



Unexpectedly
LAWSON

THE LAWSON LEGACY
Winter Novella

SARA & HINDS

Unexpectedly Lawson

The Lawson Legacy | Winter Novella

Sara Hinds

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Dedication

For all my girls out there who put a handsome billionaire or two at the top of their Christmas list.

Dreams of money, a mansion and a hot guy or two that are willing to spank your ass and fuck your throat.

It's not too much to ask, damn it! Santa needs to get it together!

Xoxo Happy Holidays

Trigger Warning

TW's will change as the series progresses; please be sure to check them per book.

Medium Burn

Whychoose romance with adult themes

Cheating- outside the harem

Sexual Content

Mild Cliffhanger

Minor Taboo: The Lawson men love to share one woman between them. In the harem, there will be 2 dads who are brothers, along with their only sons who are cousins. There is no incest. These guys love to bring the most pleasure to their women.

This is a novella set prior to the start of the story that will be Lawson Legacy. It will be referenced in the series by the characters, though it is not required for the story to be read. I

feel it gives more to the characters. The Lawson Legacy series will come out later in 2024.

*Should you have any questions regarding triggers,
please feel free to reach out to me on my socials or at
sarahindsauthor@gmail.com*

Playlist

I love to write with music playing! If you want to see what I listened to it while writing this book and get a feel for the mood, take a look at my Unexpectedly Lawson playlist :)

Wish You the Worst ~ *Ryan Mack*

High Heels ~ *JoJo*

A New York Christmas ~ *Rob Thomas*

Santa Tell Me ~ *Ariana Grande*

Mmm Yeah ~ *Austin Mahone (feat. Pitbull)*

Shape of You ~ *Ed Sheeran*

DJ Got Us Fallin' in Love ~ *Usher (feat. Pitbull)*

Tonight (I'm Fuckin' You) ~ *Enrique Iglesias, Ludacris, DJ Frank E*

One Night Stand ~ *Keri Hilson (feat. Chris Brown)*

Naughty List ~ *Liam Payne (feat. Dixie)*

Last Name ~ *Carrie Underwood*

Make Me Want To ~ *Jimmie Allen*

Leave Before You Love me ~ *Marshmello (with Jonas Brothers)*

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Katherine

CHAPTER 1

Driving five hours isn't my idea of a good time. Add in the snow, traffic, and the stupid tears that won't stop, and this has quickly become one of the longest days of my life.

No, that's a lie.

Yesterday was longer.

I drive for so long that I tune out almost everything around me and damn near miss my GPS telling me to take the next exit. I make it, but just barely. The guy behind me flips me the bird, and I don't think he's thrilled to have been cut off.

Oops, sorry.

Traffic in the city isn't any better, and it takes almost another hour to find a hotel with vacancies. I'm not surprised, though. I hadn't planned to come out until after the new year, specifically because of the holidays. New York is busy all year round, but with Christmas in just three days, it feels like everyone is here.

I'm sure it's beautiful, but I don't have a chance to enjoy the view, not with people everywhere and cars squeezing into spots they shouldn't fit. By the time I find parking, I'm close to a breakdown, and considering I've already had two on the way here, I'd rather not. I take only what I'll need for the night and pray the rest is still here in the morning. I've heard New York is brutal, and I believe it, but I don't have the energy to do anything more right now. Definitely not unpack everything. Not that it's a lot, but it's everything I own now.

The hotel isn't the best. It's a far cry from what I'm used to. But the bed is clean, and it's the only one I've seen that isn't full, so I'll take it. It beats sleeping in my car, especially with how cold it is.

All night, I toss and turn. They weren't lying when they said New York is the city that never sleeps. By the time six o'clock rolls around, I give up. I had a few hours. They were choppy as hell, but enough for me to pull myself from the bed and shower. Yesterday, I spent the five-hour drive here crying. I refuse to give that asshole even one more tear or second of my time.

Fuck him.



I email the school when I'm out of the shower, letting them know I'm in the city sooner than planned. I don't expect an answer with the holiday so close, but it's worth a shot. Until the start of the new year, I'm technically unemployed and homeless.

About a month ago, I'd done a virtual walk-through of the apartment I'll be living in while teaching here. At the time, Carter had paid six months' rent for them to hold it. I'd thought he was being a gentleman, supportive even, but now I can see it for what it was. He was more than happy to have me leave. My lease starts the first of the year, so the best I have is this hotel for now, but it could be worse. At least my apartment is paid for the next couple of months. That should give me time to get back on my feet.

It's the least he could do.

With nothing else to do, I spend the morning mapping the city. I'd already planned to do it while here, but after seeing the traffic, I think I'll benefit from knowing at least the basics

before I attempt to drive every day. Ultimately, it's not as helpful as I would have hoped. I do not know if the school even offers on-site parking, and judging by the traffic yesterday, it honestly might be smarter to take the subway.

With so many unknowns, I don't get far before I'm stuck, leaving me once again with nothing to do. I could go out to my car, grab a book or two, and maybe do some light reading. But as much as I love to read, I can't imagine I'll be able to lose myself in a book right now. No matter how good it is.

Instead, I find myself scrolling through social media. I'd already gone through and deleted Carter from everything last night at a rest stop. After thirty-two missed calls and dozens of texts, I even blocked his number. I'm sure it won't be the last time I hear from him, but for now, I'll enjoy the peace.

Everything is depressing. With the holidays right around the corner, every post is full of beautiful pictures, smiling couples, happy families, and holiday scenery. Christmas is usually my favorite time of year, but it feels like too much right now. He's ruined it for me by taking something beautiful, or something I thought was beautiful, and spitting on it.

Eventually, I toss my phone across the bed and onto the pillow. I would love to chuck it across the room, but seeing as I don't have the funds to replace it, that's not an option. It's enough to get it away from me and stop my toxic scrolling, though.

My life might be a mess right now, but at the end of the day, I still landed my dream job. I'd always wanted to teach at

Horace Mann's lower division. It is one of the best schools in New York. I knew I wanted to be a teacher from the moment I started high school. During my first year in college, we did a project on some of the best private schools and where we would want to work once we graduated. Horace Mann was my second choice, right behind Brearley. I'm not sure why, but I'd always wanted to teach in New York. The fact that I'd somehow managed this, despite the rest of the shit happening in my life, doesn't make it less of a dream come true.

With new determination, I grab my phone and keys. Pulling my coat on, I make my way to the elevator and head out to my car. The afternoon air is crisp, and a fresh layer of snow coats everything as far as the eye can see. Despite the chill that seeps past my layers, I can't deny it's beautiful. The parking garage I chose is two blocks from the hotel I'm staying at, but it's easy enough to get to, and with the hustle of people, it feels like it takes no time before I'm there.

I sigh in relief as I turn the last corner in the garage and find my car still exactly where I parked it last night. Some of my worries about living in a big city eased. I'd imagined I'd find it with the windows busted, tires slashed, and everything I own taken. It's not exactly the most expensive or flashy car I've seen, even just in this garage, but it's mine—one of the few things I had before Carter that I got without his help or money.

Everything appears to be intact. It only takes me a moment to find the suitcase that holds the extra things I grabbed on a last-minute whim. Initially, I'd only grabbed what I needed.

Before I left, I realized I never wanted to go back and took a little extra. I set myself up so I could use what I had as a base and start fresh.

Thank God for that, because I'll need everything I've got for tonight.



I stand in the bathroom, in front of the full-length mirror, as I put the last touches on my outfit. A dark maroon lipstick, my favorite color. Carter had hated it, so I never wore it before now. The one time I wore it, he told me it made me look cheap. Looking back, I see the red flags for what they were, hindsight and all that.

I blow a kiss to my reflection, feeling giddy and can't stop the smile that curves my lips.

I still got it.

My dress isn't anything special, just a little black dress with a tapered waist. The band is built in, with a lace design that shows off a good chunk of my stomach underneath. The plunging neckline and bottom hem have the same lace that somehow makes it feel more flashy than it is. I'm showing off a bit more skin than I'm used to, but the long sleeves help, kinda.

I'd originally bought it for a party with Carter, but he hadn't been a fan when I tried it on. Without question, I'd picked a

dress I knew he liked, stuffing this one into my closet and all but forgetting it ever existed.

It feels fitting to wear things he didn't like. Putting my happiness over his for the first time in far too long. So what if it shows a little more cleavage than I'm used to? My ass is covered, and chances are I'll probably still look overdressed compared to half the people, no matter where I go.

My make-up is light overall, except for my deep maroon matte lip, which makes everything seem more dramatic. It makes my light green eyes pop even more than the eyeliner and mascara do. I'm naturally fair, no matter how much time I spend in the sun. I'm either super pale or burnt; there's no in-between. It's even worse in the winter with how often I hide from the cold. I debate putting on foundation, but decide against it. Not only am I too lazy for that, but if I find a good club, I might very well sweat it off.

Thanks to the years of parties with Carter, I know how to do my make-up all fancy, but I don't like it. I'd much rather just use it sparingly. All my life, people have complimented my plump lips, high cheekbones and, of course, my red hair. Besides, I'm not trying to impress anyone. This night is about me.

At the last minute, I decide to leave my hair down, letting it fall in its natural waves. I wear it up often when working with children, and it feels nice to leave it loose.

I skip wearing any jewelry. My car might not have gotten broken into like I feared it would, but I still don't know how I

feel about walking around New York at night with anything of value on me. Even more so when I'm planning to go to a club specifically to drink. For that reason, I also decided on my tall boots with chunky heels instead of anything with a spike heel. Drinking in heels is dangerous enough as it is. Add in some snow or a little bit of ice, and that's a hard pass. I'd rather seem short than break my neck. Besides, five-five isn't terribly small, and with my boots, I'm probably closer to five-seven.

My phone beeps on the counter, and I scoop it up, along with my room key and credit card. Tucking them safely into my bra. My boobs aren't huge, but they're big enough to stash stuff in, and that's more than enough for me. I'm happy as long as I don't have to carry a purse.

The Uber I ordered idles right out front, but even the half-dozen steps from the door to the car have me shivering. I'd gone with my lighter jacket, unwilling to lug my big, puffy one around a club that would no doubt be boiling with bodies all over the place. Sliding into the back seat, I let out a sigh of relief, feeling the blasting heat.

"Where to?" the driver asks with a smile. I'd ordered a pickup without a destination. Being new to the city means I don't know where I want to go. At first, I worried nobody would pick it up because of that. They wouldn't have in my hometown, but I guess New York's different.

"What's the best club that's not too far, but has the best bar and dance floor?"

“Definitely Lavo. It’s about fifteen, twenty minutes from here, depending on the traffic,” he says, smiling at me in the rearview mirror.

“Perfect, Lavo, it is.”

With a nod, he pulls away from the curb, seamlessly merging into traffic. I’ll need to learn to do that eventually, considering traffic never seems to stop around here. On my drive in yesterday, I’d been too busy trying not to get lost, crash, or hit some random person to stop and take a look around. Now, in the back of the Uber, that’s all I can do. The sun went down less than an hour ago, but it’s far from dark. Streetlights, neon signs, and random Christmas decorations are scattered throughout the city. It’s almost chaotic, but something about it is beautiful as the snow slowly falls and couples huddle together while walking down the street.

I’m not sure how long it takes before we come to a stop. I’d been too distracted by the city to keep track. With a quick thank you, I rate him five stars and give him a nice tip before climbing out onto the busy street.

I’d expected it to be a little more crowded. I’ve always heard of New York and all the people and assumed the nightlife would be crazy. Maybe it’s still too early for people to party. It’s only eight and a Thursday. For all I know, the nightlife might only be big on the weekend. Usually, that would be the case for me, too, but since I’m not working yet, the day of the week doesn’t much matter to me.

Or maybe other people aren't as concerned with partying with the holiday so close. It's the night before Christmas Eve, after all. Either way, it beats standing out in the cold, so I'm not complaining.

"Reservation?" A man just inside the door asks, catching me off guard. Looking up, I find a man in a suit standing at a podium, looking down at me with a scowl. I steal a glance around him, only to find that inside looks much more like a restaurant than a club.

"Um, no. I was looking for Lavo, the nightclub," I tell him, unsure what else to say. The sign outside clearly said Lavo. The driver had said it was a club, but this definitely doesn't look like any club I've ever been to.

"The club entrance is the red door just to the left," he tells me sharply before dropping his gaze back to the podium in front of him.

Rude.

"Oh, um, thank you," I whisper before walking away, feeling like an idiot.

Good job, Kat. Nothing says I'm new here, like not knowing a nightclub from a restaurant. Pulling the door open, I welcome the chill in the air. I know my face is red with embarrassment without looking. The joys of having such a fair complexion. With any luck, people will write it off as being due to the weather.


The red door is huge, and I can't help but groan in annoyance when I see the large 'Lavo' painted over top of it. Pushing the door, I'm surprised by how heavy it is. It falls closed without a sound behind me, cutting off all the hustle and bustle of the street. Voices up ahead echo down the narrow hall, and I head toward them to find a line. It's not long, maybe five people, but definitely feels more like a club.

One minor setback isn't going to stop me from enjoying tonight. I deserve this, damn it.

Just this one night won't hurt.

DESMOND

CHAPTER 3



Working holidays sucks.

It might not be Christmas yet, but it's close enough. The only saving grace is that I won't have to work New Year's Eve. It's the only reason I agreed to this week with Alex. My father and Oli can deal with that shit.

Don't get me wrong, the club is great. The vibe is good, the booze are solid, and the entertainment is always top-notch. We make sure of it. Hell, I don't even mind the attention most of the time, but with the holidays, it's always a bit much. Something about them makes people lonely, and they suddenly want a lot more than just a bit of fun.

"You're supposed to be working," Alex calls to me from where he's reclined on the sofa to my right. I flip him the bird as I finish my drink. He chuckles in reply, and the clink of the ice in his glass lets me know he's finished his as well.

"Says the guy who's two drinks ahead of me," I shoot back before dropping my empty glass to the table. Pushing off the

couch, I head to the balcony, looking at the club below.

It's pretty early, but even so, people are steadily filing in. I can't remember the last time we didn't hit max occupancy. Even on Christmas Eve, we fill up. It's great for business, but kinda fucking sad if you think about it. Of all the things people could be doing, at least eight hundred people would rather be here.

"Not my fault you can't keep up, boy," Alex says, and I hear the smirk on his lips.

Asshole.

"I'm going to head down and check the restaurant to ensure everything's good. See how the reservations are filling out," Alex tells me, leaving without another word. Reservations aren't often left open. Hell, the restaurant has a damn waitlist at this point, but it happens occasionally, and it happens even more often during the holidays. People break up, forget, or suddenly don't have the funds. Whatever the reason, getting into the restaurant isn't easy, and we like to fill those spots when we can.

With Alex gone, the VIP lounge is too quiet, and I'm filled with the urge to move. The bass of the music below is almost ever-present. Still, the lounges do an overall good job blocking almost everything else.

Time to be social.

With a sigh, I push off the banister and make my way to the stairs. All the while trying to convince myself this was a good

idea.

Maybe it won't be so bad. We still have a few nights before Christmas, so maybe I'll get lucky.



I'm not lucky. The girls who throw themselves at me as I make my way through the crowd are overeager. I'm not stupid. Most people know my face, the same way they know my status and reputation. But it's not exactly appealing the way they flock to me, all the while looking for Alex or my father with wide, hopeful eyes.

We have a reputation, and not just for our money, but for sharing women. Something that seems to either drive people away or make us even more appealing. Even women who don't like the idea will give it a try, hoping to get close to us. They all think they can be the one that's different—the one who can make us settle down and change.

It's gross and so weird to me.

It's also why none of us let anything go very far. What's the point of being with someone so that they can use you? And if she doesn't want to be all of ours, she'll be none of ours.

There have been a few over the last couple of years. But something always happens. Either they can't handle the life we live, or they aren't a good fit for all of us. You'd be amazed by how far women go to try to fake it, though. At this point,

we've kind of stopped looking. Women in our beds are enough for now—no need to settle down.

“How's it going, Colt?” I call out to our lead bartender over the music. He turns to face me as he mixes a drink, a smile on his lips as he nods in greeting since his hands are full.

“All good, boss. Everyone's in, and stock is set. Shouldn't need another order for a week, week and a half, tops,” he calls back without missing a beat. Finishing the drink, he heads down the bar to drop it off.

I follow him with my eyes, mostly for something to do. I can feel the eyes on me from people around the bar and even on the dance floor behind me. Thankfully, most know better than to approach me when I'm working. I might have a bit of a temper, and while I enjoy a fun night out as much as the next guy, work first, then play.

My father taught me that at a young age, and it's become something we live by.

The sound around me drowns out as I watch Colt set the drink in front of one of the most beautiful women I've ever laid eyes on. Her long red hair falls down her back, which is half facing me. Her whole face lights up when she smiles at Colt and nods her thanks.

One look and I can tell she's not from around here. There's something about her; she seems pure... innocent, maybe? It calls to me in a way I've never felt before. I'm not sure if I want to bask in her innocence or corrupt her.

Is it possible to do both?

“Who is that?” I ask the moment Colt’s back in earshot, maybe a little louder than necessary.

“Not sure,” he says with a shake of his head, looking back at her over his shoulder. “I’ve never seen her before. I’m positive I would remember if I had.” He laughs before moving on to someone else further down the bar, taking their drink order. It’s well enough, considering the fact that I currently want to hop the bar and knock him the fuck out.

It’s ridiculous. I’m more than aware of that, but I can’t help it. Something about the way he looked at her when he said that has me ready for a fight.

That’s dangerous.

I should walk away. Go find someone simple to fill my bed and forget I ever saw her. But I can’t. Even more so, I don’t want to.

A strong hand closes around my shoulder, and I feel my body tense, craving a fight. “Everything’s pretty much set in the restaurant. One couple canceled, but it’s not worth filling in for.”

Alex’s deep voice rings in my ear, and just like that, the need to fight lessens. It doesn’t go away completely, but at least I’m not about to turn around and sock my uncle.

Which is good because he would have no problem handing me my ass right here in front of everyone, regardless of what kind of shit it would get us in with my father.

“You hear me, boy?” he asks, pulling at my shoulder to get my attention, but I’m not done looking yet. My eyes trace over every inch of her I can see, which, unfortunately, isn’t much from this angle. It only takes Alex a moment to catch on. From the corner of my eye, I see him lean closer so that he can follow my gaze.

I know the second he sees her.

His grip on my shoulder tightens, and a smirk pulls at my lips when he doesn’t seem so worried about his status report anymore. We all have a type, and I’ll be damned if she doesn’t fit the bill.

“Who’s that?” Alex asks, his voice lower so as not to be overheard, and I don’t blame him. I didn’t like it when Colt had his attention on her, even when it was just to serve her and answer my question.

“No idea,” I tell him, shaking my head.

We see new people in the club almost daily. It’s New York, after all. People come and go all the time. Everyone wants to make something of themselves, and more often than not, the city chews them up and spits them out before they ever get a fighting chance. What is unusual is that I’ve been standing here openly watching her for the last few minutes, and she hasn’t so much as glanced my way. With Alex at my side, it makes it even stranger.

Most everyone knows who we are. If they don’t know us for owning the club, they know us for Lawson’s Tech and Investment, the company my father and uncle run here in the

city. Even when we travel, most people recognize us, and if they don't, it doesn't take much for them to put two and two together and at least realize we're important. Billions of dollars change the way people look at you.

Yet the red-headed beauty across the bar hasn't so much as hinted that she's aware we're here. She's sitting alone; her body angled slightly toward the dance floor as if she might get up to dance at any moment. The slight frown on her brows tells me she'd much rather stay and enjoy her drink. I'm not sure what it is, but something seems to be bothering her. I have to actively work to stop myself from walking over and demanding to know what it is so that I can fix it.

What the fuck?

No, what I need to do is get a grip.

My eye catches movement a few seats down from her. I watch a guy lean on the bar, flagging down Jess, one of our other bartenders. With a smile, he nods toward the red-headed beauty, and I don't even need to hear him to know he's just ordered her a drink. Jess smiles back and moves toward her. I hadn't paid attention when Colt made it earlier, but watching Jess, it's easy to see what she's making. I've spent a lot of nights behind this very bar when we were short-staffed. Between Alex and me, we've trained every employee we have.

Jess slides the drink to her, earning her a confused look in return. Jess simply nods toward the jackass who ordered it for her. He's leaned forward with his chest damn near draped on the bar to meet her gaze around the three people that sit

between them. The smile on his face is fucking hard to look at without cringing. This guy is trying way too hard.

My anger spikes again as she turns her attention toward him. It quickly fades into amusement, seeing just how uninterested she looks.

Alex chuckles beside me, and I know he's seen it too. "Fucker doesn't stand a chance," he huffs, sounding equally amused. We both watch as she plucks the cocktail pick from her drink. Bringing it up to her mouth, she closes her dark red lips around the cherries, tugging them free and pulling the pick from her mouth with a flick of her wrist. Fuck me, I've never been the jealous type, never had a reason to be, but what I wouldn't give to be that cherry right about now.

As if the jackass can't help but prove us right, he pushes off the bar a second later and heads toward her. I watch her roll her beautiful green eyes the second he's out of sight.

Damn.

Beautiful and feisty.

The asshole hardly makes it to her before her lips turn up in a polite yet obviously fake smile. Yet that doesn't deter him. Instead, he leans into her space, getting far closer than necessary to speak to her. She leans away from him, but he follows, clearly not taking the hint.

Alex's hand drops from my shoulder, and I don't need to ask where he's headed. The same place I am. Alex doesn't say a

word as he rounds the side of the bar and comes up behind the guy, dropping a hand to his shoulder and yanking him back.

“What the fuck?”

Whatever else he was going to say dies on his tongue as he turns around, coming face to face with Alex. His eyes dart between Alex and me before he stammers some bullshit apology and disappears into the crowd.

I have half a mind to follow him and beat his ass, regardless. Before I can give in to the urge, a bright green pair of eyes meets mine, stopping me.

Damn.

If I thought she was beautiful before, she's stunning up close. When her lips pull up in a small smile as she looks at me, I feel my lips turn up as well.

I'm so beyond fucked.



Katherine

CHAPTER 4

Spending my night at the club sounded good when I was bored in my hotel room. After about five drinks and just as many men trying to shoot their shot, I'm beginning to rethink it. Funny how that works. You would think it would be easier to find a redeeming quality in at least one of them after this much alcohol.

Nope.

It started fine. I got a few free drinks and gave them a few minutes before politely telling them I wasn't interested, and that was that. But now, after five drinks, I'm pretty positive I'd rather pay for them myself than have to deal with another guy trying to hit on me as he sways in place, reeking of booze. It is as if a twenty-dollar drink is so amazing that I'll overlook his glazed eyes, which spend more time looking at my chest than my face.

I'm not sure I came out for much more than drinking, if I'm being honest. Hooking up has never really been my thing. I like connections. Anything less feels like a waste of time. Why

go through the hassle of bringing a guy back to my hotel or going with them somewhere when I could go home alone and handle myself? I'd probably do a better job, anyway.

No, I've never found the appeal of one-night stands, but the drinks are strong, and the club is nice enough. Besides, it'd be a shame to waste the forty dollars I paid to get in here just to go home and sit tipsy, alone. With a sigh, I throw back the rest of my drink and enjoy the momentary burn as it makes its way down into my mostly empty stomach.

Damn, I really should have eaten more before drinking like this. Tomorrow me is going to be pissed if I wake up with a massive hangover. I'll have to find a good breakfast restaurant with pancakes to make it up to myself. Pancakes and sausage might make me hate myself less in the morning. Unless I throw up, then there's no helping me.

Before I can set my glass back on the bar, the female bartender is in front of me again, mixing another drink. This is the third one she's made me, and she gives me an almost apologetic smile as she sets it down. The confusion must be clear on my face because she takes pity on me, nodding down the bar before she moves to serve someone else.

Shit, I don't have the patience to do this again. Scanning the bar to my left, it only takes me about two seconds to see who's responsible for my newest drink. He all but hangs over the bar, smiling at me, and I know it's only a matter of time before he comes over here. It always is.

I pull the skewer of cherries from my drink and eat them before dropping the pick on my napkin. They're so sweet and delicious that I can't let them go to waste. Honestly, the reason I drink Manhattans is solely for the cherries. Alcohol is gross most of the time, no matter what you do to it. So why not get something sweet to go with it? Not that I can taste much of it anymore, anyway. It's always smoother after a few drinks, though that also makes it more dangerous.

The next second, the man who bought this drink pushes off the bar, no doubt heading toward me.

I choke down my annoyance, but can't stop myself from rolling my eyes once he's out of sight. Now, I sit and wait for him to come over so that I can turn him down, just like the rest of them.

"Hey, beautiful," he all but shouts, leaning into my space without so much as giving me a moment to respond. "I can't help but notice you seem awfully lonely over here. What do you say we dance, maybe get to know each other?"

He's not bad looking. Probably about five-nine, five-ten, with dirty blonde hair that looks messy, but I'm sure that's just how he styled it. He's not overly dressed, but his dress shirt looks wrinkled, and his breath smells like he's been here far longer than I have.

One look at his eyes, and I know I'm right. This guy is smashed. I hadn't been interested before, but I'm definitely not now. The last thing I need is a drunk asshole all over me when I'm still unsure if I even want to be here.

Pulling back, I lean on the bar, hoping to put space between us. That's a mistake. Instead of giving me space, he follows me, trapping me against the bar.

Damn it. Hole-in-the-wall bar next time, for sure.

I open my mouth, unsure what to say to get him to back off, but knowing I need to do something. Before I can so much as say a word, he's gone, and I can't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

"What the fuck?" he spits. He whips around, I hear the annoyance in his voice, and I catch sight of a man who now stands chest to chest with him.

That's not good. As much as I don't want his attention, I also don't want to end up stuck in the middle of a fight if it comes down to that. Unfortunately, whoever pulled him back didn't leave enough room for me to slip away. So I remain on my stool, hoping, at the very least, should things escalate, I'll find one.

It never comes to that, though. Instead of continuing the would-be fight, he stops when he turns around. Abruptly turning and walking away, muttering something almost like an apology.

What the hell just happened?

In his place are two really good-looking, well-dressed men. They have similar features but appear a few years apart in age. Both are dressed up and well put together. As if ready for a night of business more than out at a club.

The older of the two wears black dress pants, and a deep gray button-down dress shirt with a suit jacket that hangs open, showing the way his dress shirt hugs his chest. While the younger seems to have skipped the jacket and went with all-black. His sleeves are folded up to his elbows, showing off a fancy watch on his wrist and a sea of ink on his arms that goes all the way down his hands as far as I can see. The top few buttons of his shirt are undone, showing more tattoos that weave up his neck.

Is his chest as covered as his arms and neck? What about the rest of his body?

Nope, that's not a safe thought right now.

I push it aside in favor of letting my eyes continue to roam over them while their attention is still on the asshole who bought me a drink.

Both men have brown eyes and dark hair with skin that I can only assume is naturally warm. Either that, or maybe they go tanning. I can't imagine they see much sun here in the dead of winter, but I guess I could be wrong.

The younger one's hair is brushed back out of his face and styled to perfection it's shaved short on the sides and longer on top. While the older man's hair is cut shorter on the sides, it's not shaved and is just a little wild, as if it's never seen a brush.

For a moment, I think the younger man has black hair, but a flashing light from the dance floor hits him, and I see it's not quite. His skin is also slightly lighter than his friend's... brother's? It's hard to say what their relation is or isn't. While

they have similar features, that doesn't exactly mean anything.

They may be brothers, maybe even father and son or just friends who happen to share similar traits.

Maybe they came from work?

Maybe they're in the mafia?

I almost snort a laugh out loud at the thought as my mind wanders. Maybe it's time I laid off the alcohol for a few.

"Sorry about him," the older of the two says, keeping a respectable distance. "I can promise he won't be bugging you anymore."

The younger man stands off to his left, his attention on the crowd. Following his gaze, I find the man they just scared off as he makes his way toward the exit. I'm not sure who these two are, but I get the feeling they aren't to be messed with.

"Thank you," I say, turning my focus back to them, "but I would have handled him."

I can only assume the asshole is gone now as the younger of the two turns his attention back to me. His dark eyes lock on mine, and the smirk on his lips has no business being as attractive as it is. Something about them feels dangerous, and the way he looks at me almost feels intimate. I hold his gaze for all of two seconds before I have to make myself look away, my stomach tying itself up in a knot under his gaze.

I blame the alcohol, but with nothing else to do, I grab my drink and take a long sip. Not the best idea, I know, but I need

something to do.

“What’s your name?”

Even over the loud music, I can hear the difference in their voices. Until now, the younger of the two hadn’t spoken. His voice is deep but smooth, whereas the older one has a slight rasp, as if he smokes or maybe yells a lot.

Setting my drink back down, I contemplate answering or turning away from them and hoping they take the hint. I don’t think they would push should I show no interest, or at least I’d hope they wouldn’t after just coming to my defense. Something about them is different. Whereas, with every other guy tonight, I’ve felt annoyed or uninterested, these two seem to have the opposite effect.

“Katherine,” I say, pushing a piece of hair behind my ear.

“I’m Desmond, and this is Alex,” the younger one introduces himself with a smile before bumping his shoulder into the man beside him.

Damn, these drinks are either hitting me hard, or these are some of the most attractive men I’ve ever seen. It doesn’t hurt that they are the complete opposite of every man I’ve ever talked to before.

“Nice to meet you,” I say in greeting. Years of social skills kick in, spurring me to be polite regardless of my setting.

“Oh, the pleasure is all ours. I assure you,” Alex says, reaching out and again, I move on instinct. The second my

hand is in his, he brings them up to his face and presses a soft kiss to my knuckles.

The lights catch on his profile, and I notice a jagged line that runs from the edge of his jaw up to about the center of his cheek. The skin is a few shades lighter than the rest of his face, and I can't help but wonder what gave him that scar. It shouldn't make him more attractive; scars are usually tied to a traumatic event or memory, but something about it enhances his appearance.

Shit. I should have stayed in the hotel.

My brain screams, but the alcohol drowns it out quickly enough for me to ignore it.

I told myself one night, and for the first time tonight, I no longer regret it.



Alex

CHAPTER 5

Katherine has no idea who we are.

It's almost unheard of for us to go anywhere and not be recognized, but I'm not sure it's ever happened in the club.

Our club.

As strange as it might be, it's also refreshing. We sat at the bar and talked, enjoying a few more drinks. It's not hard to tell she isn't from around here. She sticks out like a sore thumb compared to almost everyone else. Her soft makeup is a far cry from the majority who wear it caked on as if they're ready for the runway, and her simple dress doesn't scream 'look at me.' Even so, it has that effect on not only me, but Desmond as well.

I'd thought for sure she was going to tell us to get lost when we initially approached her. I'd seen the way she reacted to the prick who bought her a drink, hoping to get her attention. But she didn't, and I wasn't going to ask why. No, I know better than to question life, especially when it's treating you well.

With my back against the bar, I sip my beer, looking out onto the dance floor. Desmond had asked her to dance with him. She seemed hesitant, but eventually agreed. The kid might be a hard-ass, but he's got a great pout. It used to get him out of trouble all the time as a kid. These days, it usually gets him into it. Watching them dance, I can't help but be grateful for it.

I'd bet my left nut she's not the club type. The hesitation she had about going out to dance was the first clue. The second was the way she simply swayed to the music. It wasn't until Desmond pulled her close and moved with her that she relaxed a bit. Though the blush on her face was noticeable even to me, where I sit across the room. The song winds down before the DJ mixes it into another upbeat song. I'm not familiar with this one, but everyone else seems to know it. A smile pulls at Katherine's lips as she looks up at Desmond before bouncing around, and I'm guessing she knows it, too.

Desmond looks put off by the song for all of two seconds before he sees her smile. That's all it takes for him to get over the song and start dancing with her again. She's much more relaxed now, and I can't take my eyes off her. I'm not sure what it is exactly, but she's captivating.

Oh, how angry my brother will be to hear about missing out on a night with her. We each have our types, but occasionally, they overlap in certain areas. Katherine is exactly that, an overlap of the best kind.

Desmond and Katherine dance very differently than the majority of the people who use the dancefloor as an excuse to grind on each other shamelessly. She's like a ball of energy. One second, she's jumping around, and the next, she's doing an adorable shimmy with her hips that has her dress slowly riding up her thighs. I watch as Desmond reaches out. His fingers grip her wrist, and he smiles at her before spinning her into his arms. Pulling her back to his chest, he leans down, pressing his lips to her ear so that she can hear him over the music. I'm not sure what he says, but her eyes dart up the next moment, meeting mine across the room.

Fuck me.

How someone so beautiful and innocent can look so tempting and delicious is a mystery to me. It doesn't help to see her wrapped up in Desmond's arms. Their stark contrast stands out even in a sea of people. Not that it matters much. Nobody would dare get too close to Desmond right now, not with his reputation.

Katherine nods before Desmond slowly lets his hands fall, purposefully letting them trace down her body, and I see her shiver from his touch. The second she's free, she's moving, making her way through the dance floor to me, and it makes sense now.

The sneaky fucker.

He's sent her to collect me.

The dance floor isn't usually somewhere I want to be—too many people. I'd rather enjoy my drink at the bar or up in the

lounge. This isn't the first time he's tried something like this. But it will be the first time I give in.

I stand even before she reaches me, tipping back the last of my drink before dropping my bottle to the bar. She stops in front of me with an adorable little hop that makes her hair bounce around her face as she smiles up at me. Her cheeks are flush from dancing, but she looks happy, with no hint of her earlier annoyance.

"I see he's sent you to do the dirty work. Let me guess. You're to deliver me to the dance floor, huh, Red?" I'm not sure where the nickname came from, but I watch as the color of her cheeks deepens before her eyes dart down to her feet, and I know it's going to stick.

I reach out, hooking my finger under her chin, lifting her head so that her eyes once again find mine.

"And here I thought you wanted to dance," I say, raising a brow. Her chin presses against my finger as she attempts to look down again, but I don't let her.

"Um, I..." she stumbles over her words, and I can't stop the smirk that pulls at my lips as I watch her. "Yes, Desmond said you looked lonely, and I should come to get you," she says in a rush, her tongue darting out to wet her lips. I know she's nervous; her body language screams it, but she doesn't pull away.

"Well, let's go dance then, Red." Her eyes dart back up to mine at the use of the name again, but I nod toward the dance

floor. “Don’t want to leave him waiting too long,” I say before I release her.

For a moment, she stands still, staring up at me with her big green eyes. I curl my hands into fists at my side to keep myself from reaching out and dragging her to me. Her lips are painted a deep maroon color, making her eyes and hair pop, and I’ve never been more tempted to wipe a woman’s mouth clean with my own.

I watch as those same lips curve up into a smile. Reaching out, she grabs my hand before turning and heading back into the crowd, dragging me behind her.

Damn, what is it about her that’s so irresistible? I can’t seem to put my finger on it, but I know I want more. I know it won’t be enough even after just this bit of time with her.

Following her, I watch people all but stumble out of her way when they see me behind her. However, she doesn’t seem to give it a second thought as she continues toward Desmond. As we get closer, I catch his gaze over her head and huff a laugh at the shock on his face.

I can’t blame him. Like I said, he’s tried this a time or two in the past, and it’s never worked, so I doubt he would think today would be the day.

Lucky him.

“Well, well, this is new,” he shouts over the sound of the music, causing Katherine to look between us, her brows pinched in confusion.

“Ignore him, Red. I’m pretty sure we’re out here to dance, not talk,” I tell her, pulling her into my chest as the music slows a bit. It’s no slow song. The club’s not known for them, but it’s less chaotic, allowing me to keep her close while she sways and moves to the rhythm.

“Red?” Desmond mouths, cocking a brow at me in question, but I ignore him, giving Katherine my full attention. He can ask me questions later. For now, I have better things to focus on. Like the way she feels in my arms or the way her tits bounce as she hops around.

It only takes a moment before Desmond moves, stepping up behind her and sandwiching her between us.

The mere thought fuels ideas of how else we could make a sandwich out of her, and I groan before pushing the thought aside.

We can worry about that later. Right now, I’m enjoying dancing, and that doesn’t happen often.



We dance for long enough that Katherine is panting. A thin layer of sweat covers her skin, but the smile on her face says she’s enjoying herself, and that’s enough for me.

“So, what brings you here?” Desmond asks once we’re back at the bar for a drink. I call for water from the bartender, knowing she needs to stay hydrated, and I’m rewarded with a smile.

Damn, most girls would have gotten pissed, insisting they were fine, but she didn't even bat an eye.

"I just got a job here," she answers before sipping her water.

"Oh, what kind of job would that be?" I ask, unable to stop myself. Usually, I don't really want to know more, don't care to, but something about her has me curious. So many people come to New York hoping to make it big, only to fail. I'd hate to have her end up like that.

"I'm a teacher."

She beams at me, clearly proud, and I nod, happy to hear she's not here for something that might break her heart should she fail.

"Oh, got anything to teach me?" Desmond teases, and she almost chokes on her water. She takes a second to regain her composure, and I glare at him over her head, but he rolls his eyes. It was funny enough, but poor timing on his part. I can't blame him, though. If I'd had a teacher like her, maybe I would have finished school. At the very least, I would have made it to class a lot more often.

"I think you're a bit old for my classroom," she tells him, laying her hand on his arm and smiling. It's a simple gesture, but Desmond's whole face lights up like a damn child offered the last slice of cake.

"Nah, he sucked at school. He could always use some more," I chime in, making her laugh, and I feel Desmond's eyes bore into the side of my head.

“So you’ve never been to New York before?” I ask, the beginning of a plan forming in my mind.

She shakes her head, her hair bouncing around her as she takes another sip of water.

“No, I actually just got here last night,” she tells us with a shrug.

“Damn, one night and already out partying?” Desmond says with a snort, but I know the second he’s said it, that was the wrong thing to say.

Katherine’s smile melts off her face, and her shoulders slump slightly, her eyes downcast on the bar. I’m two seconds from reaching over her head and smacking the shit out of him, but he seems to realize he’s hit a nerve before I have to.

It’s almost funny. Desmond’s a smooth talker, usually. He has no problem picking up women. Between his bad boy reputation, his motorcycle, the money and his charm, but tonight, he seems to be off his game.

“Shit, sorry,” he says in a rush, reaching out to brush some of her long hair out of her face so that he can see her face. “I was only joking, gorgeous,” he tells her, leaning into her space so she can’t easily ignore him.

Her cheeks burn red, either from the compliment or the proximity. Either way, I get the feeling he’s forgiven.

“Ignore the insensitive fuck. You can do whatever you want,” I tell her, hooking a finger under her chin and turning her head toward me so our eyes meet. “What do you say we

head out?” I offer, watching her eyes widen slightly, her lips parting. “I’ve got something I think you’d love to see,” I continue before she has a chance to say anything.

She doesn’t answer for a moment, and it’s almost as if I can see the wheels turning in her head. We could stay here with her. I have no problem with that, but I’d guess this isn’t really her scene, and I think she would enjoy seeing the tree. We can show it to her in a way not many other people get to experience.

But the choice is hers.

Her head jerks with a nod finally, and a smile pulls at my lips before I can stop it.

“Fuck, yeah!” Desmond shouts, pumping his fist in the air behind her. Shaking my head, I turn back to Katherine, who hides her laughter behind her hand.

“Go fetch your coat and meet us down at the door, Red,” I tell her before pulling away and heading back through the crowd without another word.

Desmond catches up a few minutes later. I’m not surprised it took him longer to leave her. Hell, I’m shocked he walked away at all. I half expected him to stick with her and meet me out front. It’s what I wanted to do.

“Fuck me, man,” Desmond murmurs as we make it back to the lounge, collecting our jackets. The smile on his face says a lot, and while I understand, it won’t stop me from giving him a hard time.

Nothing can do that.

“Keep it in your pants, boy,” I tease, grabbing one of the drinks the servers left on the table for us and knocking it back.

“Shut up,” Desmond says, barking a laugh as he tosses me the keys across the room. I catch them and shove them in my pocket, but I have another idea.

“Call for the town car while I go check in with Dale and let him know we’re heading out,” I shout back over my shoulder, heading for the door.

I know he’ll listen. Even if it wasn’t for the redhead goddess downstairs, Desmond knows how to take orders when it matters, at least. Something tells me the town car is the right call here. Katherine doesn’t know who we are, and pulling up in a three-hundred-thousand-dollar car might tip her off that something is a miss. While I might not care, I can’t say I’m not enjoying being treated like anyone else. Not to mention having a driver means we can enjoy our time with her instead of traffic, because even this late I know there will be plenty.



I stand out front waiting on them. I’d informed Dale we were heading out and to call with any issues, though I expect it should be quiet tonight. The club door swings open, and I hear Katherine’s giggle even before I see them.

My heart hammers in my chest at the sound. I take a deep breath, holding it for a moment before letting it out slowly.

God, give me strength.

I say a silent prayer as they walk up just as the car pulls up to the curb in front of us. I'm going to need all the help I can get, especially now that we'll have her alone.

Nope, bad idea. That's the last thing I need to think about if I want any hope of control. I'm not sure what it is about her, but I want her so fucking bad. In my bed, *our* bed, at the house, any fucking where will do.

It's a scary thought, knowing someone for only a few hours and wanting them. It's not who I usually am. That's more my brother's speed. When he actually finds someone, he gets hooked, fast. Desmond is a lot like him, but has the attention span of a fucking goldfish, so he's hooked for a night tops, not long-term like his father.

Honestly, Katherine's already lasted longer than half his flings.

I wave off the driver as he reaches for his seatbelt, letting him know I've got it before I pull the door open for her.

Desmond attempts to get in right behind her. I bar his path with my arm, earning a glare. It only lasts a moment, though, before he follows my gaze to her ass as she crawls into the back of the car. Her dress is short. Not short enough to show anything other than her thighs, but I'll take it.

Judging by Desmond's groan, he will, too.

I drop my arm, but Desmond doesn't move. His eyes are still stuck on the place where she was just a moment ago.

Amateur.

Pushing past him, I let my shoulder collide with his to pull him from his daze. Too bad he had more than enough time to fantasize.

“Control,” I growl as I pass him to follow Katherine into the car. She made it look easy, almost graceful, how she folded into the backseat. That’s not possible for us. Being a bigger guy makes most cars annoying, but years of practice stop me from smacking my head on the door frame the way I used to as a teenager.

“Damn it,” Desmond groans, adjusting himself so that his now hard cock hopefully won’t be as noticeable when he climbs in behind me.

Katherine, of course, doesn’t notice. She doesn’t even glance his way as he climbs in, instead looking around the back, eyes full of wonder. The door closes, and the backlight goes out, hiding his issue completely.

“This car is beautiful,” Katherine beams. “I thought the Uber I took here was nice, but this...”

She doesn’t finish, but she doesn’t need to. This might not be the Royce, but none of our cars are cheap exactly, at least not by the average person’s standards.

Neither of us corrects her assumption that this is a paid drive, either.

“Where to?” Vin calls back, and I’m thankful he seems to get what’s going on here without explanation.

Vin has been driving us around for the better part of the last ten years. He's not the only driver we have. He can't be when we often have separate business to attend to, but he is our favorite. Vin doesn't ask questions and is pretty quick to catch on, two things that we appreciate a lot in our lives.

"5th and 50th," Desmond calls, and even in the dark, I hear the smile on his face.

"Oh, where are we going?" Katherine asks, and I feel her leg rub against mine as she settles into her seat.

This control thing just got a whole lot harder.

"Don't worry about it, gorgeous. You'll see in a few minutes. Wouldn't want to ruin the surprise now, would you?" Desmond says, his voice low as the car pulls away from the curb, and I expect her to argue.

She doesn't. The light of the street and businesses bleed in through the window, lighting up her face. She's quiet for a moment before she nods, a soft smile pulling at her lips before she turns her attention to the window, watching the city as it passes.

Fuck, as if she wasn't already tempting enough. Her obedience is enough to have me clenching my teeth in a silent fight with myself to keep my control.

In the end, I lose, unable to have her so close without touching her. If she doesn't want me to, she'll tell me, and that will be the end of it, but I have to try.

Reaching out, I let my hand fall to her thigh just above her knee and below where her dress falls. Her skin is full and soft, and I have to bite back the groan that builds in my throat. She jumps slightly at the unexpected contact, before she looks down at my hand. I see the confusion in her eyes for a moment before turns back to the window, the lights showing the hint of a blush on her cheeks.

I can feel Desmond's eyes burning into my hand where it rests on her skin, and I know he's jealous. How could he not be? She's fucking perfect.

I meet his gaze for a moment. Just long enough to let him know I'm gloating, before I turn my gaze back to look at the space where my hand rests on her thigh. Imagining it's her neck, admiring the difference in our skin tones. Her skin is light, milky white, as if she hardly sees the sun, but I doubt that's really what it is. No, I think that just means her red hair is natural. It seems to be common for redheads to have fairer skin.

All her features are lighter than ours. My skin is a beautiful permanent tan, no matter how little time I spend in the sun. Desmond's is just a shade or two lighter, but not by much. Our hair is dark brown, and we have the same hazel eyes. Dark features run in our family, though my brother somehow got our mother's eyes.

The lucky bastard.

Katherine's gasp lets me know that we've arrived. The tree is beautiful. Even after years of coming down here, I find myself

in awe of it every time I see it. I can only imagine what it must feel like to see it for the first time.

The car rolls to a stop at the curb. A few people are still out and about, even at this late hour, but none of them appear to be here for the tree. During the day, this place is fucking packed, especially this close to Christmas.

This is the perfect time to come, though I can't say I've ever been before.

“Oh, my god...” her words trail off as she leans across my lap. She damn near puts her head in Desmond's crotch in an attempt to see the tree out of his window. His eyes widen as he watches her, her hand resting on his thigh for support. Just an inch more, and she would be grabbing something very different. I'm not sure if he's disappointed by that or not, though.

I don't give him time to figure it out, nodding toward the door in a reminder of what we're doing here.

He rolls his eyes but moves all the same, swinging the door open and stepping out. I don't even have to ask her to move. The second the door opens, she pulls away, damn near bouncing in her seat as she waits to get out.

Control might be challenging, but this is definitely worth it.



Katherine

CHAPTER 6

I've heard about the tree here. I mean, who hasn't? But I had no intention of going to see it. From everything I've heard, it's almost always crowded. Not to mention, I didn't yet trust myself not to get lost. This city is like one giant maze; even after looking at a map all morning, I was confused.

The cold air hits me, cooling my warm cheeks, but I don't feel it like I did earlier. Alcohol is fantastic at keeping me warm despite knowing I'd be shivering without it. Mix that with my excitement, and I'm damn near overheating.

I'd seen the tree on the TV a few times and always wondered what all the hype was about.

Now I get it.

It's not just big; it's enormous, and even that doesn't feel like an appropriate word to describe it. It's got to be close to one hundred feet tall, every inch covered in lights. So many that they light up the square, making it feel earlier than I know it is.

Everything around us is decorated and beautiful, making it feel as though I stepped into a different world.

“Amazing, isn’t it?”

Desmond comes up beside me, wrapping his arm around my shoulder and pulling me into him. It’s a bold move for a guy I just met, but I find I don’t mind. I might not feel the cold, but I know it seeps into my skin regardless, and his warmth is welcome.

I don’t have the words to describe it, so instead, I nod, looking up at him with a smile to find him staring down at me.

I’m unsure what my face looks like, but I can guess when he chuckles. I probably look like a little kid, but I can’t seem to wipe the smile off my face. Tonight is definitely turning out to be amazing, and to think, I almost didn’t go out at all.

It was totally worth it, even the few creeps I had to deal with at the bar.

“I’ve been coming to see it ever since I was a kid, and it still blows my mind every time,” he tells me, turning his attention back to the tree. I realize Alex is missing, but before I can ask where he is, he steps up beside me, opposite Desmond. The back of his hand brushes mine with how close he stands.

I spent the night dancing with both of them, and Desmond currently has his arm wrapped around my shoulder. Yet somehow, that simple brush of skin sends my heart pounding.

It's ridiculous, honestly, and I don't think it has anything to do with the alcohol.

Actually, I know it doesn't. I can't explain it, but they've both been amazing tonight, and after the last few days, I needed this. The way they were at the bar, dealing with the creep, giving me space and letting me talk, put me at ease—every moment since has been easy in a way I'm not used to.

Being around them is easy.

Something I never felt with Carter, even after years.

No, nope! Don't go there. Tonight, I forget about him, close that chapter of my life and start a new one. He doesn't deserve a moment of my time, especially when thoughts of him will no doubt ruin the beauty of this moment.

“What's wrong, Red?” Alex asks, and it takes me a second to realize I'd been shaking my head at the thought of him. As if I could merely send it away.

Idiot. This is why I don't drink.

“Oh, nothing,” I tell him, fixing my eyes back on the tree. But I'm a terrible liar, and even without looking at him, I'm sure he doesn't believe me.

“It's just a shame it's so far away,” I say after a moment, trying to change the subject. It's not a lie; it really is a shame. One night or not, I don't want to lie to them. It's not who I am or how I want to start this new chapter.

“How long we got?” Desmond asks, turning to look over my head at Alex.

I'm not short. If anything, I would say I'm about average height, and I have a few extra inches with my boots. Yet somehow, I feel small standing between them while they talk over my head.

"Fifteen. That was all he could do," Alex says, pulling his phone out to check the time. "So about eleven left now, I'd guess."

Desmond pulls his arm off my shoulder, and with it goes all the warmth I was happily siphoning from him. A chill works down my spine, making me shiver.

"Let's make it quick, or she's going to be a popsicle," Desmond says, huffing a laugh. Reaching out, he laces his fingers in mine, pulling me behind him as he heads toward the tree. I follow easily, unsure when I became so trusting of people who are little more than strangers. I guess it doesn't matter now, though. I'd like to assume if they intended to kill me, they would have done so in the car when we were alone. Not in front of one of the biggest attractions in all of New York.

"Ah, we'll make sure she's plenty warm after," Alex says with a chuckle of his own. The deep tone of his voice has me turning to look back at him even as Desmond continues to drag me forward.

"If you're interested, that is?"

I open my mouth, but no words come out. My answer must be clear on my face because a sexy as fuck smirk twists his lip up, scrambling my thoughts.

Alex doesn't seem to be the smiling type. Even after spending the last few hours together, I'd only ever seen a smirk, just a subtle curve of his lips. But this is different. His smile lights up his face, making him appear younger. He and Desmond share many of the same features and traits already, but his smile seems to really drill that home for me. They could easily pass for father and son. I suppose they could be. It's not as though I'd thought to ask.

My foot catches on something, and I stumble. Before I can fall, Desmond catches me without so much as missing a beat as he continues toward the tree. Unwilling to tempt fate and see if he could do it again, I face forward, paying closer attention to where we're going. But I can still feel Alex's eyes on me.

I shudder, but this time, it has nothing to do with the cold and everything to do with these two men. Desmond stops moving, pulling me in front of him. His arms wrap around me as he pulls me into his chest before turning us away from the tree I'd thought we were running toward. I open my mouth to ask what we're doing, but the words die on my lips before I can utter a word.

The tree is mostly to our backs, but the view in front of us is no less breathtaking. Leaning forward, I press my palms to the cold stone of the half wall in front of me to get a better look.

The whole square is lit up. Trees with lights surround the biggest ice rink I've ever seen. It's empty now, but I can only imagine what it would be like, full of people. Families

teaching little ones to skate, and couples enjoying the magical feeling surrounding this little bubble of Christmas perfection.

Bright lights from below catch my attention, and without thought, I lean further over the edge. I hear Desmond chuckle behind me, but I don't pay him any attention as my eyes land on a beautifully lit golden statue almost directly below the tree. I can't see all of it from this angle, but the bright green and red lights that shine on it reflect on the ice. I want to go down and get a better view. It's probably not a great idea with my current state, but I make a mental note to come back later to see it.

Now that I've gotten a taste, I can see why so many come back year after year. I'm not sure this could ever be anything but amazing. I'd even go so far as to say it's probably even more amazing with crowds of people fully in the spirit and ready for Christmas.

Desmond gives me a few seconds to look before his strong arm pulls me back to him with a huff.

"Pretty trusting of me there, Gorgeous," he whispers, his lip grazing the skin of my ear.

"I knew you wouldn't let me fall."

The words are out of my mouth before I can really think about them. But I can't bring myself to take them back, even knowing how crazy they might sound. I don't know them, not really. A few drinks in a club and a beautiful view shouldn't equate to trust, and usually, they wouldn't. I can feel it in my

bones, even if I can't explain it. Something about them feels safe.

Desmond's chest rumbles a moment before a growl leaves his lips, his warm breath rolling over my neck in the most delicious way.

"You're killing me," he groans, his arms tightening around me to press me impossibly closer to him. I don't understand what he means at first, but then I feel it. His hard length presses to the top of my ass with our height difference.

I'm not stupid. I know what he wants. Hell, it'd probably be stranger if he didn't, seeing as we met at a club. I knew what I was getting myself into the moment I decided to go out, but some part of me didn't really believe I would find anyone, let alone two. No, I'd been more than ready to have a few drinks and go back to my lonely hotel room to handle my own needs. It would be easier and cleaner, with no ties and no potential feelings. Desmond and Alex don't strike me as the type to need anything more than one night, though, and as fantastic as they might be, my heart couldn't get attached if it wanted to. There aren't enough whole pieces left for that right now.

Letting the last of my usual caution slip away, I press back into him. My coat only covers as far as my waist, and my dress is thin, letting me feel the impressive length resting just below his black dress pants. It's not much, hardly more than what we were already doing, but something about that simple movement has me clenching my thighs together as my teeth sink into my bottom lip.

“Red.”

Alex’s hoarse rasp has my head whipping to the side. As if I’m not already ready to combust as it is, that fucking nickname shouldn’t sound so damn good. It’s not as if I’ve never been called that before. My hair is naturally red, meaning I’ve heard it all my life. But something about how he says it makes it feel dirty. Sensual in a way it’s never felt before.

He’s only a few steps from us, his back to the beautiful view I’d just been in awe of. His ass rests against the stone wall, arms crossed at his chest, somehow making him look both completely at ease and like some kind of sexy statue.

Damn them both. I didn’t stand a chance from the second they walked up, but if this is our one night, I’ll be damned if I don’t make the most of it.

Alex’s eyes are dark, but with the lights surrounding us, I can see the heat in them as he watches me. With my eyes on him, I reach up, letting my hand run up Desmond’s neck, into his hair. It’s cut short on the sides but long enough on top that I can tangle my fingers in it. With my other hand, I untangle one of Desmond’s arms from around me, guiding his hand down my waist to rest on my hip before I grind back into him again.

“Fuck me.” I don’t need to look to know his jaw’s clenched. His words come out in a low hiss that only feeds my desire-filled brain, making me crave more of him, more of that reaction, more of them in general.

Apparently, I'm not the only one either. As I press back into Desmond, I seem to have found his tipping point. One second, I'm in his arms, completely in control. The next thing I know, I'm spinning to face him, his hands gripping my waist to hoist me up onto the wall. My legs fall open to allow him closer as he steps forward, his hands still holding me tight, as if refusing to let me go. Something I can appreciate, considering I saw just how high up we are just moments ago. Usually, I'm not a fan of heights, but just like when I leaned over the side earlier, I find I don't mind him holding me.

I don't have time to give it more than a passing thought before he's there. His chest presses up against my own as he pulls me into him. This time, his hard length presses against my pussy through the thin fabric of my dress and underwear, pulling a gasp from my lips at the feeling. As if I wasn't wet enough already. At this rate, it will be a Christmas miracle if I don't soak through his pants. I can't bring myself to care, though, as my eyes once again land on Alex.

He no longer stands leaning against the wall. Instead, he stands just behind Desmond, his eyes burning with desire as they roam over us. I've never been with more than one man before. If you can even count Carter as a man, that is, I never thought it would be something I wanted. But right now, with Desmond pressed against me and Alex watching us like this, I can't think of anything I've ever wanted more.

Desmond's lips crash into mine greedily but still tenderly before he drags his tongue along my bottom lip, asking for entry. I'm quick to open for him, more than happy to give him

what he wants as my body burns with need. Our tongues tangle together as his hand snakes up into my hair, gently tugging my head back to deepen our kiss. My eyes fall closed of their own accord. As much as I might enjoy seeing Alex watch us, I can't fight the feeling of bliss overwhelming me while Desmond explores my mouth, and I don't want to.

He kisses me until I'm breathless before he finally pulls away. He doesn't go far, but it feels like too much space after being pressed so close to him. With my eyes still closed, I let my hand travel slowly down his chest. He freezes, but I keep moving, continuing my slow path lower. I feel their eyes on me as they watch, waiting to see what I'll do. The weight of their gazes is heavy, but I feel no judgment, only curiosity. I push past the small tangle of nerves I feel in my stomach for being so bold.

I feel the waist of his pants and hesitate only a moment before continuing my path down, ghosting my fingers over his hard length teasingly. His breath catches, and that's all the encouragement I need. Twisting my hand, I palm him through the thick fabric of his pants and not for the first time since we got here, I wish we weren't somewhere so public. Somewhere where far fewer clothes are required. I'm just tipsy enough still that the idea of being fucked here isn't far from my brain, but I know better. Just because we don't see anyone doesn't mean nobody is around. New York is the city that never sleeps, after all, and I don't think starting my new chapter with a count of indecent exposure would be a great idea.

That doesn't stop my mind from wandering, though. His pants might be thick, but there's no doubt his cock is as well, and I have a good imagination. He's been still until now, letting me explore him. So when he suddenly pulls me to the edge of the wall, gripping my hips and grinding me against his thigh, he catches me off guard. A high-pitched, needy moan escapes me at the feeling of the friction I've been craving.

"Desmond!" Alex barks, but neither of us pays him any attention as Desmond continues to press my hips forward and back, grinding me against his thigh. I can't think past the feeling of his hands on my hips and the release building inside of me. I can't remember the last time a man made me come. Yet here I am in the middle of New York, about to come apart in a very public way, and I can't say I mind. My breaths come in short pants as he continues, and I know at this rate, I'll be screaming in no time. I reach out, gripping his arm, but I'm unsure if I'm trying to make him stop or encouraging him to keep going.

One second, he's there. The next, he's gone. I almost topple forward onto the ground at his sudden absence. Before I can, Alex is there, catching me around my waist before setting me back on my feet.

What the fuck just happened?

Looking around the open space, I find Desmond a few feet away. His shoulders rising and falling rapidly, his nostrils flaring with each breath. For a moment, I fear I did something wrong, that he's angry.

“It’s time to go,” Alex says, his voice holding a hint of command that I hadn’t heard from him before. I turn my gaze to where he stands beside me and see that it isn’t me Desmond is staring at, but him.

“We’ve hit our limit,” he says, raising a hand toward the tree behind Desmond. I follow his hand and feel my eyes go wide as I look up to find the lights off.

How the hell did I miss that? When did that happen?

Turning around, I find it’s not just the tree, but the whole square is now dark. The buildings around the square still glow with life, but it’s not the same. It’s almost as if the magic left with the lights.

“As much as I would love to watch you two fuck, I don’t think this is the place for that. Don’t you agree, Desmond?”

Alex’s question seems rhetorical, but turning back around, I see Desmond give a stiff nod before he takes a deep breath. It’s as if I can physically see the tension melt away.

A smile turns his lips once again, and I feel like I might end up with whiplash from how fast he just went from one extreme to the next.

“What do you say we take you to get warm, Gorgeous?” he asks, reaching out to me, without moving toward me.

I stand there staring at his hand momentarily, unsure what to do. It doesn’t matter, though, as the choice is made for me a moment later. Alex turns, scooping me up in his arms bridal

style as if I weigh nothing, and starts back toward their still-waiting car.

Oh god! I hadn't even considered that they might have the driver wait. He no doubt just got a fantastic show. My cheeks heat at the thought.

"You had your turn. Get in the car, boy!" Alex shouts back to Desmond without so much as glancing back at him. I peek over his shoulder, curious to see how Desmond will react, only to find him shaking his head with a smile on his lips as he starts toward the car.

Maybe he wasn't mad earlier? Maybe I'd misread his body language?

We reach the car, and I expect Alex to put me down to open the door to have me climb in. Instead, he reaches out, supporting my weight with one hand as if I weigh nothing before he pulls the door open and climbs in with me still in his arms. He shouldn't have been able to do it so smoothly, not with his size, and me cradled in his arms, but somehow he does. In only seconds, we're seated in the back of the car as Desmond slides in after him.

The driver takes off without them telling him where we're going as Alex adjusts me in his arms so that I'm now sitting on his lap. One of his hands rests on my hip while the other plays with the ends of my hair. It's sweet, but I can't help but shift around, uncomfortable with the idea of sitting on him. It can't be comfortable for him. I might be small compared to them, but I don't feel like I'm built to be on someone's lap, either.

“Sit still.”

His words are hardly more than a breath, but the demand is clear. I do as he says, and a moment later, I feel his thumb ghost over my side, making my stomach flutter.

I make it about five minutes before we hit a slight bump in the road. That’s all it takes for me to feel uncomfortable, and I’m squirming again.

“If you keep moving around like that, your ass is going to match your hair, Red.”

I hear the smirk on his lips as he says that damn nickname again. He emphasizes it so that I understand what he’s saying. It wasn’t necessary. Trust me, I got it, but what I don’t get is why his words seemed to have a direct line to my pussy.

I’m a grown-ass woman. Nothing about being spanked should have me excited... yet here we are.

“Don’t scare her, old man,” Desmond teases, shoving Alex’s shoulder with a laugh and pulling me from my thoughts.

“Oh, I promise scared isn’t what she’s feeling right now,” Alex says. His hand, that’s been toying with the end of my hair, slowly slides up my back. He tangles his fingers into the hair at the base of my neck before gently pulling my head back until our eyes meet. Even on his lap, I’m shorter than him. It’s insane.

“Isn’t that right?”

Again, with that commanding voice he used earlier with Desmond. This isn’t exactly the same, though, because it’s

directed at me this time. If I thought it was bad before, well, now I'm fucked.

I nod without thought, but thankfully, he seems ready. His fingers loosen enough, so I only feel a slight tug, which excites me more.

He peers down at me, and my breath catches as his lips curve in a smile, his eyes shining with satisfaction at my response. The car slows to a stop, but he doesn't release me, and we all sit in silence.

I'd felt his hard length from the moment he set me on his lap, but I'd been too worried about how uncomfortable he must be with me on top of him to really pay attention. Now, with my head craned back, I don't have the ability to squirm around, no matter if I want to or not.

It's impossible to miss the feeling of his hard cock against my ass as he presses his hips up into me. I gasp at the sensation and hear Desmond curse from beside us.

"Tell me, Red. Would you like to come and get warm with us, or would you prefer the driver take you home?" Alex asks.

His question seems strange, considering the night we've had until this point. Plus, there's the fact that his hand is literally wrapped up in my hair right now while I make a mess of the both of us.

My face screws up in confusion, and I hear Desmond mutter something beside us. Alex hushes him without taking his eyes off mine.

“I’m going to need an answer.”

I nod, unable to form words as I look up at him, but he still doesn’t release me, and makes no move to go anywhere.

“With you,” I stammer, my voice sounding strange with the strain on my neck. He either doesn’t notice or doesn’t care.

“Good answer,” he praises me, leaning forward to drop a kiss on my cheek before releasing his hold on me.

“You heard her, Des.”

I turn to find Desmond already outside of the car, I hadn’t even heard him move. He stands leaning back against the door, watching us. Without hesitation, he reaches out, grabbing me off of Alex’s lap and pulling me out of the car back into the frigid night air.

I open my mouth to tell him I can walk, but the second I feel the cold, I press my lips closed again. The alcohol is definitely not a factor anymore. I can tell by the way the cold seeps into my bones, leaving my teeth chattering in just a few seconds.


“You’re going to need a better coat, gorgeous. It’s not even that bad out here.”

Desmond all but jogs up toward a house I can’t see, and I don’t care to look as I bury my face in his chest in search of warmth.

“No, shit...” I stutter, and I feel him laugh.

DESMOND

CHAPTER 7



Katherine is shaking in my arms. The second I pulled her from the car, she buried herself into my chest to hide away from the cold. I head down the path toward the pool house and can't wipe the smile off my face. She's adorable. I'd much rather take her into the house, but that's a no-no. Dad is liable to lose his shit. Not to mention, I have no idea who's awake right now.

Next time, maybe.

The thought catches me off guard, making me stop in my tracks. I've never wanted to bring someone into the house before. The pool house is our agreed space for company. It helps to keep things simple, not to mention it's fucking huge for only a pool house. The bed alone can easily fit five people. I know. We've tested it. But more than that, the easy way I brushed it off for next time is what made me pause. It's not that I never sleep with the same person twice. There are no real rules, but it's not something I tend to plan. It happens, or it doesn't, and that's the end of it. But it's not something I ever

look forward to, and I can't deny I look forward to seeing her again. Even now, when our night is just getting started.

“Did your feet freeze to the ground, boy?” Alex calls from behind me as he makes his way toward us. Shit, I'd completely spaced out. With careful steps, I dodge the patches of ice as I run the last fifty or so feet to the door.

Thankfully, we keep the pool house heat on once it starts getting cold for this exact reason. Never know when one of us will need the space. I'd rather have it warm and unused than come in here and continue to freeze. Nothing about being cold makes people want to take their clothes off, or at least it doesn't for me. I'd bet my baby that Katherine would agree with the way she's huddled up to me even now that we're inside.

“You can come out now, Gorgeous. It's warm in here,” I tell her, trying and failing to choke back a laugh.

She makes no move to pull away, though, instead vigorously shaking her head against my chest.

“I need time to thaw.”

Her words come out muffled against my chest, but I make them out well enough, regardless. What's more amazing is that Alex seems to as well.

“We can warm you up faster together,” he calls as he kicks the door shut behind him, flipping lights on as he moves into the room.

The pool house is just one big room that overlooks the pool. Not that you can tell with all the snow. Right now, if you peeked out the window, it would just look like one huge backyard. When we had it built, we skipped out on things people typically might add, like the kitchen and dining area. It felt useless with the extensive deck space we already had by the house. Instead, we opted for a small bar, fireplace, and breakfast nook, with the rest of the area dedicated to our custom-built bed.

Skipping out on some of the other shit has never been an issue, though. Aside from the fireplace and occasional drink, we don't need much more. I've never heard a complaint.

"Come on, Red," Alex says as he walks by, snatching her out of my arms before I can protest.

Damn him.

I stand frozen for a second, my arms still up in the air as if she's still there as I watch him make his way to the bed. Alex turns, tossing a smirk over his shoulder at me before collapsing onto the bed with her still in his arms. She lets out an adorable little squeak of surprise as they bounce off the plush mattress, and the sound has me moving forward.

"Oh my god," Katherine groans as Alex sits up, reaching down to pull off her boots, while her hands fist into the soft blanket that covers the bed.

With two steps, I reach the end of the bed, dropping to the floor and grabbing her other foot, but my eyes stay fixed on her. I watch her eyes flutter open, getting her first real look

around. A smile tugs at my lips as I see them widen in surprise.

Fuck, she's such a breath of fresh air. Every damn bit of her has been amazing so far, and we all still have our damn clothes on. Excitement has me moving faster as I pull off her high boot and toss it behind me without so much as glancing at where it went.

She won't need it tonight, anyway.

"Your house is beautiful!" she says as she presses herself up on her elbows to get a better look around. I can't help but laugh, looking over to find Alex shaking his head, obviously enjoying this as much as I am.

Katherine's gaze finds mine as I look at her. Her legs still hanging off the end of the bed, looking comfortable. Minus the fact that she's still got her coat on, but I'll deal with that in a moment.

Her brows pinch in confusion, and I see a hint of the attitude I'd witnessed at the bar when the douchebag had sent her that drink. It shouldn't excite me the way it does, but something about her sassy side only makes my dick hard or harder. I've been hard since the fucking drive here, thanks to Alex's little show.

"What?" she mutters, looking to Alex, and I hear the faintest hint of uncertainty in that one word. I don't know her yet, but fuck do I want to. I want to know who made her doubt herself like this.

I want to fucking end them.

But that can wait until the morning. For now, we have other things to do.

She's on the top of that list. All. Night. Long.

Alex doesn't miss it either. It's not surprising. Not much gets past him. Reaching out, he hooks a finger under her chin, tilting her head up so she has no choice but to look at him. With his other hand, he brushes a strand of her beautiful red hair out of her face, tucking it behind her ear. The crease in her brow disappears as her cheeks heat, turning a beautiful shade of pink. Her skin's so fair I bet that flush covers much more than just her face.

The second the thought crosses my mind, I'm moving, unable to stop myself. Climbing up onto the bed, I crawl up behind her on my knees. She attempts to look my way, only to find herself trapped in Alex's hold, and I huff a laugh.

"This isn't our house, Red."

As he talks, I reach around her back, snagging her zipper and pulling it down.

"It's our pool house, but it will have to do for the night."

I grab the cuffs of her coat and tug it so it falls down her arms until I can pull it off completely. Just like her boot, I toss it off the bed—a problem for another time.

Alex still holds her attention, literally, and I intend to take full advantage of that.

“It’s late, and we didn’t give proper notice that we would have company tonight. Hadn’t planned to find such a beauty alone at our club.”

My gaze cuts to him at his words, and I can’t keep the scowl off my face. He doesn’t so much as glance at me, his attention fully on her, and I have to bite my tongue to stop calling him out for his shit.

He’s testing her. The fucker would wait till now to do it. Can’t get over himself enough to think someone might actually just not know us. I watch him as he watches her, looking for a reaction, but whatever he’s looking for never comes. I can tell by the subtle way his brow raises. It’s a look he doesn’t get often.

Shock.

That deserves a reward if you ask me. Not that anyone did, but that’s fine. I don’t need an invitation to take what I want.

I gather Katherine’s hair, pushing it forward over her shoulder. Her dress has long sleeves, but up on my knees like this, I can see right down the front of it. Fuck me if it isn’t a magnificent view, but even more than the beautiful display of her boobs is the flush that’s creeping down her chest right now.

My cock strains at the thought of watching that delicious color work its way down every bit of her. Leaning forward, I drop my lips to the crook of her neck, right above the fabric of her dress. I ghost them over the exposed skin and can’t stop my smirk as I feel her shiver at the contact.

So responsive.

“Next time, we’ll plan better, and we can show you the house.” It sounds like he’s talking to her, but I know his words are just as much for me. I pull back slightly, unwilling to go far. Our eyes met, and I see it, the understanding that this won’t be the same.

He won’t hear any arguments from me. A smile curves my lips that has him turning his attention back to Katherine, obviously done with me. That’s fine, though. I know he got the message; if not, I’ll ensure I tease him about it later.

Oh, the mighty Alex, king of no strings attached, may have finally met his match. I can’t fucking wait to tell Dad and Oli. They’re going to lose it. But they will understand once they meet her. I can’t imagine anyone wouldn’t.

With that out of the way, I turn my attention back to her and her delicious reactions, intent on eating every one of them up, and then her. Dropping my lips to her skin again, I feel the goosebumps that break out over her skin as I slowly trail my lips up her neck. Alex still holds her chin, but that doesn’t stop her from tilting her head to the side, giving me better access. I hum in appreciation as I skim my teeth over the sensitive skin below her ear.

Her breathing hitches, and that’s all I need. I bite down, not too hard, but enough to pull a little moan from her lips, and it’s as if the sound has a direct line to my cock.

I can’t remember the last time I was this damn hard, let alone with everybody still fully clothed. Pulling back, I drop my lips

to the same spot, soothing the slight sting I'm sure I left. Movement catches my attention from the corner of my eye. I look down to find her squirming, pressing her thighs together, chasing friction from the ache I'm sure she's feeling right now.

Alex finally hits his limit, his hand circling her throat as he moves forward, pressing his lips to hers. Her eyelids flutter as she lets herself get lost in the feeling of him. She whimpers as his hand wraps around her, pulling her toward him until their chests press together. But it's not enough, and I can't say I blame him.

Hell, if not for Alex, I very well might have fucked her in the middle of the city had she let me. Something about her is so intoxicating in the best possible way.

Palming my cock through my pants, I watch them for a moment, trying to relieve some of the ache I feel in my balls. But there's only one way to help that.

With her hair out of the way, finding her zipper is easy. It glides down her back, and I get my first look at the matching lace bra she wears underneath. I can't help but groan, praying to any god who will listen that her underwear matches. The vision my brain supplies won't even compare, I know that, but it does enough to make me move just a little faster, leaving me feeling like a kid unwrapping a Christmas present. I almost laugh out loud at the thought.

What a fucking gift she is!

I make quick work of her sleeves, pushing them down so that her dress is held in place by only the tight lace at her waist. Reaching out, I grip her hips and lift her before setting her down on Alex's lap so that she's straddling him.

The second she's on Alex's lap, her hips rocking almost as if of their own accord, and she mellows at the contact. Alex's groan lets me know just how much he appreciates me.

We've shared a lot of girls over the years. We both know what we're doing on our own but with both of us... Well, there's a reason girls love seeing us in the club together. Pleasure overload is a real thing, and it's something we strive for, something she's going to find out pretty quickly.

With them lost in exploring each other, I take the opportunity to get out of some of these damn clothes. I fucking hate dress clothes. Too many buttons, and they're damn uncomfortable, but my father insists we dress up when we're at the club or office. I get it; we have a certain reputation, but damn, I love taking them off at the end of the day.

After years of fine dress shirts, I've learned to navigate the buttons quickly and my shirt goes over the edge of the bed to join her ever-growing pile on the floor. My pants are next before I scoot back until my back rests on a pillow against the wall, in nothing but my boxers.

The shift of the bed has Alex pulling back, his fingers tangled in her hair as he holds her still, his eyes roaming over her, eating up every scrap of skin she now has displayed. Even

from the other side of the bed, I see his pupils blow wide with desire as he soaks it all in.

Without a word, he gathers the hem of her dress, pushing it up to join the rest of it at her waist before he reaches down to grip her ass. I watch as Alex stands with her still on his lap, and I chuckle as her arms quickly circle his neck to keep herself from falling. He wouldn't have let her. I guess she doesn't know that yet, but she will.

She's about to get the queen treatment.

With one hand gripping her ass, Alex pulls her dress up and over her head. She catches on a moment before it reaches her head, leaning back enough to center her weight so that she can lift her arms without falling.

Alex tosses the dress, or at least I assume he does, but honestly, I can't be sure. The second her skin is displayed, it's as if a magnet pulls my eyes. I couldn't look away if I tried. Her bra has lace around the bottom, covering more of her than a typical bra would. I know there's a word for it, but fuck if I know it.

I've never understood why someone would want that much lace; I imagine it would be itchy and annoying. But seeing it on her, I might get it now. My eyes trace down her back, landing on the matching lace boy shorts that look as though they were painted on.

Alex's fingers sink into the plush skin of her ass. They leave imprints on her skin that tell me not how affected he is by her

and have me licking my lips at the thought of having her in my arms, my fingers on her skin.

Without thought, I'm moving forward, crawling across the bed to them, unable to resist the temptation. I've never been one to pass up on something I want. Alex says I'm spoiled, and that might be true. But she wants this too, and I'll be damned if she doesn't get everything she asked for... and then some.

Her head whips to the side the second my fingers ghost over the soft skin of her waist. Slowly, I circle my hand around to her stomach, before resting on the line of her lace underwear. Our eyes lock together; her pupils are blown so wide that even with the lights on, the color of her is almost entirely eaten away by them. Her breaths come in short pants, lips parting as her tongue darts out to run the length of her bottom lip as I slowly inch my hand lower.

The lace is soft, not at all like some of the itchy shit I've felt in the past. I have no doubt she wore these for comfort more than to show off, and that only makes this sweeter. She hadn't been in the club looking for attention, but she sure as fuck found it. Maybe more than she was ready for if the widening of her eyes is anything to go by. My hand continues its descent toward where I know she wants me most.

She's fucking soaking, the thin lace unable to hide her obvious reaction to us, her need. I want to watch my fingers disappear inside of her, but I can't pull my eyes away from her face. The need to see her reaction pushes me further, faster.

Her back arches slightly as I hook a finger under the side of her underwear, but I don't give her time to do more than that. I trail two fingers up through her wetness, going right for her clit. I've been about as patient as I can be. Usually, it's Alex who can wait, but tonight, it seems neither of us can.

Lucky her.

Lazily, with purposely slow movements, I circle her clit. Her mouth drops open, but no sound comes out. I press forward, pushing my aching cock against her ass as I drop my lips to hers. I take advantage of her open mouth, dipping my tongue in to find hers. For a moment, she remains still before she seems to find herself, and her tongue moves against mine, her lips molding to match my kiss.

I can feel Alex's eyes on us, watching how she responds as I explore her, but I know he won't watch for long.

As if he can hear my thoughts, Alex presses forward, trapping my hand against her clit as he rocks into her, and she moans into my mouth. I swallow down the sound with a growl of my own as he presses her ass back against my cock, that's begging for more.

"Tell us what you want, Red," Alex's gruff demand cuts through the sound of our labored breathing. I pull back, knowing she needs her mouth to answer him. Her eyes flutter open slowly as if weighted; knowing I have that effect on her is like a drug.

"More," she pants, turning to look at him, and my eyes flick to him as well.

Alex's hand is on her throat in a flash, his thumb lazily flicking up and down, no doubt enjoying the rapid thump of her pulse.

“So responsive for us.”

His words hint at praise, and she eats it up, her hips rocking in response.

“What do you say, Des? What first?” I know he's teasing her, trying to gauge what she wants since she seems unable to decide, but fuck if it doesn't tease me, too.

“I think we have more than enough time to try a little of everything,” I tell him, playing along. As much as I might want to get to it and bury myself deep inside of her, I know building this up makes it better. She won't just cum, she's going to fucking explode, over and over, all night long.

“True. Well, if it's all the same to you, I think I'd like to start with her mouth.” Alex turns his attention back to her as he drags his hand up her throat. “I've been dying to rub this lipstick off.”

He drags his thumb along her bottom lip, which surprisingly is still marked with that deep maroon color. I'm not sure what she uses, but it sure as fuck lasts. However, something tells me it won't be around much longer.

“What do you say, Gorgeous?” I ask, dropping open-mouth kisses up her shoulder as I dip my fingers lower, slowly inching closer to her aching core. “Can Alex fuck that pretty mouth of yours while I fuck you?”

I feel her legs clench around Alex's waist at my words, and I know she likes the idea. Her eyes are hooded as she looks up at Alex. She moves forward, catching Alex's thumb in her mouth, sucking hard before she lets it pop free.

"Fuck," Alex growls, his eyes blazing with so much desire I'm surprised he didn't just throw her on the bed and start fucking her. She didn't even do it to me, but I almost came just watching her.

"Sounds perfect." Her voice is rough with need as a sultry smile pulls at her lips.

I don't need to be told twice. Pulling my hand free, I grab hold of her waist. Alex's brow pinches, and for a moment, I worry he won't let her go, but the second I move back, he does. Katherine lets out an adorable little squeak of surprise with the sudden movement, but before she can say anything, I'm falling back. My head falls on the pile of pillows as I settle her down on my lap. Her legs fall to either side of my waist so that she's straddling me while still facing Alex, who stands at the end of the bed, somehow still completely clothed. Her hands drop to the tops of my thighs as she steadies herself from the jolt of movement. That simple bend puts her ass on perfect display, and I can't resist reaching out and kneading the soft globes. My fingers sink in like Alex's had earlier, and it's better than I imagined.

My hips buck, and I grind up into her. She pulls in a sharp breath of surprise just as a condom lands on the pillow next to my head.

Thank god for Alex. At least one of us can think enough for the two of us. The head that's currently in control of me isn't the smartest.

"Lift for him, Red," Alex says, his voice demanding though not unkind, and she does so without hesitation.

I make quick work of ripping open the foil with my teeth. My eyes meet Alex's over her shoulder, and I know we both are on the same page.

Katherine has some bite, but she also has a submissive side that seems more than ready to shine under our praise. This is going to be fun.

With her hovering above me, I peel my boxers down, kicking them off once they're below my knees.

"Fuck!" I hiss, slamming my head back into the pillow. My eyes screw shut as I suck in a breath through my teeth. Her fingers drift over the row of bars that line the underside of my cock, and my balls ache as pre-cum drips from me. I hadn't anticipated her touch, had no fucking clue it would feel so good.

Thank the gods, I didn't just come like a teenager.

Alex barks a laugh, but I can't even glare at him like he deserves while her fingers continue to explore my piercings.

"Wow." The amazement in her one word is clear, and I don't even need to ask to know she's never seen a Jacobs ladder before.

“Yeah, he’s a crazy fucker,” Alex says, and I hear the rustle of his suit jacket as he pulls it off.

“It’s beautiful.”

“It’s for a lot more than just looks, Red.”

That seems to get her attention. Gently, she lets her hips drop back down so that she’s once again straddling me. The lace of her underwear rubs against my now bare cock, and something in my brain remembers the condom that’s now fisted in my hand.

Snaking a hand around her waist, I hold her in place as I sit forward. I can feel the heat of her skin everywhere. Against my chest where her back rests, on my cock that’s now painfully close to where I want it, and on the tops of my thighs where her hands grip me.

Alex stands at the end of the bed, his suit jacket now missing, as he begins to work on the button of his dress shirt.

“Watch.”

I breathe the word into her ear, and that’s all she needs.

Alex is a businessman, just like the rest of us. My father might be the face of everything, but we spend our fair share of time in the limelight. Alex is known for dressing up for almost everything. It’s his style, a part of his personality, but he doesn’t go so far as my father. He has his suits and dress shirts, but he hardly ever wears a tie. It’s what’s underneath that usually gets a shock, though.

I might have a pierced cock and tattoos everywhere, but that's fitting for me. People see my motorcycle and think everything adds up. Alex has a tattoo on the side of his neck and the word pain across the knuckles of his left hand. Most of the tabloids chalk it up to choices made when he was young and dumb.

If only they knew.

Alex undoes his cufflinks before stashing them in his pocket, and I feel the little gasp of air Katherine sucks in as she sees the sea of ink that covers him. From his wrists to his collar, all the way down to his waist as he peels off his shirt.

With her attention on Alex, I take a moment to roll the condom on before I forget... again. Her teeth sink into her plush lower lip, and the only reason I don't pull it free to bite it my-damn-self is because I have something else I want to do more.

Reaching down, I hook a finger into the side of her underwear, pulling it aside. With my cock still in hand, I press it back, finally getting to feel her heat.

"Ah, ah. Eyes on me, Red," Alex says when her eyes dip down.

She hesitates a moment before her head snaps back up. Her breaths are sharp and shaky as I slide my cock through her wetness, and I can feel her tremble in anticipation. I could drag this out. Hell, I'd intended to, but at this rate, I'll be teasing myself just as much as I am her, and I don't know how much more teasing I can take.

With her underwear pulled to the side, I press on her back, pushing her forward. She sinks to her knees without being told, hovering just above the head of my cock. I can't wait another second.

Gripping her hips, I pull her down and line myself up with her entrance. The feel of her is enough to make me lose the little control I had left. With one sharp thrust, I bury myself inside of her.

Alex



CHAPTER 8

Katherine's strangled moan fills the room as Desmond slams into her, and I can't look away as her face scrunches up in pleasure. Desmond holds her to him as he lowers himself back to the bed, still buried deep inside of her. I give them a moment as my eyes rake over her. The flush from earlier now covers her chest as it rises and falls rapidly. Her fingers bite into the skin of his thighs, where she grips him for purchase.

"Eyes on me."

My words come out sharp, and her eyes fly open, landing on mine.

I hadn't even realized I'd stopped moving, so taken in by the sight of her with Desmond. But now that I have her attention again, I fall back into my movements. Unbuckling my belt, I pull it free with a snap, letting it fall to the floor and stepping out of my shoes. Slowly, I unbutton my pants, feeling her hungry gaze on me.

Could I move faster?

Fuck yes, I could, but where's the fun in that?

Desmond couldn't wait to bury his cock in her, and while I can't blame him, I also don't feel any pity for him while her delicious pussy tries to squeeze the life from him. He'd had no problem putting her on display, making me watch, and pushing me. So now he can suffer, or come like a teenager. Either way, it doesn't bother me.

I step out of my pants before retrieving them from the ground. Desmond's eyes burn a hole in my head as he lets out a growl of frustration, knowing I'm purposefully taking my time.

"I think he needs some motivation, Gorgeous," Desmond says with a dark chuckle. One I know all too well means trouble.

With his hands still gripping her waist, he slowly pushes her forward, grinding her on his cock. His eyes roll back at the feel of her, and I'm beginning to regret my choice of order. The need to delay and tease goes out the window as her mouth drops open, and I remember why I picked it first.

I make quick work of my boxers, kneeling on the end of the bed. Without a word, Desmond moves so his back rests against the wall.

"Lean forward for Alex," Desmond tells her with a tap to her ass that has her moving in a flash.

Fuck, she's so compliant, so responsive. She has no idea who we are, what we do, or the lives we live. She's innocent, with just enough of a bratty streak to be fun. Something about that mix is appealing. It makes me want to both shelter her from us and corrupt her. I don't even have to ask Desmond to know he feels the same. I've seen his battle for control raging since he saw her at the bar. He's putty in her hand, something I've never seen before.

She's dangerous, in the most delicious way, and I think it's already too late for us to turn back.

Up on my knees, I look down at her to find her peeking up at me through her lashes. Her eyes dart to my cock that throbs from just the weight of her gaze. Desmond pulls her hips back before pressing her forward again, and I feel her breath rolling over my cock as she lets out a needy moan. I grip my cock, stroking it as she watches, and her moan turns into a groan as she watches a drop of pre-cum bead on my head.

I watch in what feels like slow motion as her tongue darts out to catch it before she lets out a pleased hum and licks her lips.

There's that bratty streak again, the one that's going to get her ass turned red if she isn't careful.

As wonderful as that visual is, it will have to wait for later. Right now, I need to feel those lips wrap around my cock before I lose my mind.

I shift forward so that she won't have to reach as far, and the second I do, her mouth falls open, giving me access. Her lips

mold to the head of my cock as they glide over my length, her tongue pressing up to the sensitive underside, and I reach out to tangle my hand in her beautiful red waves.

She moves slowly, taking me deeper and deeper—inch by agonizing inch. I’m torn between pressing forward to take her mouth as far as I can and enjoying the sweet torture. I’m not sure what I expected, but I find myself pleasantly surprised as her nose presses to my pelvis. I’m buried so far into her mouth that I almost lose it when she swallows, and I feel her throat grip my head.

“Fuck...” Desmond groans, putting to words perfectly the way I’m feeling. I imagine the sight, from his view, is delicious, but he has no idea, at least not yet.

“You’re just full of surprises, huh?” he asks, even though he’s well aware of her inability to answer. She hums in response, and the vibration makes my balls tighten as my release presses closer to the surface.

I clench my jaw, my molars pressing together hard enough that I wouldn’t be surprised if I bust a tooth, as I suck in a sharp breath through my teeth. It helps, but it won’t work forever, and I’ll be damned if I miss out on a chance to fuck her pretty little mouth.

My fingers flex in her hair, raking along her scalp as I pull back, intent on doing just that. I feel her jaw go slack, her breath coming harder out of her nose, ready, waiting, craving more the same way we are.

Innocence be damned. She feels like she was fucking made for this, for us.

I look up to find Desmond's eyes on me. We've shared enough women in the past to have this down to a science. We don't need to talk. We can have an entire conversation with just a few simple looks, and I know he understands when a smirk curves his lips. I pull back far enough that only the head of my cock is still in her mouth before Desmond lifts her hips. He slams up into her with a bruising force that has her mouth falling open in a scream that I'm more than happy to silence.

We set a punishing pace, fucking into her mouth and pussy at the same time, and my only regret is that I can't hear the delicious sounds she's making. The tears that leak from her eyes as she looks up at me make up for it, though, pushing me closer to the edge as she moans. Her hips rock of their own accord as she chases her release.

"Fuck me!" Desmond curses, letting his hips drop back to the bed so that she can ride him, his eyes narrowing as he watches her take pleasure from him. His hands grip her waist much the same way mine tangle in her hair.

"You're close, baby. I can feel it. Feel the way your walls are strangling my cock. It's the most heavenly torture." Desmond hisses, painting a mental image in my head that does nothing to help me.

"I bet your mouth feels just as good. I can't wait to feel you choke on my cock. Have you swallow me as I come down that beautiful throat."

Desperate, filthy noises fall from her lips at his words, her eyes scrunching up.

I won't last much longer. I've been holding back my release since the second her lips touched me, and every second since then has been a miracle and a testament to my need to see her fall apart.

"Come for us." I bark, unable to keep the demand from my words. Desmond grinds her forward at the same moment. I'm not sure if it's my words or the buildup of pleasure, but she fucking shatters.

Her eyes rolling back into her head, her throat closing around my cock, and I'm done for. I come hard enough that spots dot my vision. My cock's buried so deep in her throat that she has no choice but to swallow every last drop. Her breathing starts to even out, her body no longer shaking by the time I've regained some sense. Yet she makes no move to pull back, seeming content with letting my cock live in her mouth if I so choose.

Fuck, if that's not the most tempting thought I've ever had before. I hesitate a moment, burning the image of her like this into my brain before I reluctantly pull back, my still semi-hard cock falling from her lips with a pop. A line of saliva stretches from her lip, keeping us connected. It shouldn't be arousing, but my cock throbs to life again. My eyes meet hers, and I find them hooded, happy, and satisfied, but her pupils are still blown wide, letting me know she has no issue with doing this again.

That's good, because once definitely wasn't enough. Hell, I'm not sure there's a number I can think of that will leave me not craving her.

Desmond sighs, pulling my attention to him as his arm circles her waist before turning them on the bed. Her head hits the pillow next to him as he spoons her, nuzzling into her neck, dropping kisses and little bites anywhere he can reach, his cock still buried deep inside of her.

Fucker.

"That was..." Katherine says with a sigh, as if she can't think of a word, and I can't even help her. My own brain is unable to find a word worthy of that. Desmond seems to have no issues, though.

"Amazing, phenomenal, wonderful, breathtaking..." he offers lazily, making her chuckle.

"Only the beginning," I say, making both of their eyes fly to me.

"Oh, she likes that." Desmond trails a hand up her side, and she shudders, but I don't think it has anything to do with the temperature this time.

"Do you want more, Gorgeous? Want to let Alex feel the way this pretty pussy can grip his cock?" His hand continues down her side, fingers tracing a path lower before they disappear between her thighs.

Her sharp intake of breath lets me know exactly what he's doing, but it's not enough. Reaching out, I grip her thigh,

pulling her leg up so that I can watch. She doesn't fight it. Instead, tucking her leg back behind Desmond's, holding them open for me like a good fucking girl.

Desmond's cock is still buried inside of her, and with this angle, I can see her walls as they throb around him, begging for more. Desmond's fingers are shiny with her cum as he rubs slow, teasing circles on her clit.

A growl works its way out of my throat at the sight, and I'm moving purely in need.

Reaching out, I wrap my fingers around her other ankle before I tug her down the bed toward me.

She yelps in surprise, but the smile on her face lets me know she doesn't mind. Desmond's cock pops free, and he groans in annoyance. But I don't give him a second thought. He can clean himself up and join us or lie there and whine; it doesn't matter to me either way. What does matter is my need to taste her, devour her with my tongue until she's begging for me to fuck her.

Her smile disappears the second my tongue presses to her entrance. Her teeth dig into her bottom lip, and her back arches off the bed as I lick up to her clit. My fingers dig into the plush skin of her thigh as I flick my tongue over her clit, once, twice, teasingly. Her thighs press against my hands as she tries and fails to press them closed, just like I knew she would.

Her resistance only fuels me. Releasing her legs, I move so that my shoulder holds her instead. My lips close around her clit as I press two fingers into her, curling them up to hit the

soft spot inside of her I know will drive her wild. A strangled shout rips its way from her throat, her fingers threading in my hair with a tug as her walls clamp down on my fingers.

I knew it would be easy. She was still coming down from her last orgasm, leaving her sensitive and more than ready for me. Her body's wound tight as waves of pleasure shoot through her. But I don't let up, instead sucking harder as I press my tongue to the sensitive bundle of nerves.

Her back arches impossibly higher, her shout turns to a scream before it cuts off altogether, and her body goes slack in my hold. She crashes back down onto the bed, gasping for air, looking as though she might pass out at any moment. I release her clit, but I need one last taste. The gentle press of my tongue causes her breath to catch and her legs to tremble, and I can't help but huff a laugh.

"Share," Desmond says, leaning across the bed and hooking his hands under her arms before yanking her down the bed toward him. I huff again at his dramatics, but I get it. I can't keep my hands off of her, either.

I'm off the bed and across the room the next second, grabbing a condom from the bowl on top of the bar. Bringing it to my mouth, I tear it open as I walk back to the bed, my eyes never leaving her. Desmond bends over her, softly kissing her forehead as she gets control of her breathing again. It's such a strange sight. It twists my stomach seeing it, but not in a bad way.

Climbing back on the bed, I crawl toward them before rolling the condom on, waiting and ready.

“Have you ever been face fucked, baby?” Desmond asks her, his hand coming up to cup her face, his thumb stroking her cheekbone tenderly.

Katherine’s eyes widen slightly before she shakes her head, and a feral grin splits Desmond’s lips.

“Would you like to be?” he asks, his words coming out even, but his eyes beg her to say yes.

She hesitates for a moment, and I see her throat work as she swallows. After a moment, she nods and if I’d thought Desmond’s grin was feral before, it’s downright unhinged now.

“Such a good girl for us,” he all but purrs, dropping a kiss to her nose that leaves her smiling. “I’m going to pull your head off the side of the bed. It will make it easier for you. It helps open your throat,” he tells her, reaching down to grab her hand before bringing it up over her head and resting it on his thigh.

“If, for whatever reason, you don’t want to do it anymore. You’re uncomfortable, don’t like it, or just want to stop. Just give me a pinch, and that’s it.” His eyes burn into hers as he looks down at her.

“Understand?” The ring of authority in his tone has her squirming on the bed.

“Yes,” she says. It’s hardly more than a whisper, but it might as well have been a gunshot signaling the start of a race with

the adrenaline it sends shooting through me.

Desmond pulls up to stand, once again wrapping his hands under her arms to pull her head up and off the bed. He doesn't need to say more. The second her head is level with his cock, she wraps her lips around him, making him curse as his eyes screw closed.

Yeah, that mouth is a thing of beauty, just like the rest of her.

Desmond's hips snap forward, and I watch, waiting to see how she handles it before I bury myself in her pussy and lose myself. She's got about half of him in her mouth before he slowly inches forward. I can see the strain it puts on him to go so slowly. I know he's bottomed out when he throws his head back with a drawn-out groan.

He stays there for a moment, before pulling back, letting her get a breath and edging back in, testing what she can take. Our eyes roam over her body as he bottoms out again. I can't look away from her throat as she swallows him down, her throat bobbing, the swell of his cock visible.

He gives another few pumps without complaint, and I take that as a green light.

I move forward between her legs. Reaching down, I grip both of her calves, lifting her legs so that her ass is just off the bed. Her legs rest against my chest, knees bent just over my shoulders, giving me the perfect view of her pussy. Gripping my cock, I press it to her wetness, sliding it up to press against her clit before I move back down to her entrance and thrust forward.

Her walls grip me harder before I'm fully inside of her, and by the time I'm fully in, my balls are ready to burst. Desmond wasn't joking when he said she gripped him, because fuck me, she's tight.

Ignoring my growing release, I pull out before thrusting into her again with enough force to rock her body and forcing her back down on Desmond's cock.

"Oh man, I don't know how you lasted with her lips wrapped around you because I'm about two seconds from coming like a teenage boy who just saw his first tit, and I'm not even ashamed," Desmond says, his words strained as he battles his release the same as me.

Instead of answering him, I pull back, rocking her with me so that she slams forward again and again. Desmond's control finally snaps after the third time. Leaning forward, his hands fall to her tits, palming the soft skin and tweaking her nipples, making her moan and writhe between us. He uses his hold on her to anchor her to the bed and stops my thrusts from shoving her down onto his cock.

"Asshole," he growls, but the smirk on his face says he isn't too torn up about it.

This time when I thrust into her, he does the same, matching my pace so that we both fuck into her at the same time. It doesn't take long before I feel her body begin to tense. Her heels dig into my back, spurring me on as I fuck into her faster, harder. I lift her hips higher, the change in angle allowing me to press deeper.

“Fuck!”

Desmond groans as he slams into her three more times before he stills, his shoulders rising and falling as if he just ran a marathon.

Wrapping my arm around her leg, I press my thumb to her clit before I lazily begin circling it. I move slowly at first, but with every snap of my hips, I increase my pace.

I know the second his cock leaves her mouth, no longer muffling the sounds she makes, and fuck, are they some of the best sounds I’ve ever heard. Desmond moves onto the bed beside her, leaning down to catch one of her nipples between his teeth. Her walls clamp down so fucking hard around me, I lose my rhythm as her orgasm racks through her body, leaving me with no choice, but to follow her over the edge.

My body’s drained, as if every bit of energy left with my release. Desmond sits back with a self-satisfied smile on his lips as I reach up, unhooking her legs from around my shoulders. I gently pull her body toward me so that her head no longer hangs off the side of the bed.

Her cheeks are red, either from her orgasm or the blood flowing to her head, but a soft smile curves her lips. Her eyes are closed, almost making it look as though she’s asleep. Someone who was just so thoroughly fucked shouldn’t be able to look so adorable. Yet here we are.

I’m not sure what comes over me. Before I can think better of it, I’m leaning over her, my arms caging her in on either side as I press my lips to hers in a gentle kiss. The smile on her

face doubles in size, and I feel my lips pull up to match hers as her eyes flutter open.

Desmond makes a sound from beside us, but I ignore him and his shocked huff. I don't need to look at him to know what caused it, and I don't want to look too deep into myself.

I don't do gentle kisses, or soft touches like that. Kissing while you fuck is completely different compared to a soft kiss after you've fucked. That kind of thing muddies the water and forms ties and connections that we usually try to avoid.

I know that.

Desmond knows that.

We all know that, but I still couldn't stop myself. Even now, I wouldn't change it. Hell, I'm about two seconds from doing it again with the way she's looking at me.

“Alright, Gorgeous, let's go.”

Desmond scoops her up in his arms, crawling back to the head of the bed and resting her head on the mound of pillows. Together, we pull the blankets down before I crawl in beside her on one side, and Desmond does the same on the other.

None of us bother to grab our clothes. The pool house is warm enough, and with the plush blankets, we are more likely to get hot at night than cold.

“Goodnight,” Katherine mumbles, sounding already half asleep.

“Night, Red.”

“Sweet dreams, Gorgeous.”

We both say in unison.

Desmond kisses her forehead, rolling his eyes when his gaze meets mine over her head. But I don't say anything. How can I when not five minutes ago I'd done something not so different?

I tuck my arm under Katherine's head, wrapping the other around her waist and pulling her close to me. She hums and nuzzles her head against my chest. Desmond scoots down so that he can rest his head on her chest, using her tits as his own personal pillows.

I feel more than hear her chuckle before she wraps her arm around him, her fingers digging into his hair, brushing it back out of his face. He lets out a sigh, and if we weren't already fucked, we are now.

We don't cuddle like this, and Desmond doesn't sleep in people's arms while they play with his hair. He didn't get his bad-boy reputation for nothing.

The most a girl can hope for is us falling asleep in the bed, either from the sex or the booze, but we make sure we're gone before they wake. It's part of the reason we use the pool house. They have somewhere to sleep it off, and we can have a car ready for them in the morning and keep everything clean. At this point, we can just add it to the list, which is growing at an alarming rate. Something tells me this is just the beginning, though.

But that's a problem for tomorrow. Right now, with her in my arms and my balls drained, all I want is some sleep.



A knock on the door pulls me from my sleep. My arm is dead fucking weight where it rests under Katherine's head, but it will be worth the pins and needles. Her red hair is like a fire, spread out and wild around the pillows, down her back and over her shoulders. Propping myself up carefully to not wake her, I look down and find Desmond's head still on her chest. They both look so content. Her fingers still twisted up in his hair.

She's fucking breathtaking.

Another knock sounds, pulling me from my thoughts. The staff knows better than to come out here unless we're needed. But even knowing that it's not enough to make me get up. Reaching around her carefully, I shove Desmond's shoulder hard enough that he rolls right off of her onto his back. He's not awake, yet, but his eyes flutter with movement.

"Desmond," I keep my voice low but biting and watch in satisfaction as his eyes pop open.

He blinks hard against the morning light streaming through the window by the door.

"Get the door," I tell him, nodding in that direction.

His brows scrunch up in confusion, but before he can say anything, another knock sounds, and I watch his face drop to a

scowl. With a huff, he rolls to the end of the bed before walking to the door as naked as the day he was born, and pulling it open with a yawn.

“Sir,” a voice squeaks on the other side of the door. I know it’s one of the maids, but I can’t tell which with their voice so many octaves higher than usual.

“What?” Desmond whisper shouts, taking a step back from the no doubt cold air that’s blowing in from outside.

“Um.. oh.. The master sent me to see if you and Master Alex were out here,” she stutters, clearly caught off guard by Desmond’s appearance.

“Well, you found us,” Desmond says, annoyance clear as he moves to close the door again. He’s not a morning person, and I can’t imagine freezing his balls off is helping to improve that.

“Your sister is asking for you, for the both of you.” Her words come out in a rush as the door swings closed. He catches it a moment before it shuts, peeking his head around the door to look out at the women outside.

“We’ll be there in a moment,” he tells her before quietly pressing the door closed. The second it’s shut, he shivers, cupping his hands before his face to breathe warmth back into them.

“You heard her,” he says as he walks around the room, kicking up discarded clothes in a half-assed search for his.

I can't help but groan as I slowly work my arm out from under Katherine. I'd had no plans to move unless it was to bury myself inside of her again. Of course, the maid had to say the one thing that could put a wrench in that plan.

We dress quickly, neither of us saying much as we go. We collect Katherine's clothes and set them out on the end of the bed for her. More than once, I find my eyes drawn to her, and I have to fight the urge to crawl back into the bed with her, even just for a moment. It's not a feeling I'm used to, and I'm unsure if I'm grateful to ignore it or upset that I don't get to explore it.

Once we've dressed, we head out, careful to stay quiet. Just because we have to be awake doesn't mean she does.

"We'll have one of the staff bring out food for her in case she wakes up," Desmond says as we head down the path toward the front of the house. I nod in agreement, unsure of what else to do. It's never something we worry about. Once we're done with our night, it's up to them what they do for themselves. But something about this time feels different. Clearly, whatever it is, Desmond feels it too.

Damn, my fingers itch for a cigarette, but I resist the urge knowing I don't have enough time to enjoy it before we hit the house.

We're going to have to have a talk with my brother about this.



Before I even open my eyes, I know I drank too much last night. My head is pounding, and even birds chirping outside the window seem too loud.

Shouldn't they be hiding from the cold instead of torturing me?

With a huff, I push up the bed before peeling my eyes open. Unsurprisingly, they're both gone. I hadn't exactly expected them to stay, but it still seems a bit strange, considering this is their place and not mine.

Oh well, the details really don't matter much. Last night was fun, and that's all it was meant to be. Despite my pounding head and not-so-happy stomach, I feel lighter, as if I dropped an invisible weight. This is a good thing, exactly what I needed to make a fresh start here. Taking my time, I collect my things, or most of them. can't find my underwear despite looking all over. Thinking back, I can't even be sure I put them on to begin with, though even if I had, it's not a huge

loss. It's not until I have a seat at the small table to put on my boots that I notice the tray of food on top of it.

A smile tugs at my lips at the thoughtfulness of the gesture, and though I'm not even the least bit hungry right now, I still appreciate it. I force down the orange juice just for the sake of having something in my stomach. If I do end up throwing up, I would much rather my stomach not be empty. Setting my now empty cup back on the table, I find a piece of paper I hadn't noticed before. The writing is sloppy, as if written in a rush, but still legible. Unfortunately, the cup didn't do it any favors. The condensation from the glass smeared what I can only assume was once a phone number.

That's fine, though. Last night was a one-time thing. I'm not looking to be tied down, and with how easily they shared last night, I can only guess they aren't really either. Not to mention, they have more than enough women to choose from. They might have given me attention last night, but it wasn't for lack of options. The girls in that club would have pounced on them had they had the chance.

The cup only did me a favor and took the option from me.

My phone dings with a notification from my Uber driver, letting me know they are out front. With one more deep breath, I brace myself for the cold I know will hit me when I open the door.

Fuck, I hate the cold.

The snow might be beautiful, but I could live without the bone-deep chill it brings. A shiver racks through my body,

leaving me trembling as I make my way down the path, and I send a silent thanks to the universe that someone was kind enough to shovel the walkway. Nothing is worse than snow getting in your shoes, and with how deep it is back here, that for sure would have happened.

Even with the chill, I can't help but look around. The yard is huge, and now, without the alcohol and the dark, I can see the house just down a separate path to my right. It's beautiful. Desmond had said we were going back to the pool house where he liked to hang out last night. I hadn't thought much of it in the heat of the moment, but when I woke up, I'd been shocked by just how nice it was for being only a pool house. Seeing the main house helps me understand it better. It's not a house at all. It's a whole damn mansion.

The would-be pool house is probably better than whatever apartment I'm going to find myself in...

My random thoughts and appreciation of the scenery are cut short as laughter bounces off the high-privacy walls that run to my left. I freeze in place, and it has nothing to do with the wintry day.

I've been a teacher for just over three years now, and there's no mistaking the sound I just heard. Despite that, I *want* to be wrong.

"Daddy..." A little girl's voice rings out, "make snow angels with me!" she demands before laughing again.

Shit.

My feet are moving before my brain has time to catch up as I run down the path toward the gate. I almost slam into it as my feet hit a patch of ice, but somehow, I manage to get it open and stay upright.

Turning around to close it behind me, my eyes meet Alex's across the yard. I watch as a smile tugs at his lips. His hand comes up as if to wave at me, but before he can, a small girl bundled up in winter gear is pulling it back down as she attempts to drag him through the yard.

"Snow angels!" She demands in a high, whiny voice, and I watch as he shakes his head but follows her all the same. It's adorable, even if it tears my heart out to watch.

"Dear," another voice calls out, and the rapid beat of my heart drowns anything else out as it pounds in my ears.

That isn't a child, regardless of how very female it is.

The next thing I know, I'm in the Uber. I don't even remember getting in, but somehow I managed. I keep my eyes fixed on the house, even as they unfocus, as it slowly disappears behind us, and my stomach knots, but it has nothing to do with the alcohol from last night.

I should have known better than to believe two good-looking guys like that would want just a random hook-up. The pool house should have made it clear, but I'd been stupid. I was so lost in my heartbreak that I might have just caused someone else's. I'd let my hurt cloud my judgment and made me the very thing I hated.

I'd become the other woman.

Fuck, so much for New York being a fresh start.



Well, that won't be the end of that, I'm sure...

Turn the page to see what Katherine is up to

6 months later in Chapter 1 of

Beneficial Misfortune

FIRST LOOK AT
BENEFICIAL MISFORTUNE
THE LAWSON LEGACY | BOOK I

Chapter 1 - Katherine

Who would have thought six months ago my life was falling apart? Now, I sit on the subway and head back to my apartment, which I can now afford all on my own.

I'd thought Carter had ruined my life, but I was wrong. If anything, he set me free. It's crazy to think I hated him, and now I'm grateful.

The thought of still being with him, running between New York and Maine just to keep our relationship going, makes my stomach roll. Looking back, I can see all the red flags I'd been blind to when I thought he loved me. I would have done anything for him; I did. I put who I was in a little box until it fit what he wanted and doing so lost not just myself but my drive.

Now, I'm working my dream job and providing for myself. I'm so busy I don't even have time to be lonely, but on those rare nights when I lay alone in bed, it's not him my mind wanders to.

No, it's Alex and Desmond and the night we had when I first came to town.

I can feel my cheeks heat at the memory, even though it's close to eighty degrees today. Thankfully, the air in here isn't as hot as the platforms, but I push the memory aside all the same. The last thing I need is to work myself up and pass out from the heat, especially not in this neighborhood.

I get off at my stop and pull out my phone as it dings, letting me know I just got a new email. Usually, I'd wait till I got home, but I know the route by heart now, and I've been waiting for an email all week.

I applied to teach at this year's Summer on the Hill program, and this week, they are supposed to let the teacher who got picked know. If I don't get picked, I'll be bummed, but I made sure to save enough to get me through with rent until the new school year starts, but it'll be tight. Not to mention, I have nothing better to do, and I really love my class. It would be amazing to get a few more weeks with them before they go to the next grade.

I hadn't realized how hard it would be to let my students go. Don't get me wrong, I love my job, and I have a few students who are less than ideal some days. But at the end of the day, they are all smart and funny and only children. I can't say I loved school every day at that age, either.

My eyes fly over the email as I pull it open, not really absorbing much of what I'm reading until I hit the one thing I'd been praying for.

'Congratulations, we're thrilled to inform you that you will be joining us for this year's 'Summer on the Hill' program.'

I stop dead in the middle of the sidewalk, making the person behind me run into me. I jolt forward, almost dropping my phone as he grumbles about what a dumbass I am, but I couldn't care less as I read the message again just to be sure I didn't imagine it.

I read it three times before it really sinks in and I can move again. I all but skip the rest of my apartment even though it's hot and everyone around me is crabby I feel like I just won the lotto.

Thank god Carter was a piece of shit.



Beneficial Misfortune

Coming 2024!

Afterword

Well, that was fun! Right?

The Lawson Legacy Series is coming later in 2024, and I have so much fun planned for them!

Originally, their one-night stand was meant to be something that was covered later through a flashback, but it was too hot to pass up and fit into the holiday season so well... It demanded I write it.

So that's what I did, and I'm not sorry because it will only get hotter from here.

Make sure you preorder or join the FB group if you want to be in the know about book one because we have more men to meet, and boyyyyyy, are they yummy in the best way.

Of course, I have some twists and turns planned out for you, and while this isn't my typical style so far, I can't say I'm not loving the idea of a FMC who is just a little softer. It gives her men more room to protect her,

which I'm here for!

Love you all lots and thank you for reading! <3

Also By Sara Hinds

Vengeance City:

Vengeance & Sin

Betrayal & Deception

Sacrifice & Redemption

Beasts of Extinction:

Shaped by Destiny

Shaped by Discovery (Coming 2024)

Roommates from Hell:

Running from Nightmares (Coming 2024)

The Lawson Legacy:

Beneficial Misfortune (Coming 2024)

Stalk Me!

Stalk me, don't worry, I like it! ;)

Want the latest on all my books in this series and my
upcoming projects?

Come hang out with me on all my socials and join the
Readers Group on Facebook!

I love hearing from everyone and sharing my newest ideas
or just random thoughts with everyone!



About Sara Hinds

I'm an author who might be just a bit obsessed with the world of Reverse Harem.

My love for reading goes back as far as I can remember. When I was growing up, my mom

used to get mad when I asked for a new book, "How do I say no to that?" She'd ask me.

Well, the answer is she didn't.

From Manga to all the way up to smut I'll take it all, and of course all the men!

I live in Michigan with my husband, three boys, and a few spoiled pets with the dream of owning a goat.

When I'm not spending time with my family, you can find me reading or writing, usually with a Red Bull in

hand. I'm known to go and go, but a good book can easily put me down until I'm done with it.

I also enjoy anime, adventure, sleep in no specific order, and of course, being weird with people I love <3