thinking.

It's almost instinctual that I want his cock in my mouth.

The hot shower water pounding against his back, spraying up over his shoulders.

He looks down at me as I drop to my knees.

Water drips from his now soaking-wet hair.

A few droplets hit my face.

This all just feels so impossibly slow and erotic.

My nails scratch at his stomach, feeling the rippling lines of stomach muscle.

I look forward and I'm greeted with his cock.

The thing is *right there*, ready for me.

I move to my left a little bit and kiss the side of Villi's cock.

His thick shaft... my tongue eagerly begins to taste it.

Licking and kissing all the way up to his tip.

I don't waste a second as I move my mouth over him.

"Oh, darling," Villi growls.

He smacks his left hand against the wall so hard I fear there will be an imprint of his hand in the tile.

That'll ruin my security deposit!

I groan in my throat and take more of him into my mouth.

There's a voice in my head that screams for more.

Villi hisses and slides his right hand to the back of my head.

He gently presses himself forward.

I can't believe how much I'm able to take.

When I reach my limit I inch back.

Villi curls his hand around my hair and pulls me away from his cock.

I groan, then look up at him and pout.

He reaches for me and stands me up in a hurry.

Such a fast and strong move.

Like I'm a toy compared to his strength.

It's a little unsettling to be honest.

His hands cup my face.

He kisses me.

A deep, hard kiss.

The way that move turns me on...

Villi moves his right hand from my face to between my legs.

Two fingers against my clit.

Instant connection.

Instant explosion.

I drive my hips back.

My butt smacks against the wall.

Villi is then against me.

His fingers digging against my clit.

I cry out, curling my toes, unable to stop myself from orgasming.

That fast? How is this possible?

His fingers move fast.

Really fast.

I'm all over his fingers.

He stops only to position himself between my legs.

His fingers are replaced by the thick swell of his cock.

“Oh, Villi,” I manage to whisper.

His hands grab my ass and he pulls me toward him.

I fit over him.

He holds me in the shower and fucks me.

I grab for his back, holding on tight.

Surrounded by steam and being hit with hot shower water.

It's like waking up in heaven.

I'm going to be freshly showered and fucked, ready to face the day.

I PULL THE BRUSH THROUGH MY HAIR ONE LAST TIME.

I look in the mirror and see Villi standing a few feet behind me.

Dressed in the clothes he wore here last night.

I - on the other hand - get to wear something new.

It doesn't matter.

Villi could wear clothes that are dirty, smelly and old and he'd still look perfectly delicious.

As I stare at him through the reflection in the mirror, a crazy idea comes to me.

I replay the morning.

Waking up.

Kissing, touching, flirting.

Amazing sex.

Then going to the shower for more of the same.

I can't think of a better way to top this all off than by getting some breakfast.

Only makes sense to get some food in your belly after a hot morning like this, right?

I turn around and smile. "I have an idea."

"Let's hear it."

"Breakfast. I'm starving after... *all that*..."

"Breakfast," Villi nods.

"Some greasy food and some hot coffee. Sounds really good right now."

"It definitely does, darling."

"You seem hesitant. Is that too forward?"

Villi smirks and steps toward me.

Just one step closer to me and my body is right back on fire.

Fresh panties... *wet*.

I lick my bottom lip.

Villi towers over me.

He smells like my soap.

He touches my chin. "Not sure you're straight, Vera. That post-sex high is wild between us."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning... do you really want to go out with me for breakfast? You want to be seen with me?"

"You're not a..."

I lose my words.

He's right.

I was going to say that he wasn't some kind of hideous monster or something.

It's not that at all.

It's the reality of who we are.

Villi leans down and gently kisses my lips.

"For the record, darling, I would fucking love nothing more than to go out to breakfast with you. I want to know how you order your eggs. If you eat real bacon or that turkey crap. If you like your bacon extra crispy. I want to know how much sugar you put in your coffee or if you just drink it black. Believe me, darling, I want to know all of that. And I never want to know that stuff."

He kisses me again.

With that, Villi exits my bedroom and I listen to him leave my apartment.

I lean against my dresser.

He's right to leave.

He has to leave.

And we can't be seen together in public.

Not today.

Or tomorrow.

Probably never either.

That's the allure of this thing.

This fling or affair or whatever it is.

It's about tempting something forbidden and saying *fuck you* to stupid rules.

I'm just having a hard time now dealing with the feeling in the pit of stomach.

And trust me, it's not me being hungry for breakfast after great sex.

GABRIEL

I LOOK THROUGH THE LARGE FRONT WINDOW OF SOME RANDOM coffeehouse and there's my father.

Leaning against the counter in his ridiculously expensive suit. His five-hundred-dollar haircut perfectly in place. I already know his crystal-clear blue eyes are making the barista serving him feel flustered.

Mind you, my father is in his fifties and has no business flirting with some twenty-something-year-old girl who is working a shift to make ends meet or pay toward her college degree.

But here you are, getting a crash course into the world of Marshall Saxon.

That's my father's name.

So now you know my last name too.

I'd give you the rundown of his business ventures and investments but you'd end up falling asleep.

It bores the fuck out of me too.

I'm not a fan of meeting my father for lunch. Or brunch. Or dinner. Or anything else that involves me and him sitting alone together.

I'm sure you're thinking - *oh great, the trend continues of a hockey player hating his father.*

Here's what I can tell you.

What Mac and his old man have?

It's nothing like mine.

Mac's old man is hard ass. That's for sure. And poor Mac has to grapple with that for the rest of his life, because without Big Matt riding his ass the way he did, Mac would not be in the position he's in.

Doesn't mean the shit that Mac's father has done and is doing is right.

Don't get it wrong.

It's complicated.

With my father though?

It's a little more straight forward.

My father met my mother at a beachside bar and swept her off her feet.

By the end of their romantic weekend, he proposed to her and she said yes.

A year later, they were married, and I was already born.

My father could never keep *it* in his pants.

As for my mother, there was only so many diamonds, vacations and things to buy to mask the pain of infidelity.

I think she really did love him.

So when it all fell apart she took a nice chunk of his money and split.

When I asked her if I could go with her, she told me I was better off with my father.

It didn't make sense at the time, but she was right.

And in some sick way it might have been the best thing she ever did for me.

Long story short there - my mother has been in and out of rehab more times than I can count. My father pays for everything to keep his *good name* from getting tarnished.

It's all messed up stuff.

As for me, my father always just tossed money in my direction to keep me out of his way.

Okay, that's enough background talk.

I open the door to the coffeehouse and my father turns and looks at me.

I have to give it to him - he always greets me with the biggest smile in the world.

And he says the same thing.

"There's my son!"

We do the cliché father-son hug thing.

But in the pit of my stomach, I'm not liking the vibe that's been going on...

"I ALREADY TOLD YOU I TOOK CARE OF IT," MY FATHER SAYS.
"I have no clue why they'd bother you over something so

dumb.”

“It’s not exactly dumb...”

“Hey, did I tell you about something I found? Food trucks. Smoothies. Combine them. Put them right on the beach.”

“Dad.”

“Son, relax. I’m telling you an idea I have. You know, I would love for you to be involved in some of these. Get your name on a few things.”

“I’m busy.”

“College boy.” He smiles. “You know, Gabriel, part of me is jealous of that. I never experienced college. I just hit the streets. Always hustling. You know my first job...?”

“Yes, Dad,” I say. “You delivered papers.”

He holds up a finger. “Not just any papers. I went and found papers that weren’t being delivered in my neighborhood. I found a product people wanted but couldn’t get and provided it.”

“And you made a lot of money.”

“Bought a Camaro with cash,” he reminds me. “Won over Susie Breckens. The prettiest girl in school. You know, I looked her up not too long ago? She still has the looks, but the age thing. It got her good. Too bad. I could have helped her with that.”

Yes, my father is an asshole. It’s okay to say it. I’m used to it.

“Anyway, sorry about that,” he says. “Food trucks. Smoothies.”

“That’s great, Dad. You always keep busy.”

“Have to stay busy. Or else you’re just waiting around to die.”

“And your things are...”

“What are you worried about, Gabriel? I told you it’s fine. You need to focus. Right? Classes. Hockey. *Girls.*”

I smile.

My father laughs.

The guy can smooth anything over at any time.

The barista he had been flirting with comes over to the table.

“Uh, excuse me, Mr. Saxon...”

“Oh, please, you can call me Marshall. We know each other well, don’t we?”

Keep it in your pants, Dad. Especially in front of me.

“I’m so sorry but the credit card you gave us didn’t go through.”

The barista is blushing.

My father looks perplexed.

“That’s crazy,” he says. “Impossible.”

“I tried it twice,” she says. “Very strange, I’m sure.”

My dad looks at me. “You should take off, Gabriel. This was fun. I know you have a big day ahead. Or even if you don’t, there’s got to be plenty of pretty college girls clawing at your door. Isn’t my son handsome?”

The barista looks at me. “Very much.”

“When does your shift end?” I ask.

My father cracks up laughing. “Apple doesn’t fall far from the tree!”

He then looks at me and nods.

I don’t move right away.

Something is...

“It’s my goddamn secretary,” my father whispers to me. “I got a new card in the mail and she activated the damn thing and never gave it to me. So this card is turned off or whatever. Have to get a new secretary. For obvious reasons.”

He winks at me.

My father loves to sleep with his secretaries.

Then they fall for him.

So he fires them and pays them off.

“Let me handle this,” he says to me. “Go on, Son.”

I casually walk out of the coffeehouse.

I look back and I see my father holding the barista’s hands.

It looks like he might be pleading with her.

Or just flirting like crazy.

My father quickly looks at me.

He smiles.

He doesn’t wink.

Something is not right...

VILLI

AM I IN A BAD MOOD?

What the fuck do you think?

Being with Vera is like a fucking drug.

The most addictive drug in the world at that.

Pussy.

I can taste her on my lips.

I swallow and taste her in the back of my throat.

My skin stinks like her soap. Her shower.

Even her water...

Her body and her sheets and her pillows.

She's everywhere.

Like being stained by a permanent marker.

I don't want to wash it off though.

I want to wear the mark of Vera.

What the fuck am I even thinking or saying right now?

I've ran my hand through my hair so many times, I feel like I'm going to end up going bald.

I can't figure this all out. Can't shake the way this feels.

I can't stand that Vera and I aren't out having breakfast right now.

All I want to do is watch her lips sip a cup of coffee.

Then I want to kiss her and taste her coffee breath.

But we can't do that.

I even thought about going on a road trip.

She and I, getting into a car and just taking off.

I wonder how far we'd have to drive to put enough distance between us and Puckford and all the risk of our relationship.

Relationship?

Holy shit, Villi, what the hell are you into here?

The anger won't subside.

There's only one thing that can help - other than Vera's body against mine.

I walk to the gym.

The private gym for just us hockey players.

They know better than to try and stick us with the baseball players or other sports on campus.

We're outlaws. Bad boys.

And we make a ton of money for the university so we get some extra perks.

As soon as I get into the gym, I put on headphones and find something loud, angry, and fast to beat the hell out of my ears.

I have nothing but the clothes I'm wearing.

So jeans and a t-shirt it is for a lifting session.

I don't care.

I don't have a choice but to not care.

I know I won't get the smell and taste of Vera off me but I'm going to try my hardest.

And then I need to figure out what the fuck is happening to me.

I'M SWEATY AND FEEL LIKE I WAS JUST IN A CAR CRASH.

That's a good gym session.

Have I forgotten about Vera at all?

Nope.

I'm still pissed off, but now my muscles are aching and I'm as hungry as a lion without a meal for a week.

I'm ready to attack anyone that looks at me the wrong way.

In other words, I keep my head down and walk back to the dorm.

I need a hot shower - with my fucking soap - and maybe even jerk off.

Try to clear everything out to get rid of Vera.

Not going to happen, Villi.

As soon as I walk into the dorm, Mac is right up in my face.

Like a pissed off parent, wondering where the hell I've been.

"Look at me, you fucking moron," I snap. "I was at the gym."

"All night?" Mac asks.

"Fuck yourself."

I push by him.

He follows me, chirping in my ear.

He sounds like a puppy.

Yip. Yip.

Violet appears from the bathroom, drying her hair with a towel.

"There he is," she says. She tosses the towel over the back of the couch.

Her wet hair makes me think of her sister.

"Long night?" Violet asks.

"Jealous it wasn't you?" I ask.

"It was nice to have this place to ourselves," Mac says.

He walks up behind Vera and slides his arms around her.

He picks her up, nibbles at her ear and growls.

"How fucking cute," I mumble.

"She was able to scream as loud as she wanted," Mac says. "I thought for sure someone would call the police to report a murder."

“Right,” I say. “Let me guess... you were *murdering her pussy...*”

“That’s disgusting,” Violet says with a smile.

I start to walk toward my room and Mac jumps into my path.

“Whoa,” he says, putting a hand to my chest. “For a guy who spent the night out... you’re in a bad mood.”

“He hated to leave her bed,” Violet says.

I snap my head to the left and look at her.

Does she know?

“Unless she kicked you out,” Violet says. “It’s interesting though. You never spend the night out, do you?”

“Never,” Mac says.

“You two are very concerned about my sex life,” I say. “I appreciate that. But it just shows the truth.”

I shove Mac aside.

He lunges at me. “What truth?”

I look at him. “If you were fucking Violet properly she wouldn’t be thinking about me and my cock.”

“Fucking prick,” Mac growls.

“Hate the truth? That sucks. Now, either move out of my way or let me take Violet for a bit. So I can show her what it’s really like to feel pleasure. I mean, technically, in my book, she’s still a virgin. You don’t count Mac.”

Mac pushes me.

“Hey!” Violet yells. “Both of you. You’re going too far.”

“Are we?” I ask Violet. “Want me to go deep in you next?”

I know that's the line.

I know I've crossed it.

I'm cool with it.

Mac and I are probably overdue for a good fight anyway...

VERA

THERE'S A BUNCH OF US IN THE CAFE MEANT FOR PROFESSORS
and staff only.

It's a really nice place too.

It almost has the feel of an old castle kind of vibe.

Big chandeliers hanging from the ceilings.

An old building.

Just a very fantasy story feel to it all.

I finally get that cup of coffee my body has been craving.

And something to eat too.

Even though the meal is me on my own.

Yeah, I'm surrounded by colleagues.

It's not Villi.

It's not the same without Villi.

It should be Villi.

We should be somewhere together.

I sit and sip coffee and fantasize about it.

I picture us sneaking away to some small town.

Nobody knows who we are.

It's not that we look like there's much of an age gap between us.

I'm not some elderly woman with bright gray hair and an aged face.

Villi isn't a *baby face* looking guy either.

I know I've got some years on him... but...

I swallow hard and jump back into my fantasy.

It's Villi and I together.

Some small town.

We find some small motel too.

We check into a room and we have wild sex.

That's right.

Wild. Sex.

Villi makes me crave sex.

Hot, wild, crazy sex.

And I can't help thinking about it either.

Us in that random small-town motel.

Fucking like crazy.

Showering.

Going out to eat somewhere.

We can use fake names too.

I can be Anna...

He can be... Penn...

I picture Villi as that.

That name.

Penn.

It makes me smile ear to ear.

“Well, aren’t you happy today...”

Professor Williams sits down next to me.

“Morning, Leslie,” I say.

“Morning, afternoon, I’ve lost track of time.”

“Busy night for you?”

“Working on another doctorate.”

“You are?”

She shrugs. “Something to do to kill time.”

“You astonish me.”

“Don’t be too impressed. Sometimes I wonder what a life of travel would be...”

“Why not do it?”

Leslie raises an eyebrow. “Oh?”

“You only have one life. You’re not a cat.”

Leslie laughs. “You seem adventurous today.”

“Good coffee,” I say.

“This coffee is shit.”

I laugh out loud.

“I do like your approach on things,” Leslie says. “Just do it now, huh? Just stand up, quit and go travel the world. Maybe

find some sexy Frenchman to give me the night of my life.”

I wiggle my eyebrows. “*Oui...*”

Leslie leans toward me. “Or maybe I can just live through you.”

“Me? Traveling the world? On my salary? I’m lucky if I can travel to the grocery store.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“Explain.”

“I’m not stupid, Vera.”

“I never said you were...”

“You had a great night,” Leslie says. “It’s written all over your face. Some really good sex...”

I gasp.

“Oh, don’t do the gasping thing. Sex is sex. I’ll put it another way. You got laid last night. And probably this morning too.”

“Can you not say it so loud?” I ask.

“So I’m right.”

“Perhaps you are.”

“To be fair, Vera, anyone who looks at you can tell you’ve had some great sex. Nothing to be ashamed about.”

“I never said I was ashamed. No need for it.”

“I like to hear that. Now I want the details.”

“That won’t happen.”

Leslie inches closer. “Should I just call out his name?”

“*His...?*”

“Bill,” Leslie whispers. “Or did you call him Professor Jenkins.”

“Oh,” I say. “You think...”

“You two were flirting once before.”

“Flirting? That was not flirting. Not at all. Not even close.”

“So it wasn’t him.”

“Me? With Professor Jenkins?”

“Doesn’t meet the criteria?”

“Put it this way... I would rather fuck a pillow.”

Leslie throws her head back and laughs.

I can’t believe I just said that.

So open. So loud.

So quick.

I’ve got this sudden wild side to myself.

Leslie is still giggling, repeating what I said over and over.

... you’d rather... fuck... a pillow...

I’m wild. I’m risky. I’m...

I’m not sure who I am.

Or what I’m doing.

I do know one thing though.

It feels so fucking good to be alive right now.

VIOLET

FUCK. THEY'RE FIGHTING AGAIN!

There's something about Mac and Villi.

When they both get into that kind of mood, they just fight.

And not pushing and shoving either.

They throw real punches.

This one... I have no idea who is really at fault.

They're both in bad moods.

Something Mac won't tell anyone because he's a stubborn ass is that this whole thing with his father is bothering him bad.

Somewhere inside, Mac had the voice of a child begging to connect with his own father.

With time running out...

Face it, I only met Mac's father a few times.

Just in those few experiences there's no way Mac's father is going to change.

Whatever vision Mac has of himself and his father, it will never come true.

And at the end of the whole ordeal - whether it's tonight or a month from now or a year from now - Mac is the one who is going to have to bury his father.

I think Mac is also freaked out over the idea that his father could be vulnerable.

Could be weak.

Meaning cancer is going to do whatever it wants.

Nothing can stop it.

Nobody can stop it.

It's a devastating thing to face.

My body is Mac's target for pleasure.

And apparently Villi is Mac's target to burn off some anger.

Not that Villi is helping himself at all.

He's playing right into Mac.

There's something really wrong with Villi.

Something off about him.

Him not sleeping at the dorm is unheard of.

But... there's more...

Not only did he spend the night out of the dorm, he went to the gym in his normal clothes, and then came back.

I don't have time to really think about it because Mac and Villi are tangled up.

Villi punches Mac in the stomach.

I make a daring move and get in between the two.

Villi smells like jeans and sweat.

“Villi, be real here,” I say.

Before he can answer Mac grabs me by my sides.

It’s ticklish for a second.

Then Mac picks me up.

Right up off the floor and he turns me around.

He gently drops me to the couch and goes back to his fight with Villi!

He jumps at Villi and puts him in a headlock.

Villi throws a punch and hits Mac in the stomach again.

Mac stumbles forward.

Villi gets out of the headlock.

Mac spins around and throws a punch that comes way too close to hitting Villi in the eye.

Now I’m thinking about hockey.

If one of these morons gets hurt for real it’ll mess up everything for the team.

Villi grabs Mac by the shirt.

Mac breaks the hold.

They tangle up again.

Mac tosses Villi against a wall.

I see the look in Villi’s eyes.

I need to do something. And fast.

I launch myself over the couch and get between Mac and Villi. Again.

I'm facing Villi.

I scream.

Like a female warrior scream.

The kind of scream every woman wants to let out on that second day of their period when the cramps are relentless.

Not even that stops Villi.

He reaches for me to move me.

I slap his hands away and push at his chest.

That does nothing.

Now I'm down to one last option.

The most insane thing I can think to make this stop.

Oh, fuck.

I grab the bottom of my shirt and lift it up.

I hook my fingertips under my bra and lift that too.

Bam!

My boobs fall free, visible for Villi.

Instantly, the fight ends.

I expect Villi to stare. To be mesmerized. To lick his lips. To make comments.

What I don't expect is for Villi to put his hands out... not to touch me... but to block the view!

And then he turns his head!

He won't look at me!

He. Won't. Look. At. My. Boobs.

I feel insulted.

“What the fuck?” Villi growls.

Without looking at me, he darts through the dorm and out the door.

After all those games... Villi won't even look at my boobs?

MAC

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO FOCUS ON FIRST.

I mean, Villi and I were really getting into it there.

Over what?

I have no idea what we were fighting about.

That's just what happens with Villi and me.

Things get tense for whatever reason and we end up throwing some punches.

Although it has been happening a lot more lately.

We're just two big personalities looking for all the space available.

And when we can't get it, we fight for it.

It's some kind of instinctual thing.

Like two lions fighting over where to live.

Or over what to eat.

Or over...

My eyes gravitate toward Violet.

She's not facing me, but her shirt is still up.

Excuse me - her shirt *and* her bra.

Wait.

Logic starts settling in.

The adrenaline from the fight starts to calm.

Reality hits me.

Violet showed Villi her boobs!

After all this time.

All the begging.

All the teasing.

Villi driving both Violet and myself crazy over it, just wanting to sneak a peek.

And then the moment comes... what does Villi do?

He puts his hands out. He blocks his own view.

He turns his head.

He looks the other way.

And then he storms off.

Now I'm starting to get angry again thinking about it.

Violet showing off her boobs like that.

Just... she... they're... me...

It's her body, Mac.

She can do whatever she wants.

It doesn't mean I have to like it.

Violet slowly starts to turn around.

Still holding her shirt and bra up.

Her boobs are just... there...

“Mac,” she whispers. “Did you...”

I nod.

“He just...”

“I know, sugar,” I whisper.

Violet blinks a few times.

She looks down and realizes she’s still showing herself off.

Slowly, Violet lowers her bra and her shirt.

She adjusts herself as need be.

Then she looks at me again.

“He didn’t even look,” she says with disappointment. “I thought for sure it would... work. That he would fall to his knees. Or want to touch or something...”

“You want him to touch you?” I ask.

“No,” Violet says. “But for him to want to. And he can’t. Is there something wrong with me? With my... chest...?”

I step closer to Violet and gently touch her face. “Sugar. I’ll keep it simple. You have the nicest tits I’ve ever seen. And I’ve seen a lot.”

She tilts her head.

“I’m serious, Violet. I’m actually mad that you just put them away.”

“Promise me?”

“Promise,” I whisper.

I move in to kiss her.

“Why did Villi...”

I sigh. “You’re bothered by it that much?”

“I don’t know. He drove me nuts about it. For how long? And you two were fighting again. I didn’t know what to do.”

“It was a great idea. I’m a little pissed about it. Jealous too.”

“You’re jealous?”

“I’m jealous of anyone who sees you, sugar.”

She smiles. “I’m sorry for doing that. It just kind of came to me. It seemed right.”

“Well, it did stop the fight.”

“But Villi just walked away. Did you see that? He put his hands out. He wouldn’t look. He turned his head and then he...”

Violet looks at the door.

I look at the door too.

I think about it.

The whole thing.

“Mac, why were you two even fighting?” Violet asks.

“No idea. Just two alpha dudes getting mad at each other. It happens.”

“Someone is going to get hurt one of these times.”

“I know.”

“It’s going to mess up the hockey season.”

“You’re worried about the *Puckford Pirates*, sugar?”

“I don’t know what I am right now. Not after what just happened. Villi isn’t supposed to act like that. He’s supposed to be big and mean and just... just...” Violet sighs. “Mac, what’s wrong with Villi?”

I think about it again for another second or two.

Then something comes to me.

A theory.

An impossible theory... or maybe it’s not impossible.

Villi wouldn’t look at Violet’s boobs?

“Mac?” Violet whispers.

“I think I know what’s going on,” I say.

“What is it?”

I can’t believe the words that are about to escape my mouth.

“I think Villi is in love...”

VILLI

DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU JUST DID?

After all this time... she finally flashes you.

Violet finally lifts her shirt and bra and shows off those beautiful, full breasts of hers.

Tits.

Nothing better in the world.

And wanting to see Violet...

Villi, what the hell was that?

They were right there.

There for the taking too.

I really try hard not to think about it.

But it's too late.

Now my mind decides to go wild.

Now my mind decides to fuck with me.

What if... just think about it, Villi... what if...

Violet lifts her shirt and bra.

Those spectacular tits are just there.

Waiting for you.

What if you look, then look at Mac with a smirk, then step closer to Violet.

What if... you reach out for Violet.

Your fingertips graze the soft warm skin of her tits.

You cup them.

Your thumbs flirt with her nipples.

What if... Violet groans a little and then reaches back for Mac...

What if... Violet is then between me and Mac...

I can't think about it anymore.

I can't believe what just happened.

The way I reacted. So smooth about it too.

Never once in my life have I turned down the chance to see some boobs.

It's part of my DNA.

It's who I am.

Yet the second Violet lifted her shirt and bra, guess what happened to me?

Guess what went through my head?

Vera.

That's right.

Vera.

I say her name.

I see her face.

I see her... boobs. Her body.

I picture her standing in front of me, naked.

I picture her with her hands in her hair, pulling her hair to the top of her head.

I picture her standing there with those curved hips of hers.

The womanly figure she has that fucked up everything in my brain.

Fucked up everything so bad that I didn't even look at her sisters tits!

I passed up the chance to look and possibly touch Violet...

My thoughts instantly erase as a strange feeling washes over me.

I stop walking.

I feel like I'm being watched. Followed.

I'm on a quiet part of campus.

Not very much lighting.

It's kind of a dreary day out too.

Like the dark is teasing to show up earlier than normal.

It's a bad feeling that hits me.

When I hear a noise behind me, I quickly turn.

When I see Hunter standing close by, baseball bat in hand, I nod.

Well, my day is about to get even more interesting, isn't it?

OH, IT'S NOT JUST HUNTER EITHER.

It's Hunter with three other baseball players.

We've got Hunter, Chester, Toby, and Mark.

Pretty boy baseball players.

Their hair perfectly in place.

Their jaws looking cut from stone.

Each one knowing if the whole baseball thing doesn't work out they can just go steal a desk at their father's investment firm, make a few calls here and there and easily clear six to seven figures a year.

Hunter has a look in his eyes though.

An evil look.

He points the baseball bat at me. "I told you, Villi."

"Are you really that bent out of shape still? I've moved on."

"Fuck you."

"Ut-oh. Trouble in paradise? She got her legs open for someone else?"

"She has feelings for you," Hunter says. "You believe that? I mean, it's one thing for her to go behind my back and cheat. Maybe I can work through that. After all, we're in college. You think I've been loyal this entire time?"

Hunter and his buddies chuckle.

There's some golden irony about this whole thing.

First off, I don't care about Hunter and Heather.

Second, I never cared about Heather.

She was a willing piece of ass and helped to fill a little of that nagging temptation inside me.

She's a great fuck, sure.

In fact, if she moves with Hunter half as wild as she moved with me, he's a lucky guy.

"Hunter, let me ask you a serious question," I say. "Did she let you play with her ass? Enjoy the... *backdoor access*...?"

"Only on my birthday," Hunter says.

I smile ear to ear. "Then it must have been my birthday each time we hooked up."

Look, maybe I should be nicer.

But why bother?

It's four against one.

I know I'm going to catch a beating.

So I might as well make it worth my time and effort.

"Heather has such a nice ass," I say. "Tight... you know?"

I stick my thumb into my mouth and pull it out quick, making a *pop* sound.

"I fucking warned you," Hunter says.

"I know you did," I say.

Toby and Chester run for me.

I probably should fight back a little bit, but I don't.

Toby grabs my left arm.

Chester has my right.

Mark is behind Hunter, pushing him, egging him on.

I'm intrigued to see if Hunter has the balls to attack me.

He charges toward me, baseball bat ready for a hard swing...

He swings it a little, just to try and scare me.

I don't flinch.

That pisses him off.

So he jams the bat into my stomach.

I lose my breath.

Hunter brings the bat up and smashes it against my jaw.

My head snaps back.

Stars spin in front of my face.

Hunter hits my nose with the end of the bat.

A stupid hit to take because everyone knows the nose bleeds so easily.

My eyes water up and I see even more stars, even if they're blurry.

Blood pours from my nose over my lips.

I lick my blood and smile.

"That it?" I ask Hunter. "Using the bat like a pool stick?"

"We both know if I swing you'll end up dead," Hunter says.

"Probably right. But maybe you should think about my tongue flicking against your girlfriend's clit... and then me flipping her around and my tongue going for her ass..."

Hunter growls and brings the bat back.

“I’ve got this one,” Mark says.

He grabs the bat from Hunter and then moves around me and puts the bat around my neck and pulls.

I have zero air.

Fucking great.

They’re going to force me into *fight or flight* mode.

Or better yet... with a bat cutting off my air, it’s nothing but fight mode.

I have no choice.

I kick my right leg back and smash at Mark’s knee.

He yelps into my ear and drops the baseball bat.

I pull Chester and Toby.

They don’t realize how strong I am.

They stumble and end up letting me go.

Now I’m ready to take on Hunter.

One-on-one.

I feel a sudden jolt of pain against the right back side of my ribs.

Mark has one hell of a punch.

Hunter uses that as his chance to swing at me.

A very nice punch to my jaw.

I see more stars and I actually lose my balance for a second.

Mark takes the opportunity to kick at the back of my legs and I end up on the ground.

Now I know I’m fucked.

And, hey, I'm not going to be a baby about it.

I deserve to get my ass kicked by Hunter.

Him bringing three other buddies just makes him look weak.

I'm well equipped to take the beating.

I'm the one who fucked his girlfriend how many times?

I did things to Heather that Hunter could only dream of doing.

I made Heather feel so safe and comfortable near me, anything was on the table.

Hunter kicks me in the stomach.

I groan.

"Come on, Hunter," I say. "Make it count. Just picture my gigantic cock slamming into your girlfriend's pussy. Just think about all the noises she made for me but will never make for you."

Hunter drops down and hits me in the face.

Oh... that was a good one...

Then it becomes an attack.

All four of them kicking and hitting me.

They have no idea what they're doing.

I cover up my face and protect my head.

The entire thing lasts maybe ten seconds.

That's it.

Hunter stops them.

He spits on the ground next to me.

Then he laughs.

He thinks he's won something...

I'm still alive.

Conscious.

Breathing.

I sit up and take a deep breath.

Don't get me wrong, this fucking hurts.

My face. My ribs.

This sucks.

I wipe blood off my lips and smile.

I look up to the sky.

I need to get cleaned up, huh?

Of all the things to come to my mind at that moment...

All I want to do is see Vera right now.

VERA

THIS TIME WHEN I HEAR THE KNOCK AT MY DOOR, I ALREADY know it's Villi.

That's because he texted a little bit ago that he was on his way over.

It gave me just enough time to stare at myself in the mirror and try to clean myself up a little but still look laid back and casual.

All the while thinking *I can't believe I'm acting this way over Villi.*

Or the fact that as soon as I hear the knock at the door my heart races.

I hurry to the door, already thinking about Villi grabbing me, picking me up, and kissing me.

When I open the door, I gasp and freeze in place.

The sight of Villi's face...

"Villi!" I cry out. "What happened?"

His face is beat up. Bloody. Left eye swollen a little.

“For the record,” Villi says, “it took four guys and a baseball bat to do this to me.”

“That’s what you’re worried about?”

“Hey, I have a reputation. I’m a fighter. But in this case…”

“Villi, wait. You were attacked? Like… attacked…”

“You can say that.”

He steps into my apartment.

I look up at his face.

It makes my stomach shiver.

I reach up for his face but pause.

My hands shake a little.

I don’t even know what to do or say.

Everything about Villi is just so big, mean, and violent.

My brain scrambles for some sense of logic.

It finally does hit me, thankfully.

“Okay, Villi, you have to get to a hospital right now,” I say.
“Come on. I’ll drive you.”

He grabs my left arm. “No, darling.”

“Excuse me? Look at your face. You’re hurt. You’re bleeding. You could possibly have a concussion too. Do not be an idiot right now.”

“How do you explain driving me?”

“I found you on the side of the road beat up,” I growl.
“Happy?”

“No. Fuck that. I’m not some victim here, Vera. Four guys and a baseball bat.”

“Really? You need your ego stroked right now?”

“No. I need my face cleaned up. Want to help out?”

I open my mouth but I do not say a word.

Villi is stubborn. Dumb.

But... he's beat up... and he looks... sexy...

Oh, Vera.

I sigh really loud and I grab his right hand.

“I don't want to talk to you right now,” I say.

Villi laughs at me as I pull him in the direction of the bathroom.

Even bloody and beaten up he's still cocky as ever.

And believe me, it does piss me off.

It also turns me on.

I'm not ready to address that part of it all just yet.

I pull Villi into the bathroom.

“Sit,” I say as I point to the bathtub.

Villi puts one foot into the bathtub and the other on the floor and he sits down.

He straddles the bathtub and makes it look sexy.

It's not fair at all.

I look at Villi and shake my head. “You know I'm going to want the story.”

“I know, darling. You're not going to like the story though.”

“Oh?”

“Remember my name. I’m the *Villian*.”

“Great,” I say.

I turn, go to the sink and crouch down.

I find my well-stocked first-aid kit.

Because that’s the kind of person I am.

I never thought in my wildest dreams I’d need to use my first-aid kit on someone like Villi.

But here we are.

This is my reality now.

I unzip the kit and take out some antiseptic wipes.

“You know these are going to sting,” I say.

“I can handle the pain. I like it.”

Comments like that make me blush all over.

I go to hand Villi the wipes but he shakes his head.

He wants me to do it.

I open the package and take out a wipe and I gently wipe at his left cheek first.

“How bad does it hurt?” I ask.

“Not so much now that I’m with you.”

“Cut the flirty stuff.”

“I’m not flirting. I’m telling the truth.”

I fold the wipe and clean the other side of his face.

I toss the wipe since it’s covered in different shades of blood.

I get another.

“Nothing looks *that* bad,” I whisper. “Guess you don’t need a hospital after all.”

“Told you I was right.”

“Don’t get too cocky,” I say. “This is insane.”

“It’s better than sitting around being bored.”

“Who said I was bored?”

Villi reaches out and grabs my hips.

He glances up at me and smiles.

“What happened?” I ask.

I move his hands from my hips and walk to the sink and wash my hands.

I then take a wet wipe and return to Villi.

“The truth,” he says. “I deserved it.”

“You deserved this?”

“Big time.”

“Why?”

“I was fucking someone’s girlfriend.”

I freeze.

I feel every nerve in my body twist and pinch.

A surge of jealousy hits me that makes me unsteady.

“You did what?” I ask.

“For the record, it was all before you,” he says. “I’ve not been near anyone since I’ve been fooling around with you. Okay?”

“How reassuring.”

“You wanted to know...”

“I supposed I did.”

“It’s just who I am I guess.”

“Who you are... you have sex with people who are in relationships?”

“Let’s not get too judgmental here, darling,” he says. “It takes two to fuck. She knew she had a boyfriend and still got into bed with me.”

“I don’t want to think about that,” I growl.

I turn away and Villi grabs for my hips. “Does it make you jealous? Thinking about me with someone else?”

“I think you’re disgusting,” I say. “I want to slap you. I regret helping you get cleaned up. You’re a piece of shit, Villi. Doing that. Knowing someone is in a relationship and you just...”

“What?” Villi asks. “Please, Vera, don’t get all high and mighty on me now.”

I clench my teeth tight.

My heart slams inside my chest.

I want to punch him in the nose.

I want to smack him.

He really is a *villain*.

“So that’s the truth,” he says. “Nothing to hide. I don’t feel any shame either. Why would I? Two people want to get together and fool around, who cares?”

I spin around.

I stare at him.

I really do want to hit him.

But he is being honest.

Honest, blunt, cruel... sexy...

I'm turned on.

Villi grabs for my hips again.

He must be reading my eyes very well.

He pulls me toward him.

I grab his hands and sink my nails like claws.

I don't push his touch away.

I keep getting closer to him.

Then I start to move down...

I straddle him.

His hands move to my ass.

I feel the thick swell of his cock pressing through his jeans.

What the fuck am I doing?

Villi is... a... *villain*.

I just can't help myself.

I want Villi to be my villain.

VILLI

MY HANDS MOVE UP HER SHIRT WITH EASE.

She lifts her arms into the air for me too.

You naughty thing... you love that I'm all bloody. You love the violence. You love that I told you I fucked some guy's girlfriend. Everything about it unleashes a dark side in you...

I toss her shirt across the bathroom and go right for the little clasp on her bra.

She's wearing a light blue bra.

With some lacy pattern on the edge.

I unclasp her bra and she lets it fall down her arms, resting on my lap.

"You're so fucking beautiful, darling," I growl as I cup her tits.

"Did you say that to the slut you were fucking?" Vera asks.

"Listen to your mouth right now. Are you going to *jealousy-fuck* me right now?"

“No,” Vera says. “You’re going to fuck me.”

She then kisses me.

Now I’m not the kind of guy to get involved with kissing and making out and all that...

But holy fuck does Vera kiss me.

Her tongue is wild. Flirty. Fun.

My thumbs stroke her nipples.

I pull away from the kiss and move down to her chest.

Vera leans back and lets her head fall back.

Thrusting her chest up toward my face.

Delicious.

Fucking delicious.

I latch tight to her left breast, growling as I do so.

I take her, taste her... I just...

My teeth come together and I pull with a little force.

She lets out a yell and I open my mouth.

She looks at me, her cheeks bright red.

“No biting,” she says with a smile.

“Oops,” I growl.

My hands run up her back and pull her toward me.

I finally stand up from straddling the bathtub.

Vera wraps her legs around me.

She’s topless.

I’m fully dressed.

I can’t make it out of this bathroom either.

I need to be inside her beautiful, tight body right now.

I need her pussy.

I reach for a bunch of towels all neatly folded on a shelf.

I pull them all to the floor.

These big, fluffy, fresh towels.

Now they're scattered on the floor.

I drop down to my knees and quickly make a little bed for Vera.

A bed of towels.

I place her down on her back and stare at her perfect body.

The way her pants hug her curvy hips.

Even the sight of her bellybutton...

What is wrong with me? Why does that even fucking matter?

I drop my mouth down to her body, below her breasts.

I kiss down with speed, my tongue begging to flicker at her bellybutton.

Villi... you're turning into mush over this woman...

I don't even care.

I tease her bellybutton.

Instead of laughing, Vera arches her hips and groans.

I hurry to open the button on her pants and strip the rest of her body naked.

Pants, panties... gone.

Her sweet scent attacks my senses.

As I start to dip down toward her body, wanting a taste of her inner thighs - and then some - she grabs my hair and rocks her hips and groans.

“Villi,” she purrs. “Just fuck me. Please just fuck me.”

I slither up her body, reach down with my left hand and quickly open my jeans, then push them down to let my cock free itself.

She claws at the back of my shirt and pulls it over my head.

Her fingertips touch muscle, moving fast, then slow, then fast again.

I nestle myself between her legs.

She positions her nails against my back.

Curled, claws out, ready to attack.

I enter her and her back arches.

I dip my mouth to her right breast.

She grabs the back of my hair and holds me tight against her chest.

My right hand grabs at the middle of her arched back.

I thrust with force.

She cries out. Then she groans.

I pull away from her breast and kiss up her chest to her neck.

My teeth graze her neck as I’m on my way to her ear.

I whisper to her, “Beg me to fuck you harder, darling.”

“Oh, Villi,” Vera purrs. “Fuck me until I can’t talk to beg you to fuck me even more.”

I forget all about my face hurting from being attacked by four people.

Which just proves my point about Vera being a drug.

She's a painkiller too.

She's the ultimate *everything*.

I fuck her.

Then I fuck her harder.

On the bathroom floor on a bed of towels.

It might not be all romance and flowers.

But whatever, it's hot as fuck.

I'M SITTING ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR, FULLY DRESSED AGAIN.

Vera wears a few towels as she sits across from me.

Of all the wild post-sex things I've done in my life, I've never done this.

Just relaxing in a bathroom after having some steamy fun.

"You know, I should tell you something, darling," I say.

"Oh?"

"I, uh, I got into a fight with Mac."

"Another fight?"

"This was before the baseball bat thing. When I left here earlier. I went to the gym and then I went back to the dorm. I was in a bad mood. A really bad mood."

"A bad mood after being with me?"

“No, Vera. Not because I was with you. Because I was not with you.”

“Are you saying you missed me?”

She smirks at me.

It makes me a little jittery to see her like that.

Sexy and flirting and even touching something like romance too.

“Maybe I did miss you,” I say. “Something had to have been going on because when your sister showed me her tits I didn’t even look.”

“What?” Vera yells.

“Your sister showed me her tits,” I say with a shrug.

“That whore. This is why I can’t stand Abby...”

“It wasn’t Abby,” I smile.

Vera gasps. “You mean...”

“Violet.”

“What? What about Mac? Wait a second... the story you just told me...”

“You think I’m having sex with Violet behind Mac’s back?”

“I don’t know. How do I answer that?”

“Wow.”

“Villi...”

“I’m messing around, Vera,” I say. “Holy hell, darling. I am not having sex with your sister. Okay? Now, has the thought crossed my mind? Of course it has. I can’t help myself if I don’t admit I haven’t thought about you... me... Violet...”

“Filthy,” she snaps.

“Look, Mac and I were getting tangled up. Okay? Just two guys blowing off some steam. Violet got nervous and didn’t know how to stop the fight. So she jumped in front of me and flashed me. Now this comes after me begging her for a long time. And she did it.”

“She showed you...”

I see the jealousy climb across Vera’s face.

I reach forward and pull at the towel she’s sitting in.

I pull her closer to me.

“The point I’m making, darling, is that the second Violet lifted her shirt I looked away. I put my hands out to block my view too.”

“So you suddenly don’t want to see Violet’s amazing breasts?”

“Oh, trust me, I still want to see them... but it’s not worth it to me. I’d rather come over here and see yours instead...”

I wiggle my eyebrows.

Vera gets a pissed off look on her face that quickly gives way to a smile.

She slowly lowers the towel covering her bare chest.

I take a deep breath.

Her fucking tits are amazing.

“Villi,” she whispers.

I shake my head. “No more questions or stories.” I lean in and brush my lips against hers. “I need to go talk to Mac and settle things up. Okay?”

Vera grabs my shirt and curls her lip. “Do not look at my sister’s boobs.”

“I didn’t when she showed me. Why would I look now?”

“Because you’re... *you*. You’re *Villi. Villian.*”

“True. So in other words I should go look at your sister’s tits. Maybe even touch them. Play with them.”

“I’ll fucking kill you, Villi,” Vera whispers.

My entire body jolts with excitement and happiness.

I kiss her again.

Oh, Villi... you are in some serious big trouble here...

VERA

I LEAVE THE MESS OF TOWELS ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR AND float into my bedroom.

Yes, I put on the pajamas with the octopuses on them.

I also grab a tank top and a hoodie.

My normal sleeping attire.

And apparently this is now my *post-having-sex-with-Villi* attire too.

I skip the appropriateness of a wine glass and just go for the bottle.

The same bottle from Villi and I...

Even though nothing happened with that bottle...

I take a deep breath and sigh an exhale slowly.

I end up on my couch and slide a blanket over my legs.

I take a very large gulp of the wine.

As my lips pop off the bottle, I feel my hips wiggle a little.

A warm shivering sensation has just come over me.

Heat replaces the warmth as the sensation now climbs throughout my body.

I reach for the remote to turn on the television and I freeze.

I stare forward.

Heat attacks my cheeks.

I start to smile.

I can't believe what I'm about to admit right now...

But I feel him.

I feel... Villi.

I feel him inside me.

And, no, it's not some cheesy romantic thing.

I'm being literal.

I can feel...

... you know...

We had sex on the bathroom floor.

He didn't wear any protection.

He finished...

I swallow hard and bite my bottom lip.

Then I just think it.

Why not... why mess around with the words...

I can feel Villi's cum easing itself from my body.

There.

That's it.

That's the story.

Villi isn't here with me, but in a way he still is.

He's... still here...

My hips wiggle a few more times and I lean back on the couch, holding the bottle of wine.

I take another big gulp and raise the bottle into the air.

“To you, Villi,” I call out. “How the fuck do you make me feel this good even when you're not here?”

I sit there and I'm desperate to think of something else.

Anything else.

Just...

I shut my eyes for one second and guess what I see?

I see Violet showing Villi her boobs.

My eyes pop open.

I swallow hard.

I look down at myself.

Look, I've said it before and I can't control it, but in the crazy world of genetics, someone never showed up to work the day my genes for big boobs were supposed to be added.

Unlike Violet.

Unlike Abby.

And now Violet has shown... herself...

But Villi said he didn't look!

I have no idea if I actually believe that or not.

Or if it even matters.

I mean, even if he did look, even for a second, he ended up here anyway.

Right?

He ended up in my bathroom.

He ended up taking off my clothes, putting towels on the floor, placing me down...

He fucked me.

Not Violet. Not anyone else.

I realize how crazy I sound as I think this through.

There's not enough wine in the world right now to calm my mind down.

Whatever this is with Villi, I'm getting the feeling it maybe needs to end.

Just take what happened now...

Villi got jumped. Four people jumped him. Four people, one with a baseball bat.

It happened on campus and should be reported to campus police.

Villi should be at the hospital getting checked out.

Better yet, Villi got jumped because he slept with someone's girlfriend.

Not only did he openly admit it to me, he almost bragged about it. He said that was something he did.

Something he did.

Meaning he enjoyed sleeping with peoples' girlfriends...

And what did that do to me?

It turned me on.

It became the beginning of the hottest moment possible in that bathroom.

So, yeah, there's a voice in my head speaking loud and clear that this thing needs to end.

We've had a lot of steamy and risky fun.

But...

But... Vera...

I shut my eyes again.

This time I see nothing.

I can cut things off with Villi.

Or...

... or I can just admit that I might be falling for Villi.

VILLI

IT'S LIKE A TEAM MEETING IN MY DORM.

I'm not in the mood for this at all.

I actually feel like picking another fight with Mac.

Clearing things up with him yesterday did not happen at all.

He and Violet saw my face, I muttered the words, '*Hunter, a baseball bat, and three other guys...*' and then I took a hot shower, stared at my cock for a while, thought about Vera, then went on with my life.

Now I'm trapped.

Mac and Violet are arm in arm.

Hopeless lovers that used to make me sick over the notion of them being in love.

Now... I don't know.

What am I? Jealous of it? Jealous of them?

Do I want that with Vera?

“I didn’t think your face could get any uglier,” Knox says. “But look at you...”

“We have to hear this one out,” Jax says. He’s straddling a computer chair backward and he rolls toward me. “Don’t be a dick about it.”

I put my foot forward and push at the chair, making Jax roll away from me.

“I’m fucking livid,” Gabriel growls. “This shit has got to stop. Once and for all.”

“I had it coming,” I say. “The whole Heather thing.”

“But four of them?” Mac asks. “And a baseball bat?”

“Have you met me before?” I ask. “I’m Villi. You need that much just to start a fight with me. And look at me. I’m fine. They should have brought four more guys and ten more baseball bats.”

“I don’t think it’s fucking funny,” Gabriel says. “I don’t think it’s a fucking joke. I think we need to fight the fuck back!”

“What the hell has your panties twisted up?” Knox asks.

“Fuck yourself, Knox,” Gabriel says. “You want to sit around and be a pussy?”

Knox steps toward Gabriel.

I glance at Violet and smirk.

Going to show your tits to get them to stop the fight?

Violet knows what I’m thinking and she looks away.

“This is my fault,” Mac says.

Everyone looks at Mac.

“How the fuck is it your fault?” I ask.

“The shit that went down between us, Villi. That was my fault. Emotions were...”

“That was me too, man,” I say. “I wanted to fight someone. You were willing.”

“You two fought each other?” Jax asks.

“I keep thinking about my old man,” Mac says. “It angers me a lot. I shouldn’t have picked a fight with you, Villi. When the fight ended...”

“How did it end?” I ask. “Tell them what happened.”

“What happened?” Knox asks.

“Nothing happened,” Violet says.

Now her cheeks are red.

“When the fight ended, Villi took off to clear his head. That’s when he got jumped.”

“They were following you,” Gabriel says. “That fucking prick. That pussy. That piece of shit. Him and his baseball bat. His other buddies. Right? I don’t think so. Not on my fucking watch!”

Gabriel rips open the door and takes off.

We all sit in silence for a few seconds.

“Does Gabriel ever get mad?” Violet asks.

“Not like that,” Knox says.

“Something is eating him alive,” Jax says.

“You know what he’s going to do right now,” I say.

They all nod.

Knox and Jax glance at each other and nod.

They leave the dorm too.

They're going to hopefully find Gabriel before something stupid happens.

"Well, that was fun," I say as I stand up. "I appreciate the whole meeting. That was good."

"Villi, don't be a fucking jerk," Mac says.

"I'm not a fucking jerk."

"What happened to you..."

"Was nothing," I say. "Relax, Mac. Hunter got his shots in on me, okay? Doesn't take away the fact that my cock is bigger than his and that I made his girlfriend squirt all over my bed and he can't. Okay? And I bet right now if I sent Heather a text she'd be right here in ten minutes for more."

Now, am I going to text Heather?

Hell no.

That is way in the past for me.

And, no, it has nothing to do with Vera. At all. Ever.

I go to my room.

I'm done talking about all that stuff.

I have no clue what's going on with Gabriel either.

He's looking for a fight and I'm sure he'll find one.

It happens.

I'm not even in my room for ten seconds before I hear a soft knock.

The door opens and it's Violet.

She smiles at me, knowing damn well I won't yell at her and kick her out.

"Not fair to use your beauty against me," I say.

"Don't get flirty," she says.

"Come here," I say as I sit on my bed with my back against the wall.

I pat my bed.

Violet joins me on my bed.

I extend my right arm out and she curls up against me.

My right arm wraps around her and I sigh.

Under any other circumstances in life, my cock would be throbbing right now.

Getting hard.

I'd be picturing Violet's lips sliding over my cock.

That's just not how it works with her now.

"Don't bullshit me, Villi," she says. "Are you okay?"

She looks at me.

I'm fine, Violet. Your sister helped me out. She cleaned up the blood and helped with the cuts. And then I fucked her on her bathroom floor.

"I'm fine," I say. "I mean it."

"A baseball bat though?"

"I'm tough."

"Did you learn a lesson?"

"No."

"Of course not."

“Did you come in here to lecture me?”

“Yeah. What else would I be in here for?”

“Oh, I don’t know...”

“What?”

“I thought maybe you wanted to redo what happened before. You know what I mean, right? When Mac and I were fighting. You lifted your shirt up...”

Violet smirks. “You had your chance.”

“You don’t believe in second chances, Violet?”

“Not when it comes to you and my boobs,” she says way too quick.

Violet leans toward me and gently kisses my cheek.

She scoots off my bed, acting all cute and flirty.

She even turns around to look at me one more time.

She knows my eyes are going to look at her tits.

Hiding behind her shirt and bra.

I mean, honestly, even if Violet wanted to show me again...

I still wouldn’t look.

I can’t believe I wouldn’t look.

I can’t believe I care enough about Vera to not want to hurt her in any way at all.

GABRIEL

No.

This isn't happening to me.

You're not going to mess around with me.

Or mess around with my best friends.

My brothers.

My hockey teammates.

Are you fucking stupid or something?

I mean... come on...

They think I'm going to sit there and just take it?

They think I'm going to listen to some story that justifies it all?

I'm sick of hearing excuses. I'm sick of hearing words that attempt to fix things that are so far broken...

I've lost my train of thought.

I think I'm actually seeing red.

Literally red.

The color is red.

My eyesight is red.

My...

I stop walking and I start to laugh.

I wipe my forehead.

The color red?

It's actually the color red.

The neon glow of brake lights from a car up ahead that's leaving the administration parking lot.

My head is full, dazed, and I'm certainly spiraling.

I stop walking for a second or two.

My phone lets out a cry for attention.

Great.

I have texts from both Jax and Knox.

They're looking for me.

I put them both on the same text thread.

I'm out for a walk.

Which is true.

Anything besides that is not their concern right now.

Jax replies back to me.

Stop walking and tell us where you are.

Knox adds in the finger emoji pointing up, meaning he agrees with Jax.

“You want to know what I’m up to?” I ask my phone.
“Fine.”

My thumbs go to work.

**Just stay where you are. I’ll be in touch in a little bit.
Everything will make sense then.**

That’s all I have to say to anyone at the moment.

Including you.

I TAKE OUT MY PHONE AND LOOK UP AT THE SKY.

I smile ear to ear.

I feel a little better now.

At least there’s one thing I can control at this moment in my life.

I call Knox.

The phone rings and rings.

It goes to his voicemail.

I hang up.

I am genuinely surprised both Knox and Jax haven’t chased me down by now.

The fact that they may have listened and stayed away from me, giving me the chance to blow off some steam and cool down... that means a lot.

But now I need them.

I call Jax.

He picks up on the second ring.

“You good?” Jax asks.

“I’m fucking great right now.”

“Okay. Good. I assume you got your dick sucked or something?”

“Not quite,” I say. “But I do need something from you.”

“I’m not sucking your dick, Gabriel,” Jax says.

“Good to know. I wasn’t asking. Need you to get in touch with Villi. As soon as possible.”

“Villi?”

“That’s what I said. You can get in touch with him for me. On my behalf. I know you and Knox were worried about me. Looking for me.”

“Gabriel, are you drunk or high or something?”

“No.”

“Are you on campus?”

“Yeah.”

“Tell me what’s going on,” Jax says.

“I’ll text you my location. Get Villi and be here as soon as possible. If you don’t hurry, I could be in some serious trouble.”

I end the call.

I use one hand to text Jax where I am.

I can’t use both hands.

Why not?

Well... my right hand is holding a baseball bat.

*And I have the end of the baseball bat pressed against
Hunter's throat.*

VILLI

GABRIEL IS GETTING REVENGE ON HUNTER ON YOUR BEHALF...

That's the last thing I need to hear.

On top of that, the dorm is even more crowded.

Knox and Jax came back to hang around, waiting to hear from Gabriel.

Ruby and Mila are also here.

Chatting away with Violet.

It's like a fucking gossip station.

So as much as I don't want to hear that Gabriel is doing something stupid, I'm actually glad to have a reason to get out of the dorm.

Of course I can't just leave by myself.

Jax and Knox are all fired up.

They've got Mac fired up.

Violet refuses to not be with Mac.

Which means I also have Mila and Ruby on my ass as I leave the dorm.

It's like a whole parade leaving.

All because of Gabriel.

And who knows what the hell is going on with him.

"Where are we going?" Mac asks.

"He sent his location," Jax says. "He's near the fields."

Jax glances at me.

"Oh, fuck," I whisper.

Of course he's at the fields.

Now it's making a little bit of sense to me.

"What do you think?" Knox asks.

"He's up there making a mess," I say. "That's what this is. Digging at the fields. Pissing on them. Maybe he's even taking a shit on the field."

"That's gross," Mila says.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure nothing happens," Jax says with a wink to Mila.

"Why are we involved in this?" Ruby asks.

I snap my fingers and point to her. "I'm asking myself the same thing."

Ruby shows me both her middle fingers.

"Don't you have some more gossiping to do?" I ask. "What were you just talking about? Renting a boyfriend or something?"

"Villi, really?" Violet asks.

“He’s an asshole,” Ruby whispers to Violet. “And that’s not what I said. It was a joke. Starting a business to rent boyfriends.” Ruby glares at me. “Because that’s where I’m at in the world of dating. It’s impossible to find someone. Okay?”

“What does that have to do with me?” I ask.

“Nothing. You’re the one whining like a baby over me talking.”

“You can’t get a boyfriend, Ruby?” I ask. “That’s what this is? Huh? Maybe you should look in the mirror and then listen to yourself talk.”

“Villi!” Violet growls. “You prick!”

“Ouch,” Mila whispers.

Ruby snaps her head over to Mila. “You’re one to talk. Didn’t you lie to Ward tonight? You told him you threw up, right?”

“Guy sounds like a big loser,” I say.

“Fuck you,” Mila snaps.

“I think Villi is right,” Jax says.

“You can fuck yourself too,” Mila says.

“How about we just head back?” Violet asks out loud. “It’ll be a girls night.”

“I don’t like that,” Mac says.

“I don’t need anyone following me right now,” I say.

I can’t believe things are getting this complicated over nothing.

My nerves feel like they’re being twisted.

No offense to anyone, but this is why college girls are fun in the bedroom for a little bit.

I can't stand this nonsense.

Give me Vera. Give me a real woman.

"We're almost there," Jax says. "Let's see what Gabriel did and then be done with it all."

I nod.

I keep walking.

MAC OFFERS TO WALK THE GIRLS BACK TO THE DORM.

I'm fine with that.

It's just myself, Jax, and Knox.

And when I get to the fields, I can't believe my eyes.

Gabriel is standing at home plate of the baseball field.

He has Hunter on his knees.

He has a bat pressed against Hunter's throat.

"Holy fuck," Knox mutters.

"Gabriel has lost his mind for real," Jax says. "What is going on with him?"

I start to run.

I'm all for this war between the hockey players and baseball players...

But there's something about Gabriel right now that's unsteady.

"Villi!" Gabriel calls out. "Look who I found!"

“I see that,” I say.

“Can’t face me yourself, Villi?” Hunter asks.

I look at Hunter and curl my lip. “Says the guy who needed friends with him to come after me.”

“What do you call this?” Hunter asks.

“Revenge, you little bitch,” Gabriel says.

He does a quick little hit with the bat to Hunter’s jaw.

Hunter’s head snaps back and bottom lip is bleeding.

“Gabriel,” I say. “This isn’t your fight.”

“I know that,” he says. “I got this all set up for you.”

He tosses me the baseball bat.

“Don’t try fucking moving,” Gabriel roars at Hunter.

Now it’s me, Gabriel, Jax, and Knox standing there.

Hunter is on his knees in the dirt in front of home plate.

He stares up at me, knowing just how crazy I am.

Trust me, hitting his jaw over the fence doesn’t bother me one bit.

Especially since he started this fight when it came to using a baseball bat.

“Time to make him pay,” Gabriel says to me.

“What the fuck is up with you, man?” Knox asks Gabriel.

“Violence,” Gabriel says and laughs.

I bring the baseball bat back.

They’re all staring at me.

Including Hunter.

He shakes his head a little.

He's absolutely terrified.

In some weird twist of fate, the skies are growing darker.

Thick clouds moving in.

Big, fat storm clouds on the horizon.

I almost feel like I'm in some scary movie for a second or two.

The funny part here is that there is plenty to consider.

Hitting Hunter like this would change his life and mine.

I should be thinking about my hockey career.

I do this... goodbye college hockey.

Goodbye pro hockey for a while.

Goodbye to a lot of things.

Fuck, I'll probably get kicked off campus.

Arrested.

Tossed into jail.

Face a judge and jury.

None of that really hits me.

There's only one thing on my mind and that's Vera.

I think about Vera.

What she would think, say, or do in this situation.

I stare at Hunter and his eyes fill with tears.

"Oh, fuck, he's pissing himself," Jax says.

I look down a little bit more and sure enough there's a growing wet stain on Hunter's tan pants.

“I think that’s good enough,” I say. “For now.”

I toss the baseball bat through the air like a javelin.

“What the fuck, Villi?” Gabriel yells.

I turn and grab for his face. “I said that’s enough.”

I walk away from all of them.

My blood is boiling.

I really want to smash Hunter’s jaw into dust.

But... hey... I want to see Vera even more.

VERA

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS A PRANK PHONE CALL.

A mean one at that.

I did not expect a call from one of the best universities in the state.

A dream university, tucked away in the northern part of the state.

The allure of living in a fantasy world yet being close to everything...

An hour from the coast? Yes.

Two hours from beach towns? Yes.

Keep going north a few hours and you're in a lovely world of colder weather and snow...? Yes.

I can't even begin to explain how close I was at hanging up.

Which would have been one of the biggest blunders of my life.

“I’m not a fan of giving out names. Let’s just say you came highly recommended. By more than one person.”

“I am in a little bit of shock,” I say. “I was not expecting this phone call.”

“We can arrange for a better time to speak.”

“No,” I almost scream. “Right now is fine... *Dr. Spitnelli...*”

“Tim is fine,” he says. “I beg you to please call me Tim.”

“As long as you’ll call me Vera.”

“I think we just made our first deal then. We’re getting along great already.”

“We are,” I say. I swallow hard and mentally tell myself to focus. This is a huge opportunity. Really huge. “May I ask about your university?”

“You may ask all you want. Or you can just look it up. Because if you want the truth, I’ll just read off a computer screen to impress you with numbers. Knowing what I know about you thus far, I’m sure you know enough about us. I understand the idea of seeming interested. I appreciate it. I’m hoping this can be a bit informal.”

“Then I will have you continue the conversation.”

“Do you any connections keeping you where you are?”

Oh, besides my little sister...? Even though Violet can take good care of herself.

There’s also that one thing... I’ve been sleeping with a student...

“No,” I say.

“They’ve shown no interest in offering you a permanent position?”

“None that I know of.”

“Does that make you feel ill against the university?”

“Never,” I say. “I love this place, Tim. I truly do. Puckford means a lot to me.”

“But you’re willing to just leave?”

“Well... informally... I want a career.”

“You want money.”

“Who doesn’t?”

“We’re talking about you.”

“I’m talking about everyone,” I say.

Tim chuckles. “You have degrees in business and finance. You have degrees in teaching. You have experience. No desire to get into the field itself?”

“Business and finance is a wide range of a field.”

“Is this one of those things where... *you can’t do it, so you teach it...*?”

“If I wanted to be in the business world, Tim, I would be. I have the credentials and the capability.”

“Yet you want to teach.”

“I believe in doing what makes you happy.”

“And what exactly makes you happy, Vera?”

I open my mouth to answer and there’s a familiar knock at the door.

“My job makes me happy,” I say.

“The job you’re willing to leave.”

“Have to take care of myself at the end of the day, don’t I?” I ask.

I open my door and lose all my breath when I see Villi standing there.

Tall, muscular, gorgeous.

But this version of Villi... there’s a little vulnerability to him.

I can’t leave him hanging out in the hallway alone.

It’s so risky having him just show up like this as it is...

I wave for him to come inside and then motion for him to be quiet.

I hold up one finger and slink away and rush through my apartment to my bedroom.

From there I actually go into my closet and hide.

As though I’m doing something wrong.

“I know this call came out of nowhere,” Tim says. “I like catching people off guard. I hate the normal banter of a job interview.”

Job. Interview.

My toes curl.

“I appreciate the call. I do wish I was better prepared.”

“What’s there to be prepared for, right? If we get along and can talk, that’s a great first step. Logic would tell us you should take a trip up here and visit the campus. Meet me in person. Keep this discussion going. All informal. No need to

show off. In your case, you came so highly recommended I just might email you an offer right now.”

My heart skips a beat or two.

I let out a nervous laugh.

“How about we leave it as *we’ll be in touch?*” Tim asks.

“I can live with that.”

“Perfect. It was a pleasure talking to you, Vera.”

“Likewise, Tim.”

The call ends.

I collapse into my closet, clutching at some dresses.

I’m ready to scream with excitement.

Then I remember Villi is here!

I don’t even think twice about wanting to share my exciting news with him.

I can’t wait to tell him.

I can’t wait for...

I rush out of my bedroom and Villi is standing right there.

He grabs my arms.

“Darling, we need to talk.”

“Okay.”

“I want to get this off my chest before it starts storming out. I probably shouldn’t stay after I get this off my chest.”

“Ut-oh.”

“No. Not an ut-oh thing, Vera. The guys did me a favor tonight.”

“What kind of favor?”

“They tracked down Hunter,” he says. “Well, Gabriel did. Then he told Jax where to tell me he was. Point being is they had him for me. Gabriel even gave me a baseball bat.”

I gasp.

I step back from Villi.

I start to shake my head.

“I’m trying to tell you I didn’t do anything. I didn’t hit him with the baseball bat. I didn’t hit him with my fists. Nothing. I swear.”

“Okay...”

“The only thing that did happen was he pissed himself. That was kind of funny to see.”

“Oh,” I whisper.

“Vera, I’m trying to tell you something. When I was in that situation, all I could think about was you. How I’d rather be here with you. How I didn’t want to do something stupid and fuck up the chance to see you again. You’re... you’re on my mind all the time, darling. I would rather be here with you than with anyone else.”

“This is you being really romantic right now, isn’t it?”

“The most romantic I’ve ever been.”

“Villi...”

“Just hear what I said,” he says. He touches my face. “Just think about it. I’m not trying to get into your panties or anything. I just wanted to come over and tell you that.”

He leans down and brushes his lips to my left cheek.

Then his lips touch mine.

Then he backs away from me.

I'm in complete awe of him.

I'm completely enamored...

I watch him leave the apartment.

My heart is racing. My head is racing.

I feel an avalanche of emotion.

Then to add to that, I heard a rumble of thunder.

I swallow hard.

I freeze up.

A few seconds later I hear another crack of thunder.

This one louder. Closer.

I cringe.

I hate thunderstorms.

I really hate thunderstorms.

Fine, I'll admit it...

I'm terrified of thunderstorms.

I really don't want to be alone right now.

VILLI

I HEAR THE SMACK OF THE THUNDER AGAINST THE SKY AND IT doesn't bother me one bit.

The only thing that does bother me is the fact that I know for sure that Mac and Violet are all cuddled up in his bed.

She's probably nervous about the storm and he's holding her and...

... and I'm getting jealous over nothing.

Made up shit in my head.

Or even if it isn't made up shit, what the hell do I care what Mac and Violet do to each other?

This is what I was talking about when it comes to Vera.

This is what this woman is doing to me.

No longer focused on hockey or going to a bar to find a married woman who needs a good fuck... no longer finding a fun college girl for one night...

I keep trying to tell myself this isn't anything real.

It's nothing beyond the amazing physical connection.

Except...

Except my phone screen lights up with a text message from...?

"Vera," I whisper.

You don't know this about me but I'm scared of thunderstorms.

I read the text a few times.

I think I'm done playing any games here too.

A feeling of being pissed off starts to hit me.

No need to be afraid. But if you want to be afraid and be taken care of, then get over here right now.

I go right for the throat so to say.

Vera texts back.

You know I can't do that.

I shake my head.

You can do whatever you want. It's your turn to come to my place. Don't pretend you don't like the risk.

I send it.

Then I add more.

A sudden *softer* vibe hits me.

But if you need me I'll come over. I promised you I will protect you...

I wait for a response.

I see that she's typing away.

I have no idea what to expect.

If you want to know the truth I hate being in my apartment during storms. I feel like I'm closer to the sky. Don't laugh at that. (Okay you can laugh at that) I have this stupid fear that being on the second floor that I'll get crushed if the storm knocks the building over...

I do not hesitate to reply.

Sounds like you need to get over here right now. Very cozy. And very safe.

I move from my bed and I grab for my shoes.

Yeah, I know.

I'm that *loyal* to Vera?

I'm not sure if it's the sweet taste of her pussy or if it's actually something crazy like love.

Vera responds.

THIS IS FUCKING NUTS... but I'll drive over right now.

I SNEAK OUT OF MY BEDROOM AND OUT OF THE DORM.

I have a hoodie with me and when I meet Vera outside, it's pouring.

Thunder echoes in the sky.

Lightning dances from cloud to cloud.

I give her the hoodie to cover up her head and face not just from the rain but from being seen.

Even for me... this is kind of nuts.

I get her into the dorm easily.

I lock the door.

I rush her to my bedroom.

I lock that door too.

Vera tosses the hoodie to the floor and turns to face me.

She's wet.

She looks nervous.

Outside there's a big slam of thunder.

Followed by a long rumble that shakes the room.

Vera jumps toward me. I catch her.

She's shivering.

"You weren't lying," I whisper.

"No, Villi. I really hate storms."

"What happened?"

She looks up at me. "One time when I was younger, I got stuck in a storm with Violet. I was driving her home from somewhere... I wasn't even supposed to be driving. Abby was supposed to pick her up but Abby got drunk and was at some college party. Poor Violet was so scared. It was the worst drive of my life. I had Violet in the backseat, under a blanket. I drove in rain that made it impossible to see. When the lightning hit the sky, it was like a scary movie. The trees bent over from the wind. Branches everywhere. Water everywhere. I just..."

Her chin quivers.

Something about this story makes her seem so much more real.

Which doesn't make sense because Vera is real.

She's always been real.

She always will be.

I easily brush my lips against hers.

A soft kiss to start.

Then a deeper one.

She clutches for my shirt and pulls herself against me.

Outside my window there's a flash of lightning.

When the crack of thunder hits, she jumps.

I sweep her up off her feet and take her to my bed.

I toss her on my bed and she sits up and stares up at me
with eyes that are just... scary.

She licks her lips.

I bend forward and greet her lips with mine.

We then tear at each other's clothes.

I take her shirt off.

She opens my jeans.

I grab for her hips and pull at her pants, sending her flying
to her back.

She lets out a yell and grabs for the sheets.

I have her down to her bra and panties.

I push my jeans down and climb out of them.

That's all I'm wearing down there.

I take off my shirt as I climb onto my bed.

The flashes of lightning are like camera lenses going off.

Like heavenly evidence of what's going on in my dorm room.

A professor. A college student.

Naughty. Forbidden.

Delicious.

I run my hands up Vera's back and unsnap her bra with ease.

I guide her bra off her body and toss it to the floor.

My mouth seeks her breasts, one at a time, engulfing her, tasting her.

She reaches down and grabs my cock.

Offering purposeful jerks, squeezing at my tip, her fingertips playing with the sticky pre-cum that leaks from me.

I press forward, forcing her hand and my cock against her panties.

She makes a wild move, pulling her own panties to the side.

Giving me her pussy.

Mine.

All fucking mine, darling.

I don't slow or offer her myself in a little waves.

We're in the middle of a fucking storm, in more ways than one.

I slam my cock into Vera's body.

I know she can take it.

I know that she trusts me.

And believe me, I will always take care of her.

Her right hand claws at my stomach.

That's fine.

My hands wrap around her body and I hold her against me as I fuck her.

I kiss her chest again.

My tongue flickers against her skin, up her to neck, then up to her mouth.

Her tongues slaps against mine.

We begin a horribly sloppy kiss.

She groans into my mouth.

Her hips buck at me.

I slam my body harder and *harder* against hers.

The thunder gets louder and louder.

And in the twisted mix of this whole thing... my heart.

I've never felt my heart thump so hard before.

I've never felt my heart race so fast before.

Oh, fuck... is this what falling in love actually feels like?

VERA

THE STORM STILL SCARES ME.

His body pleasures me.

'More,' is the word I keep finding the ability to say.

There's a gust of wind that hits the window so hard I think it's going to break.

Between my fear of the storm and the wild pleasure from Villi's body, I can't keep myself quiet.

I know I'm being too loud.

So does Villi.

He pulls his beautiful cock out of my body and away from me.

With such ease he grabs my hips and flips me over like I'm a Sunday morning pancake on a hot griddle.

(Yes, that's what came to mind... don't judge me...)

I'm face down on his bed.

He grabs my panties and tears them down my legs.

Then his body smothers mine.

He's on top of me. From behind.

I grab for his pillows and pull them toward my face.

Now I can yell, scream, groan, make guttural noises all I want.

I open my legs.

I feel Villi there already.

That thick, firm pressure from his cock.

As invasive as he is, I don't even have to move either.

Villi has enough... size... that he can just fuck me like that.

No need for me to bend and twist and wiggle my ass, hoping to feel something a little deeper.

Nope.

Villi has it all.

Villi does it all.

He fucks with such force that my knees bend and my toes curl.

I yell into his pillows, begging him for more.

I've reached what I believe is the peak level of total pleasure.

Having the man you love fuck you like you're a one-night stand...

IT'S NOW MORNING.

I'm awake.

The storm has passed.

At least the one outside.

I stare at the ceiling, thinking about the night before.

I have never experienced sex that intense ever.

All I know now is that next time it storms...

... I'm going to be expected to be fucked like that again...

I smile.

I cross my fingers and hope for another horrible thunderstorm today.

Villi is sleeping peacefully.

Facing me.

Even sleeping his face looks so serious and so mean.

He's like a rattlesnake.

He might not even be sleeping at all.

Just waiting to make his next move...

I reach for his face and touch his right cheek.

I playfully pull his cheek up, forcing him into sort-of-half-of-a-smile.

He doesn't move.

I have to pee.

I inch my way to the bottom of the bed and look at the mess of clothes on the floor.

Truthfully I can't tell you the last time I was at someone else's place for a little fun. Whether it was something serious or some cheap one-night fling.

I find a random hoodie on the floor and look at it.

PUCKFORD PIRATES.

It smells like Villi.

My toes curl.

I put the hoodie on and it's like a warm blanket.

Covering everything that needs to be covered, going all the way down to my knees.

I creep to the door and unlock it.

I open the door slowly and turn, sneaking out of the bedroom.

I pull the door shut.

Then I sneak into the bathroom and turn on the faucet.

Yes, I'm uneasy about going pee right now. I don't want Villi to hear me going pee. So I turn on the faucet to drown out the sound.

I finish up, wash my hands in the running water, and then exit the bathroom.

I look to my left and see Mac standing at the counter, pouring a glass of orange juice.

Not even thinking, I smile and nod.

Mac's jaw suddenly drops.

My jaw suddenly drops.

All thoughts erase from my head.

There's nothing I can do about this now.

No excuse.

Nothing.

Mac just stares at me.

He's in shock.

I'm frozen.

I'm in shock.

The orange juice pours into the glass, going up and up...
and up...

Mac's mouth closes. Then opens.

He can't even speak right now.

I feel like I'm on display now.

Somewhere in my head I'm screaming to go back into the
bathroom. Or go back into Villi's room.

Do something!

I do nothing.

The orange juice reaches the top of the glass but Mac
doesn't notice or care.

The glass begins to overflow.

Orange juice spilling down the sides of the glass and onto
the counter.

Mac then finally places the container of orange juice on
the counter.

He then slowly walks away.

He doesn't take the glass of orange juice he just poured
with him.

I don't even know what to say or do at the moment.

I only have one question...

Just how fucked am I right now?

MAC

WHAT THE FUCK DID I...

I open my bedroom door and step inside.

I don't even know how to describe how I feel at the moment.

Violet is sitting up in my bed, back against the wall.

She's sleepy, sexy and happy.

She smiles at me.

"Where's my drink?"

"Out there," I say.

"Oh? Did you forget...?"

"No."

"Just wanted to see me again?" Violet asks. "See these..."

My sweet love who was a virgin not that long ago is now a crazed sex vixen.

She pulls the covers down, showing off her magnificent breasts.

The smell of her skin and the taste of her breasts in the morning is better than the strongest coffee in the world.

And now I have to fuck up this moment between us.

I move toward my bed and can't believe what I'm doing as I lift the covers up.

I'm covering up Violet's boobs.

This is unheard of.

This is a tragedy.

To make matters worse, I grab for her clothes off the floor.

I'm talking everything.

Bra. Panties.

Everything.

"Are you kicking me out?" Violet asks. "I've never see you like this before. You want me to get dressed? What's going on with you?"

I point to my door. "Uh... out there... I saw... there was... uh..."

"What? Does Villi have some girl over? Are you worried about me seeing? Or is it that Heather slut again? Are you worried about Hunter? You don't have to worry."

"Yes, I do," I say.

"Why?"

I take a deep breath.

"Your sister is here," I finally say.

“What?” Violet giggles.

“Your sister is here,” I say. “Wearing Villi’s hoodie. Probably nothing else but that.”

Violet lets it sink in for a second or two.

“My sister,” she whispers. “Fucking Abby...”

“No, sugar,” I say. “It’s not Abby.”

Violet’s eyes go wider than I’ve ever seen them before.

I’m pretty sure if it was Abby we wouldn’t be in shock here.

But... Vera?

What the fuck is Vera doing here wearing Villi’s hoodie?

VIOLET

I SET A WORLD RECORD WITH HOW FAST I GET DRESSED.

I run out of the bedroom, Mac chasing after me.

I see Vera just standing there, looking right at me.

She's wearing Villi's hoodie.

One of his hockey hoodies.

My jaw hits the floor.

"We should find a way to talk about this," Mac says.

"You're fucking Villi?" I yell to Vera. "Are you insane? Please tell me there's a reason for this. Tell me..."

"The storm," Vera says. "I was scared."

"Okay," I say. "I respect that. I'm afraid too. That was rough last night. Ask Mac. He saw what it's like. Because of the drive we had together. Right?"

Vera nods.

"So you... what? You got trapped here? Stuck here? You're helping Villi with his grades..."

Vera doesn't respond.

That's the worst thing she can do.

"You're fucking him?" I cry out.

"You don't understand, Violet," my sister says. "Just... back off a little... okay?"

"Back off? You're the one who rode my ass all my life about being good. Making good decisions. Look at you. I can't tell if it's really you or Abby!"

"That's unfair," Vera says.

"You're fucking Villi!" I yell. "You're a professor! You have a career! And you're fucking Villi? Are you insane?"

Villi's door rips open and here he comes.

Wearing nothing but a pair of shorts with the *PU* lettering on the right leg.

Villi looks around, then at my sister.

"Caught?" Villi asks.

"Really caught," Vera says.

"I should have just went to your place like I always did," Villi says.

"*Like you always did?*" I ask. "How long has this been going on? You've been going to my sister's apartment to fuck her?"

"Yeah, I have," Villi says with such calmness.

"Holy fuck, dude," Mac says. "So this is why you've been acting weird? Not bringing anyone home? Missing meetings and practices and stuff?"

“You’ve been missing hockey practice because of me?”
Vera asks Villi.

My head is spinning.

I race toward the kitchen area and open a few drawers until
I find a knife.

That’s right. A fucking knife.

I have no choice here.

I have to kill Villi.

I have to...

“You psycho!” I yell at Villi. “You could have screwed the
other sister! With Abby I would at least expect it!”

“What is that supposed to mean?” Vera asks me.

“You know what that means. This isn’t like you!”

“Do you really want to get into that?” Vera asks. “*Little
Miss Virgin...* until you meet a hockey player who commands
your ass around...”

“Works for me,” Mac says.

I wave my middle finger at Mac.

I stare at my sister.

Villi just stands there, so cocky.

“I’m going to hurt you, Villi,” I say.

I start to charge toward him.

I know Mac is already coming after me.

Villi isn’t scared one bit of me, which makes me even
more angry.

Vera steps into my path. “Listen to me!”

“No,” I growl.

“It’s more than just fucking!”

I freeze. “What?”

“Yes. We’re... fucking. Okay? We’re... yeah... but it’s more than that.”

“What do you mean by that, Vera?” I ask.

“What do you think I mean? It’s not just about fooling around. There’s...”

Villi grabs my sister’s hand.

He kisses the back of her hand.

Then he smiles at me. *“I’ve some serious feelings for your sister.”*

VILLI

DAMN. TALK ABOUT GETTING CAUGHT...

There I am holding Vera's hand.

Confessing to everyone that I have feelings for her.

Real feelings.

Strong feelings.

It's not just about sneaking around and having wild sex.

"Get rid of that stupid knife," Vera tells her sister.

Mac is right there.

He takes the knife out of Violet's hand and gets rid of it.

"That's the truth," I say to Violet. "There's feelings here. There's a realness to it all. Even if you don't like it or understand it."

I'm thinking this is it.

The big romantic reveal kind of thing.

I can't wait to plant a big kiss onto Vera's lips in front of Violet.

I can't wait for this to...

Vera pulls her hand from mine.

She steps away from me.

"Okay, fine," she says. "This is legit. Okay? That's what you want to hear, Violet? It's legit." Vera looks at me. "But this is fucking nuts..."

"Thank you!" Violet cries out.

"Relax, sugar," Mac says to Violet. "Don't judge."

"It's my sister," Violet growls. "And it's Villi."

"Hey," I say. "Just to be clear here... I've been faithful and protective of her."

I want to blurt out the situation with Blake but it's not my place to talk about it.

I don't need to sell my goodwill to anyone.

"This is just crazy," Vera says. She runs her hands through her hair. "All of it is just crazy. What am I doing? I can get fired... Villi, I can get fired. And you'll get into a ton of trouble. You have a career waiting for you. Your dream. You're going to play pro hockey..."

Vera takes off toward my bedroom.

I hope to go after her alone, but I'm not alone at all.

Violet and Mac join us.

My bed is a mess of sleep and sex.

Violet's eyes fill with anger at the sight of her sister's clothes on the floor.

I'm a little pissed and jealous that Mac is looking at Vera's bra, even for a second.

Vera scoops up her stuff and races off to the bathroom to get dressed.

She's going to bolt now.

She has to think this through.

That's just how she is.

And I have to let her go think it all over for a little while.

As I stand there, I feel something hit my arm.

It's Violet.

She punches my arm a second time.

“What the fuck is wrong with you, Villi?”

“What did I do?” I growl.

“My sister! That's what you did!”

“She's fucking beautiful. She's gorgeous. She's sexy. She's just...”

“She's older than you,” Violet says. “Do you have a thing for that? Huh?”

Vera emerges from the bathroom. “I have to go. I'm sorry. I'm in a dorm right now. I can't be here...”

Vera starts to leave and Violet makes a move to follow.

I stop Violet.

“She'll be okay,” I whisper to Violet. “She needs time to think. Alone. This is how she does stuff.”

Violet turns and looks at me.

She then finally slaps me across my face.

I TAKE THE SLAP.

I deserve it.

Mac slips an arm around Violet, just in case she tries to fully attack me.

“I can’t believe this,” Violet says. “My sister? Really? Vera? You couldn’t have fucked the easy one?”

“Do you want me to go sleep with Abby?”

“No!”

“Okay. I’m just asking.”

“This make no sense...”

“It doesn’t have to make sense for you, Violet,” I say.

“But it kind of does make sense,” she says. “The way you’ve been acting. You’ve been... calmer. I mean, you haven’t had anyone here.”

“I know. And you’ve both been questioning me about it.”

“It’s not like you,” Violet says.

“No, it’s not. This is all not like me. Ask Mac. Ask him how many times I’ve been like this...”

“Zero,” Mac says without hesitation. “I think Heather was the person you were most consistent with. But that was only to piss off Hunter.”

“Hunter,” Violet says. “Do you not see the repercussions of your life? Getting attacked like that. And you think you can be with my sister?”

“I earned that beating,” I say. “That was before I... whatever.”

“Oh, damn, Villi,” Mac says. “That’s why you didn’t take Hunter’s head off with the baseball bat.”

“That situation is over. Everyone got their say in it.”

“But still...”

“Shut up, Mac,” I growl.

“Wait a second,” Violet says. Her brain is putting pieces of the puzzle together. “So this has been going on for more than a minute. That means... wait...”

“What?” I ask. “What is your brain putting together?”

“You were fucking my sister when I showed you my boobs!” Violet cries out.

“I don’t want to talk about that ever again,” Mac says.

“Too late,” I say with a smile. I look at Violet. “And I guess you’re right. I was sleeping with Vera. And you were showing me your beautiful tits.”

Mac growls.

Violet gasps.

“To be fair though, I didn’t look,” I say. “That’s got to count for something, right?”

Violet suddenly gasps and steps back.

She covers her mouth.

She and Mac look at each other.

They’re having some kind of silent conversation.

“I get it now,” Violet says.

“Get what?” I ask.

“You begged me for how long to show you my boobs... and I did. I finally did. And you looked away. You refused to look. And now I know why.”

“Why?” I ask.

Violet smiles. “*You’re in love with my sister.*”

VERA

SNEAKING AROUND TO GET TO MY CAR FEELS LIKE AN embarrassment.

I drive away from the campus and I can't get my thoughts to calm themselves down.

I can't even be mad at myself about last night either.

What's done is done.

I hate thunderstorms. I wanted to be with Villi.

There's zero regret there.

What I do regret is feeling too comfortable this morning.

My mind forgetting that I was in a dorm.

That my sister was in the same dorm as me.

It's not a shock Villi and I got caught.

I'm not even upset that Violet wanted to stab Villi.

I'm pretty sure anyone who meets Villi wants to stab him at least once.

The more distance I put myself between myself and *Puckford University*... it does nothing to quell the panic I'm feeling.

All it takes it just...

Oh. Crap.

Think about it.

Violet doesn't mean any harm.

But I know who she hangs out with.

Mila and Ruby.

They probably mean no harm either.

Nobody is out to get me or get Villi.

It's fine.

Except it's not fine.

All I need is one little slip...

I'm picturing it now.

Violet trying to process everything.

Then she goes to a party.

Her and Mac... the other guys on the hockey team...

There's Violet, having a drink or two.

Then maybe three and four.

See where this is going?

Drunk lips are very loose.

All I need now is for something like that to happen.

And even if it just starts a rumor.

Then what?

Then I'm in a position to lie through my teeth.

I'm in a position to ask Villi to lie too.

That's not fair to him. Not fair to me.

I pull up to my apartment building and I take a deep breath.

This possible new job offer...

It means more than anything in the world right now.

I should call Tim back right now.

As soon as I get inside.

I'll go meet up with him right now.

It all feels like too much though.

Too many moving parts.

I don't live my life like this. Ever.

I hate feeling guilty.

I hate having to grasp at so many things at once.

One little thing gets out of place and then... *boom*.

I look at my phone.

I'm tempted to call Villi.

I kind of just stormed out of the dorm, didn't I?

Villi has thick skin though. He knows I didn't mean it in any way against him.

I just had to get out of there.

I just have to be alone for a minute to think.

It's all falling apart because of a thunderstorm.

I don't even know what to text Villi.

We finally decide to admit some feelings and we do it for an audience of my sister and one of Villi's teammates.

Not that Mac is a bad guy or anything, but it's the same situation...

One little slip.

Mac says something tongue-in-cheek to Villi in front of the other hockey players...

Now it becomes this rumor or story.

It grows legs too.

Next thing I know...

My stomach feels twisted up and sick.

I can't tell if I'm going to throw up for real or if I just feel like I am.

I hurry into the apartment building and up to my apartment.

I push open my door and then I-

I freeze.

Wait a second...

I just pushed open my door.

My door wasn't locked. It wasn't even full closed.

I turn and look at the door.

I shut it.

I think about last night.

In the midst of the storm and being afraid... did I really forget to close my own apartment door and lock it?

I mean, anything is possible.

But there's no way I would...

A hand suddenly touches my shoulder.

Chills ripple down my back.

"I can't help but miss you, Vera," a voice whispers.

I turn around.

I can't believe what I'm seeing.

Blake is here.

And he's got a gun.

VILLI

I LEAVE THE DORM.

No way I'm sticking around to hear Mac and Violet.

Both of them trying to gang up on me and get me to confess my love for Vera out loud.

It went from wanting to stab me with me a knife to wanting to hug me.

It went from Violet slapping me, to then teasing me that she was going to be my sister-in-law and that I could tell people that my sister-in-law showed me her boobs.

Even Mac laughed at that one.

That did it for me.

The second Mac's no longer mad about Violet showing me her boobs?

It's like the world stops turning or something.

Then again I don't have time for this stuff anyway.

This is serious what's going on now.

Vera and I are *caught. Exposed.*

I'm not stupid either.

I completely understand how this whole thing can shake out.

One word to someone.

One little rumor.

Even besides that... the allure of the risk is gone.

It's much more serious now.

It all falls on Vera's shoulders too.

Which I think is complete and total bullshit.

I know she'll be the one to get into trouble. She'll be the one to get fired. She'll be the one who is painted at a terrible person.

I can't allow that to happen.

I promised her I would protect her.

Long before we slept together.

Long before we fell for each other.

That's what I'm going to continue to do.

Maybe I am in love with her.

Maybe I'm just an idiot obsessed with her.

I have no fucking clue.

Maybe it's something about her body, her eyes, her heart...

Maybe there's some kind of drug in her sweet honey that tastes so good, dripping between her legs.

I have no fucking clue.

What I do know is that for the first time in my life, I don't want to be mean and selfish.

And you know what?

This is easily fixed.

I'll leave PU.

That's right.

I'll make some calls and have someone help me transfer.

It would send some shockwaves throughout the team.

I'd end being the most hated guy in the world for a bit.

They'd call me a traitor and boo me for my entire career.

I'll be twenty years into my hockey career and they'll still be talking about how I jumped ship from *Puckford University*.

Nobody will ever know the truth... besides myself. And Vera.

She's worth this insane decision.

She deserves to know that too.

And not through a text message either.

I want to look into her pretty eyes and tell her that.

I'll do anything to keep her happy and safe.

I have to see Vera, right now...

VERA

BLAKE.

With a gun.

His left hand grips my right shoulder tight.

The gun is at his side, in his hand.

The smell of him though...

He's drunk.

And I mean stinking drunk.

He smells like he bathed in a tub of whiskey.

His eyes are glazed, blood shot, confused, and angry.

He's got that scary look.

The look of someone who will do something crazy and not think twice about it.

Sure, he might regret it later, but that won't matter if a bullet takes my life.

An apology won't bring me back from the dead.

Dead.

I shiver.

Fear cripples my body.

I'm lucky I don't collapse.

"I told you this wasn't over," Blake whispers. "I warned you, Vera. I really did warn you. You just refused to listen to me. You wanted to screw that other guy? What... he's younger than me? Really? Is that who you are?"

"Blake, I have cameras in here," I lie. "They're always recording. I have security. The police will be here soon."

"I really can't take lies right now. You don't have cameras and security. I've been here all night waiting for you."

My heart sinks. "You... what...?"

"Yeah. That's right. I showed up last night. Late last night. You wouldn't open the door. I got scared. It was storming outside. Remember you told me you don't like storms. Remember?"

Blake laughs.

Then he growls.

"Tell me you fucking remember!"

His breath makes my eyes water.

I feel like just breathing the same air as him will get me drunk.

"I remember, Blake," I say. "I really do."

"See? That's the guy I am. I remember things, Vera. You told me that and I remembered it! See who I am?"

“Okay. I get it. I really do get it. Can you please just put the gun down? We don’t need a gun.”

“Yes, we do. Because you keep lying to me. You want to hurt me, Vera. You’re evil. You’re a fucking bitch.”

“I’m not any of that, Blake. I’m allowed to have my feelings.”

“Fuck your feelings,” he growls.

He pushes at my shoulder and I stumble back and hit the door.

I see a small opening and I take it.

I turn and twist the doorknob.

In my mind, I can do this.

Get out of the apartment and run.

Run!

Blake presses his body against mine.

The door doesn’t budge an inch.

I feel his body... I feel everything... touching me...

“You can’t get away from me,” he whispers. “That’s the problem here. You want to get away. I can’t let you do that. You can’t get away from me. Or if you really want to...”

Blake starts to laugh.

It’s a horrible belly laugh.

His body keeps bouncing against mine.

He puts the gun against the door.

That’s my reminder.

That’s my warning.

I can either be with him. Or be dead.

I can't just stand there anymore.

I can't let this happen.

Not without a fight.

I kick my right foot back.

Blake lets out a yell and his body moves away from me.

I spin around.

My back flat against the door.

I'm fighting through the desire to just freeze up.

Fight, Vera! Fight back!

Blake looks shocked.

I jump toward him and swing my right foot.

I kick him in the balls.

The gun falls from his hand as he grabs between his legs.

He's drunk and unsteady.

I look at the gun.

I'm shaking.

I can't bring myself to do it.

To grab the gun.

You need to! Defend yourself! Get help!

I take a stuttering step forward.

Blake moves quicker and reaches for the gun.

I know this is it...

He's going to hurt me.

No.

He's going to kill me.

This is how my life ends.

With some random psycho that I dated for a little while.

I run to my right, hoping to find something to hide behind.

“You bitch!” Blake growls.

I'll gladly be a bitch, but I want to be an alive bitch.

“I have to do this now,” Blake mutters to himself.

My blood runs ice cold.

I hear a knock at my apartment door.

I do the first thing that comes to mind.

I scream for help.

All I've done though is put the person at my door in grave danger.

The door flies open and Villi is there.

Again.

To save me.

Maybe.

Or maybe both of us are going to be shot and killed in some gruesome yet romantic way.

VILLI

HEARING VERA CALL FOR HELP...

Opening the door and finding that guy there again...

It's like my world is crashing down. Spinning. Turning bright red. Turning dark red.

From the corner of my right eye I see Vera scrambling to get to safety.

Which is smart, but this guy is back with a gun.

The gun is on the floor.

Which means Vera did something to fight back.

I'm damn proud of her yet I'm mad at myself for not being here sooner.

The guy - *Blake* - is beyond a psycho.

He's dangerous and needs to be stopped. For good.

He's making his move for the gun.

You already know I don't have a *fight or flight* thing in my body.

All I do and know is to fight.

Which means I run after the guy who is reaching for a gun.

I crouch down a little, tuck my right arm and blast him with my shoulder.

He flies through the air.

More importantly, he's nowhere near the gun.

That's good.

Because I want to kill Blake with my bare hands.

I lunge for him.

I slide on my knees and just start swinging.

I don't give a fuck anymore.

I'm well aware of what's at stake here.

Vera's job. Vera's career.

My life as a college hockey player.

My potential career as a pro hockey player.

It's going to be over because of this crazy stalker piece of shit.

I bring my right fist down and smash it against Blake's face.

He lets out a groan.

I do it again.

Then a third time.

This time Blake tries to fight back.

He smells like booze.

That means he has some drunk muscles showing.

Which is fine by me.

I'm ready for a fight.

"I warned you," I growl. "I fucking warned you."

I hit him again.

He loses all his strength and is now on his back.

He's bloody, dazed, drunk.

Staring at the ceiling.

I look over my right shoulder and I see tears running down Vera's cheeks.

I can only imagine what he said and did to her.

Pointing a gun at her.

Threatening her life.

What if he... you know... what if he wanted her to do stuff... with him... to him...

I punch Blake again.

He lifts his hands and waves them.

He's blubbing now, slurring his words, telling me to stop hitting him.

That's when I stand up.

I flex my right hand.

I can deal with the throbbing pain.

Right now I'm going to stomp his teeth into his brain.

I pick up my right foot.

I feel an arm come around my chest, clutching tight to my left arm.

Pulling me away from Blake.

I let out a wild yell as I'm then spun around.

I gasp for a breath as I feel hands slap my face.

I blink a few times and realize who is standing in front of me.

It's Coach Damon.

VERA

WE'LL CALL THIS... 'THE AFTERMATH.'

There's nothing quite like a crazy ex in your apartment with a gun.

And then the college hockey player - *who is sort of a student of yours* - showing up to save you.

And then the hockey coach himself showing up...

The entire thing is too surreal.

So much to take in at once that I passed out.

Now that I've come to, I'm sitting on my couch.

I have a blanket over my shoulders.

Paramedics have checked me out and I have a clean bill of health.

At least physically.

There are cops all over my apartment.

I see Villi standing in the kitchen with two officers.

My apartment door is wide open.

Coach Damon is out in the hallway talking to two other officers.

In front of me, sitting on my coffee table, is a female officer.

“Just keep it simple and call me Carly,” she says. “What in the world is going on here?”

“Where is Blake?” I ask.

“He’s gone,” she says. She touches my leg. “He’s going to stay gone. I heard this isn’t the first time he’s done this...”

I shake my head. “I should have called the police the first time it happened. I thought...”

My chin quivers.

I know I’m completely fucked now.

My secret has to be exposed.

The truth about Villi and myself.

We’ve gone from risky fantasy to a dangerous reality.

I turn my head and Villi is staring right at me.

He makes a sudden move, pushing by the two officers and hurrying toward me.

At the same time, Coach Damon rushes back into my apartment.

He puts a hand out and stops Villi from getting too close to me.

“This is one big mess,” Coach Damon. “And it’s all my fault.”

I lift an eyebrow.

It's your fault? How is it your fault?

“Villi was just doing what he thought was right,” Coach Damon says.

“Well, he may have saved Miss Monroe’s life,” Officer Carly says.

“He definitely did,” I say. “I’m very thankful he showed up.”

“Listen, I’ll tell the story a hundred times if you need,” Coach Damon says. “Vera and I had been casually talking. You know we both work for the university and all. Just talking about life. Colleagues. Nothing more. She had been telling me about this Blake fellow. Just asking questions about... stalkers. That was my first mistake. Not doing more.”

The hockey coach is lying...

“I then foolishly made a comment or two that Villi overheard. We have the best damn college hockey team in the country. We have some damn good players too. Not only that, I take pride in teaching these men how to act like that. Like men. Now if you want to go deeper, sure. I noticed something was on Villi’s mind. He hasn’t been himself lately. Distant. Missing a practice here or there. I thought he might have been in some trouble.”

“Were you in some trouble?” Officer Carly asks Villi.

“Not that I know of,” Villi says. “I just...”

“He had a feeling. A hunch.” Coach Damon pats Villi’s shoulder. “Villi has a big heart. A really big heart. He sometimes forgets there’s a whole other world outside the university.”

“The one where it’s stupid to take on a guy with a gun?”
Officer Carly asks.

Villi gives a nod.

“Go ahead, Villi,” Coach Damon says. “Tell the officer what happened.”

“I showed up to check on Miss Monroe. It wasn’t my place to be here. I’m sorry about that. But I heard her scream for help. I opened the door and she was trying to get away from Blake. The gun was on the floor. I had no choice but to attack him. To keep him away from the gun.”

“That’s when I showed up,” Coach Damon says. “I also had a hunch. Villi missing practices and all. I saw him leaving campus and I followed.” Coach Damon shrugs his shoulders. “Look, I consider my players a part of my family. I think of them as sons. It’s more than just hockey for me. And I teach them the same. Truth be told here, I’m damn proud of Villi for doing what he did. I’m scared out of my mind right now thinking of what could have been. But when I showed up, Villi had the other guy subdued. I quickly called the police and we kept the guy on the ground. Then you all showed up.”

Officer Carly nods.

Then she looks at me.

“You’re one lucky lady,” she says. “To have guys like this looking out for you.”

“I am lucky,” I say. “Very lucky.”

I glance at Villi but just for a second.

Now our love is wrapped up in an insane story of lies...

THE POLICE FINISH UP THEIR INVESTIGATION AFTER ASKING millions of questions.

My head hurts.

I'm still shivering from what happened.

Blake has been taken away in the back of a police car.

I won't have to worry about him anymore.

Hopefully never again.

Villi and Coach Damon are standing at my open door as the last officer makes his way out.

Villi then looks at me.

There's a sense of desperation in his eyes.

I know he wants to rush to me.

I know he wants to kiss me.

I know he wants to pick me up, take me to my bed and make me feel safe.

The best I can offer him right now is a small wave.

And a small nod.

Just letting him know I'm okay at the moment.

Coach Damon whispers something to Villi, then pats him on the back.

Villi promptly leaves my apartment.

Coach Damon shuts the door behind him.

He folds his arms.

“I don’t even know what to say right now,” I whisper.

He nods. “Probably a fair thing to say right now. I can probably say the same to you.”

“You didn’t have to do what you did.”

“Yes, I did. I did it for Villi. For his life. For his career. I meant what I said. These guys are family to me. Like sons to me. I knew something was going on with him. I had to find out just in case it was something bad.”

“Fighting off my crazy ex... is that something bad?” I ask.

Coach Damon frowns. “It’s dangerous. That’s what it is. That’s where I leave it. It’s a very dangerous game to be playing.”

Before I can respond, Coach Damon turns, opens my door and leaves.

I finally have the chance to cry a little.

I try to but nothing comes out.

I feel stuck.

Exposed.

Caught.

I feel...

I can’t help but ignore all the reality and danger and just admit to myself that I’m crazily and stupidly in love with Villi.

VERA

I'M SIMPLY TERRIFIED TO PUT IT LIGHTLY.

Being told to show up to a meeting...

A private meeting.

It's like being called into your boss's office at the end of the day.

Where you have that sinking feeling that you're about to be fired.

More than that, I've had notice for the last few days about this meeting.

I'm going to be sitting on the other side of a long, old table.

Just me.

Myself.

Alone.

On my own.

It's time to face whatever waits for me.

Because right now, everything is in the open.

The university knows about what happened in my apartment with Blake.

And I'm more than sure it's been talked about around campus too.

Think about it... an assistant almost killed by her crazy ex?

Saved by a hockey player and the head coach of the hockey team?

In fact, Coach Damon has been getting praise for showing up.

It's been a mess.

I've done nothing but stay home.

I've had to deal with phone calls from reporters.

I've even had a few show up to my door wanting me to talk.

My saving grace has been Violet coming over with food and wine.

And, yes, I haven't seen much of Villi either.

At least I know that's going to change after today.

I'm scared.

Yet when I think about it... I'm also relieved.

I want this thing over with.

And I want my Villi.

Yes, that's right.

He's my Villi.

I want him.

I need him.

I brush my teeth, check my hair, grab my bag, and sneak out of my apartment.

Nobody is waiting for me, which is good.

I drive back on campus and it feels weird.

Seeing the *Puckford University* sign, logo, all the buildings.

It's such a feeling of home to me yet it feels distant already.

I've played this out in my head so when I get fired I don't burst into tears.

I want to take it like an adult.

I'll stand up, thank the university for its time, and then move on with my life.

I enter the main administration building.

I tell the receptionist my name.

I'm not even seated for a minute before I'm called back.

I'm taken to a private room in the old building, just like I thought.

There's a long table.

The room has a few windows.

Lots of bookshelves and old books.

It smells like old pages and clean wood.

A very musky scent with a touch of pine.

Across from me are three people.

The most important people in the university.

The president - *Dr. Charles Omeri.*

On his left and right are Carol Ambring and Annmarie Berruzi.

“Please, have a seat,” Dr. Omeri says.

I already know Carol and Annmarie won’t be speaking to me.

They’re there for intimidation and proof of conversation.

I fold my hands.

“You’ve had quite the ordeal,” Dr. Omeri says.

“Yes,” I say. “I want to say I apologize if it’s brought any negative press to the university.”

“No need to say that. All that matters is your safety.”

“I also want to thank you for giving some time off to...”

“Understood,” he says. “Let’s address the matter at hand though. No need to waste any time. Something has been brought to my attention. We need to address it immediately.”

I swallow hard.

Yes. I’ve been sleeping with a student.

Do I think it’s wrong?

No.

We’re both adults.

It shouldn’t matter...

“You may or may not know but I’m good friends with someone you might know.”

I feel heat race to my cheeks.

“Vera, do me a favor and call me Charles,” Dr. Omeri says.
“Let’s make this informal. The way Tim handles his business.”

Tim...?

My eyes widen.

Dr. Omeri - *Charles* - smiles.

“I heard you had a conversation with him.”

“He called me. I did not seek him...”

“I told him to call you.”

“Oh?”

“Vera, you deserve a true position at a great university. I’ll be honest with you, we don’t have that here for you right now. You can easily keep your current position and wait. To me, that feels wasteful. I’d much rather see you go off and spread your wings, so to say. Mind you, it’ll come with a glowing letter of recommendation from myself. And the entire board.”

Carol and Annmarie smile and nod.

So I’m not getting fired for having wild sex with Villi?

You don’t even know that he fingered me on a desk in a lecture hall...

I feel really naughty all of a sudden.

But I’m all smiles.

I’m getting my dream job.

For sure.

For real.

And on top of that... I won’t be part of *Puckford University...*

Which means...

“I wanted to make sure we’re all in this together,” Charles says. “I don’t want you to feel like you’re sneaking around. I want to make sure we help you. We take pride in all that we do here. And, hey, there may come a time when we need you back.”

“You and Tim can fight for me then,” I blurt out.

They’re all silent for a few seconds.

Charles laughs.

Carol and Annmarie laugh too.

I’m not sure whether to scream for joy or pass out from relief.

They know nothing about Villi.

Which means...

I think about it for a second.

I’m free.

I’m free to have *my Villi*.

Just as long as he’ll still have me.

VILLI

“SO WHEN DO WE FIND OUT ABOUT THE MYSTERY WOMAN?”
Gabriel asks.

“Never,” I say.

“You think this is real?” Jax asks.

“Or does he just have some inflatable doll he fucks?”
Knox asks.

They all start laughing as I unlace my skates.

Mac is the last to come into the locker room from the ice.

He and I look at each other.

In some weird way he and I have grown much closer
through this entire thing.

He knows the truth about Vera and he’s promised to keep
his mouth shut.

I’m not a fan of not telling the guys about things, but quite
frankly, it’s not their damn business right now.

Mac punches my left shoulder. “Coach wants to talk to you.”

“Bought time,” Gabriel says. “You’ve been playing like shit lately.”

“He’s in love,” Jax says. “All dazed.”

“Or just out of breath from blowing up his doll,” Knox adds.

“His doll?” Mac asks.

I stand up. “Ignore them.”

I walk out of the locker room and down the hall to Coach Damon’s office.

He opens the door before I can knock.

I step into his office and sit down.

He keeps standing at the door, like he’s guarding it.

“Just wanted to check up on you,” he says.

“I’m fine.”

“Villi.”

“What?”

“You’ve got yourself in a mess.”

“Hasn’t changed the way I approach the game, has it?”

“No.”

“I’ve been playing great.”

“You have.”

“So what’s the point here?”

“Those things I said that day...”

“You want to be like my old man? Want to spot me some money?”

“Don’t be a fucking smart-ass right now.”

“I’m not,” I say. I stand up. “Coach, listen. I appreciate what you did. You saved me from myself. I don’t know how to say thank you. I also don’t want any lectures on what’s happening. I don’t want to have to justify how I feel. Now if you want to know about the other stuff... that Blake guy? He’s cooked for good. Police found out he was stalking two other women. The guy would go on a few dates and get obsessed. The other two women, he was sending them stuff in the mail. Making up email accounts and social media accounts to talk to them. He’s a sick guy. And he’s put away. I’m proud of Vera too. She’s taking it all well. She and the other women are going to make sure that guy has no chance of escaping what he did.”

Coach Damon nods. “Good. Nobody deserves to go through that. That was scary.”

“It was.”

“Not that guy. You.”

“I was scary?”

“Villi, you wanted to kill that guy.”

I swallow hard. “Yeah, I suppose I did.”

“That’s some really deep stuff going on in you then. To want to do that.”

“Again, what’s the point of this?”

“Just what I told you twice. Now three times. I’m checking up on you.”

“And I’m telling you I’m good. I’m fine. I’m...”

“Okay. Good. Get out of here then.”

Coach Damon side steps.

I reach for the door.

“You know she’s leaving. Right?”

I look at Coach Damon.

“She took a job up north,” he says. “A rival university too. You sure you can handle that?”

“Trust me, Coach, she’s a *Pirate*. Always will be.”

“Until you get drafted. Then she’ll be... whatever team you play for...?”

“You know, I wonder what kind of hockey team they have up there,” I say. “Bet I can skate right onto the ice and improve them instantly.”

“Go fuck yourself, Villi,” Coach Damon says with a smile.

I smile back.

I leave his office and go right for the showers.

I’m done waiting around for things to cool off.

I can’t go another day without seeing Vera.

SHE OPENS HER APARTMENT DOOR AND GRABS MY SHIRT.

“It’s still not okay,” she growls.

I touch her face and kiss her.

A long overdue kiss.

Her lips, sweet and tender, greet mine.

She is a drug to me.

I feel instantly calmer. Happier.

My cock is thrilled too.

Getting harder by the second.

I slide my hands down her body and grab her by the ass and pick her up.

For good measure I make sure her apartment door is closed.

And locked.

I walk her through the apartment to her bedroom.

She's gently scratching at my face, breaking our kiss, staring at me.

"I've missed you," she whispers.

"I've missed you too, darling," I say.

I place her down on her bed and move down her body with ease.

Those damn octopus pajama pants are my favorite because they slide off so easily.

Oh, and look, no panties...

It's just warm, sweet skin.

I lift her shirt a little and kiss just below her belly button.

She groans and takes handfuls of the sheets.

"Have you fucked yourself with me gone?" I ask.

"No," Vera purrs.

"You haven't touched? Not even for a second?"

“No. I swear.”

“Oh, darling, you must be dripping then...”

I dip down as she open her legs.

To say she’s glistening doesn’t do it justice.

She’s soaked.

I nuzzle my nose against her wet slit and growl deep in my throat.

I’ve found heaven again. Right between Vera’s legs.

My tongue gently laps up the wetness from her labia... and then I can’t help myself as I seek her pearly clit.

I place my thumb on her stubbly mound and peel her back.

Exposing her clit.

So soft and soaked.

I kiss her.

An easy kiss.

Vera groans.

Her hips buck at me.

I know, darling... oh, I know... you want me to suckle your clit until your body can no longer hold back, then you want to soak me in your honey...

I latch my lips around her clit.

And, yes, I suckle.

At first it’s soft and sweet.

It’s romantic.

It becomes more passionate.

And then finally... let's be real...

I'm still the same old Villi.

I fuck Vera with my tongue.

VERA

I'M ON TOP OF VILLI.

My hips move like they've never done before.

I'm riding him.

Grinding on him.

Taking his cock over and over...

My nails dig into his chest.

I throw my head back and let out a cry of relief.

I've lost track of how many times I've come.

It's one endless orgasm at this point.

I keep telling myself it's impossible but here we are and I know what I'm feeling.

Villi's hands move up my back and he pulls me down toward him.

My hands jump from his strong chest to my wall.

His hands cup my breasts, easily, and he presses them together.

I shiver waiting for his tongue to tease me.

Oh, there it is...

I pump my hips harder and faster.

Villi moves his hands down to my ass.

He grabs. Holds.

He plays...

I feel his two middle fingers touch me... *you know where...*

He presses. He teases.

Chills jump through my body.

He then grabs my hips and moves me on his own.

Using my body to fuck himself.

He lets out a grunt.

It's so feral and sexy...

I claw my nails down my wall, back to my bed.

I lower my mouth down to his.

The kiss is nothing but fierce.

An end of the world kind of kiss.

I feel him moving faster.

His cock growing even thicker.

I stay with him, matching his speed.

I can't believe I'm admitting this, but I feel myself climaxing again.

My entire body is going to be numb soon.

I'm not going to be able to walk for a week.

Villi's hands make a mad dash up my body, gripping me at my ribs.

He pulls me down and thrusts up, hissing as we reach climax together.

I feel that first wild throb of his cock, then cry out and bite his bottom lip.

I hold him inside me.

Clenching tight.

Throbbing as he throbs.

Taking every pulse his cock has to offer.

I slow down but I don't stop.

No way.

I'm going to keep fucking him until he's hard and ready again.

Not that Villi is ever not hard.

Villi surprises me though.

He pushes at my hips, lifting me off him.

I let out a yell at that sudden abandonment deep within my core.

Our legs tangle up.

He rolls to his right side and he has me face him.

We're both breathing heavy.

Lost in my bed in a world of passion.

A mix of sweat and the smell of our skin... the scent of our sex too...

We start to kiss.

I grind my hips a few times, rubbing my mound against his still throbbing cock.

He groans into my mouth.

A few second later his fingers are between my legs, flicking at my clit.

I roll my eyes to the back of my head.

I'm not sure I can take anymore...

Oh, who the fuck am I kidding?!

I climb right back on top of Villi...

“WHAT’S THIS, DARLING?” VILLI ASKS.

“Oh, I was doing a little apartment hunting,” I say.
“Snooping around. Getting ideas. I can’t live here anymore, Villi. You know that, right?”

“I’m surprised you’re still here right now.”

“I have to be close to work. Which is...”

“Fifty-five miles away,” he says.

“You’ve looked it up?”

“Of course I have, darling.”

“You’re okay with everything?”

Villi reaches for me and pulls me down onto his lap.

I straddle him.

He's shirtless, wearing nothing but jeans.

I'm in a hoodie and my octopus pajama pants.

"I'm happy for you," he says. "You have the job you want. The job you deserve."

"I can't see all that freely though."

"Yes, you can. Nothing changes, darling. I'll be there anytime I can. Or anytime you want me there."

"Oh, you think you're going to live with me or something?" I smile.

"Maybe I will," he says.

He sits up and reaches for the table.

"Here," he says. "This place is nice."

I look at the piece of paper in his hand. "You think you have a say in where I live?"

"Where *we* live," he whispers.

I grab the paper and throw it to the floor.

I really don't care where I live.

I want to be close to my job. And close to Villi.

I want it all.

It feels good to be a little bit greedy.

Villi gently touches my face. "I have to tell you something, darling. Something that's gotten lost in the mix of all this going on."

"What's that?"

"I love you," he says. "I fell in love with you. I think I fell in love with you the first time I met you."

“Villi, you don’t have to say that...”

“I can say whatever the fuck I want, darling. And I’m saying that I love you.”

“Fine. Good. Because I love you too.”

We share a quick kiss.

I have this sudden romantic fantasy of Villi and I looking at apartments and calling to check availability, then going to see them.

Villi has a different romantic fantasy.

His hands move up my hoodie and shirt.

His fingers play with my nipples.

I sink my hips lower, pressing against his body.

We smile at each other.

Fair enough... Villi’s plan right now is much better than mine.

VILLI

I REACH INTO THE TRUCK FOR ANOTHER BOX AND VIOLET appears from nowhere and plops down on the box.

I still pull the box toward me and pick it up, with her on top.

She leans forward and lets out a playful yell and grabs my shoulders.

“I want to talk to you,” she says.

“Your sister wants this stuff unloaded right away. She’s very pushy about this.”

“That’s because she’s a neat freak. And moving scares her.”

“I’m seeing that.”

“You’ll learn something new about her every day. She’s a pain in the ass to deal with.”

“Good to know.”

“You think you know everything, don’t you?”

“Are you jealous, Violet?”

“What?”

“You’re getting all touchy right now. Are you jealous? Mad that I’m with your sister and not you?”

“No,” she says. “Never.”

She climbs off the box and steps back into the moving truck.

I pull myself up into the truck and go with Violet.

“Just be honest,” I say. “You want to fuck right now? You and me? In the back of the moving truck? Can you keep it a secret?”

“You’d never,” Violet says.

“Wanna try me?” I whisper.

I step closer to her.

Violet grabs for my shirt.

I grin.

“You’re an asshole, Villi.”

“No. I’m a villain. I’ll always be a villain. But here’s what I can tell you for sure. I will never hurt your sister. I will never do anything to compromise her heart or her judgment or her trust.”

“Even if I wanted you right now?” Violet asks.

“Darling, you showed me your tits already. I didn’t even look. You think showing me your pussy or wanting me to fuck you is going to work?”

“You really do love her.”

“I really do love her,” I say.

“Then I’m thrilled for you both,” Violet says.

She jumps at me and throws her arms around me.

I pick her up and carry her to the edge of the truck and jump off.

Honestly, holding Violet like this means nothing.

She’s like a sister to me now.

So the thought of seeing her like other than that is really weird.

“Oh, there’s a sight for me,” Vera calls out from the balcony of her new apartment. “My little sister in the arms of the guy I love.”

“Don’t worry, I denied her advances,” I call up to Vera.

Violet wiggles out of my arms and punches me. “Jerk!”

“Quit acting like Abby and help me,” Vera says to Violet.

“Speaking of,” Violet yells. “Where is Abby? You didn’t call her?”

“No,” Vera says.

“Why not?”

“I didn’t want to.”

“You’re being a bitch right now, Vera.”

“Can we not yell this stuff to each other?” Vera asks. “I’m literally moving in today. I don’t need to have problems with my neighbors.”

“Oh, your neighbors are going to hate you, darling,” I call up to her. “When I get you in your bed tonight... the noises you’ll make...”

Violet hurries to cover her ears.

She runs off screaming *la-la-la-la...*

A horn beeps and I turn my head to see Gabriel driving a massive pickup truck.

Right behind him is another pickup truck being driving by Jax.

Knox is in the passenger seat.

They park and jump out.

Vera goes back inside.

Gabriel, Jax, and Knox walk up to me, grinning ear to ear.

“Go ahead,” I say. “Get it off your chests.”

“Fucking a professor,” Gabriel says as he falls to his knees. “You’re a legend!”

“I’m more impressed that you fell in love with someone,” Knox says.

“For real,” Jax says. “You never said a thing to me. To anyone.”

“Not your business,” I say. “It’s a risky situation. Or at least it was.”

“Legend,” Gabriel says. “Fucking legend.”

“Stand up,” I say. Then I point to all three of them. “Not another word about it. Okay? Vera has her dream job here. And things are settling back at *PU*. Things are normal. I’m happy. She’s happy. Don’t fuck this up.”

They all nod.

I tell them to get some boxes and help out.

Vera orders pizza for everyone as a thank you.

I love watching the way she does things.

Obsessively deciding where to stack certain boxes.

Getting mad at Violet for opening the kitchen box and trying to put things away.

I never thought I would look at someone the way I'm looking at Vera.

And now she has a new place.

One that we agreed upon together.

Apparently I'm going to be leaving some of my stuff over here too.

Some clothes.

My toothbrush.

Soap and shampoo and all that too.

Speaking of that...

I walk to Vera and grab her by her left hand.

I pull her into the bathroom and shut the door.

I lock it.

She looks at me with curious eyes.

"I can't fucking wait any longer, darling," I say.

"Wait? For what? The pizza? I just ordered it. Give them a chance."

"No. For you."

I move toward her and pick her up by her hips.

"Villi," she growls. "What are you doing?"

"What? Are you going to act all tame now, darling? I want to fuck you right now in this bathroom. With everyone out there unpacking your stuff."

Her cheeks turn bright red and she bites her bottom lips.

I sit her on the sink and then turn and grab a box labeled *BATHROOM*.

I open it and dump all the towels inside it onto the floor.

By the time I turn around, Vera has her shirt and her bra off.

She grabs the edges of the bathroom sink and she bites her bottom lip again.

I move toward her and go right for her chest.

Kissing each nipple.

Kissing up her chest.

Kissing her neck.

She lets out a groan.

I can easily hear the muffled voices of Violet, Mac, Knox, Jax, and Gabriel through the walls.

Which means they're definitely going to hear Vera and me.

But that's the fun of it.

Life is about bending the rules, taking a risk, and flirting with the forbidden.

Sometimes when you do that... you just might find the love your life wrapping their legs around you and whispering into your ear for you to fuck them on the bathroom floor of their new apartment...

EPILOGUE

GABRIEL

I'M THREE STOKES OF EMILY'S LIPS ON MY DICK UNTIL I COME and my phone won't stop making noise.

I have the damn thing on silent but it's vibrating like crazy.

I try to ignore it.

I groan and whisper to Emily that her mouth feels so good on my dick.

She pops up and off me and throws the covers back.

She takes a deep breath.

Her lips are pouty and puffy.

Her cheek red, flushed.

“What the fuck is with your phone?”

“No clue. I don't really care.”

“I do. This is distracting. Is there an emergency on campus or something?”

I groan and know there's no chance of her finishing me until I check my phone.

If this is the guys messing with me, I'm going to have kill them.

I have a whole bunch of text messages from numbers I don't know.

A whole bunch of texts that read *I'M SO SORRY*.

A few offers from reporters wanting to talk to me.

Reporters?

I open one of the texts and there's a link.

I'm usually smart about clicking links from people I don't know, but something is weird here.

When I click the link, it opens to a major news company.

I see my father's name.

I see a picture of my father... in handcuffs.

"Oh, fuck," I whisper.

"What is it?" Emily asks.

"My father got arrested today. And apparently... he's broke. He's been stealing... holy shit..."

I put my phone down.

Things start to make a little more sense now.

"Are you okay?" Emily whispers.

"Probably not," I reply.

"Do you want me to... keep going?"

I nod.

Emily pulls the covers back over her head.

Her lips touch my dick.

I might as well enjoy one last blowjob here on campus.

It finally makes sense now why I was told I would no longer be part of the Puckford University family...

GABRIEL'S LOVE CAN BE BOUGHT AND SOLD!

“I know what to do!” I announce.

I have the full attention of Mac, Villi, Jax, and Knox.

“I know how to make this right,” I say. “They just want money. Right? They want me pay up. We all know I should be here for free... but my father fucked that up...”

“So...?” Jax asks.

“Look at me,” I say. “I’m a commodity.”

“A what?” Mac asks.

“I’m a product. I’m *the* product.”

“You lost me,” Knox says.

“Can you just get to the fucking point here?” Villi growls.

“I am. I just did. It’s all about me. I’m going to sell myself!”

“You’re going to do... what?” Mac asks.

“Like a male prostitute?” Jax asks.

“Sort of,” I say. “I’m going to sell myself. For whatever someone needs. A date. A dance. A work function. A campus

function. Proof to your parents that you're with someone. It's genius. I'm the product. It's not as insane as it sounds!"

"Gabriel," Knox says, "it's beyond insane."

I smile.

I nod.

Maybe it is insane... but it's something I can definitely pull off...

Yeah, you read that right.

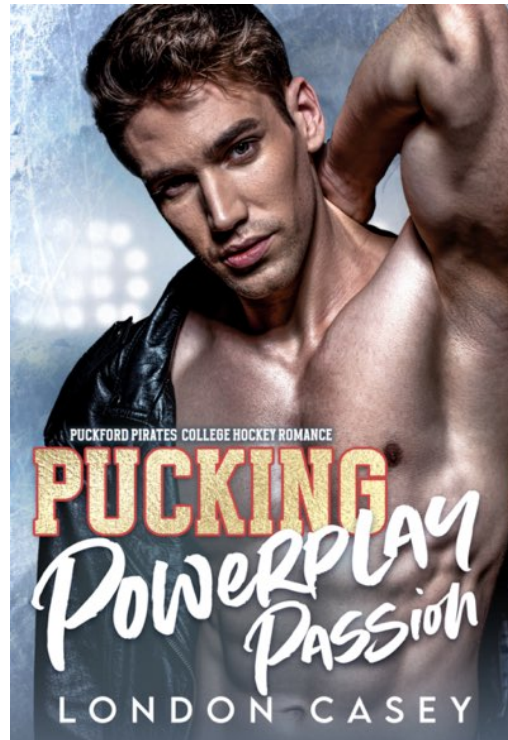
Gabriel needs to come up with some fast and easy money to keep his spot at Puckford University.

So... he's going to sell himself!

But that's not the craziest part of it all.

The craziest part is who ends up "buying" some time with Gabriel!

(Need a hint? (1) You've met her already and (2) her name is a color...)



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