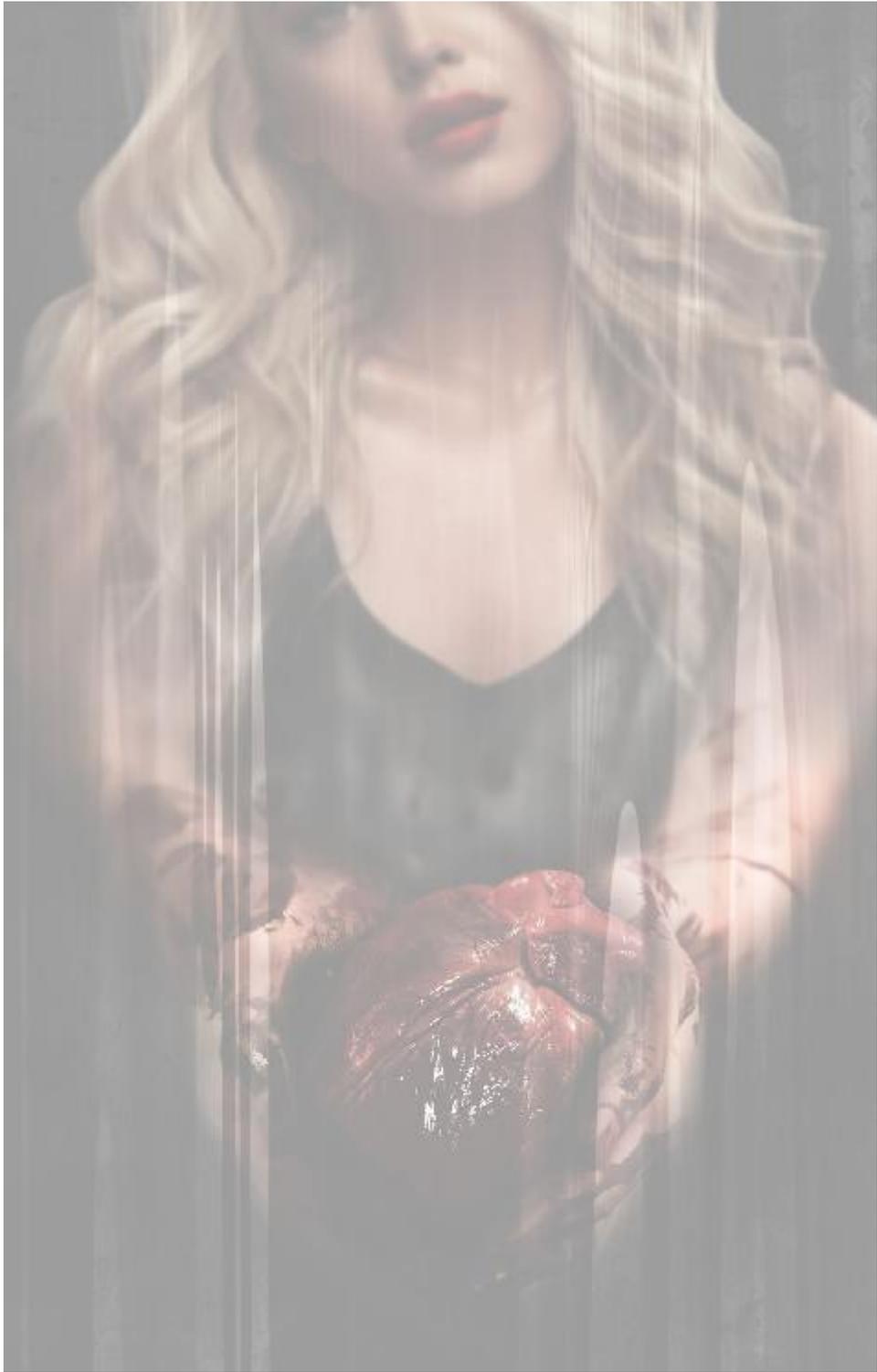
A woman with long, wavy blonde hair and red lipstick is shown from the chest up. She is holding a large, bloody, and glistening heart in her hands. The background is dark and moody, with some light reflecting off her hair and the heart. The overall tone is dark and sensual.

WREAKING HAVOC ON MY HEART

A Brutal Babes Novella

T.R. OLDIN



*THERE'S A STORY I'D LIKE TO TELL
ABOUT THE NICE GIRL WHO JUST WANTED TO YELL.*

*SHE WAS TORN IN TWO,
BUT REFUSED TO BE UNTRUE.*

*A BATTLE FOR HER HEART BEGAN,
BETWEEN TWO MEN DETERMINED TO BE HER MAN.
THEY FOUGHT AND BICKERED,
BUT THEY BOTH REFUSED TO PULL THE TRIGGER.*

*WHEN THEY FINALLY CAME TOGETHER,
THEY REALIZED TWO WAS FOR THE BETTER.
EXCEPT SOME HAD SECRET DESIRES,
AND REFUSED TO LET THEM TRANSPIRE.*

*WHEN PUT TO THE TEST,
HE WAS TOO STUBBORN TO PROGRESS.
ONLY WHEN HIS LIFE WAS ON THE LINE,
WAS HE ABLE TO CONFESS THAT THEY BOTH WERE
MINE*

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Content Note

Alright, here we go again. First things first, if you're family please walk away. Put this down, back up slowly, and forget your eyes ever graced this masterpiece because it's not for you!!!

Now that that's out of the way, lets talk about some of the things you might find in this book. As usual, my books contain dark themes and a few possible triggers that include but are not limited to the following: There will be mention of child death by cancer, spousal death, emotional manipulation, and abuse. There will be a mention of an eating disorder. This book will also contain on page violence and some of it can happen to the main characters. No one will be safe until the end of the series!

There will be a lot of BDSM play including but not limited to: rope play, bondage, flogging, whips, pain play, egding, overstimulation, all the toys, and more. This is an MFM romance but could possibly explore MMF themes.

This novella is not a standalone and must be read after Mafie Kings and Mafie Trials. It is considered 2.5 because there will be things that happen here that tie into book three of the Brutal Boys of the Mafie series. It starts off right where Mafie Trials began.

For everyone who feels like the side character in a novel, the ones that never get put first, this one's for you.

Your story matters too!



Prologue

4 years ago

I can feel my hands going numb. The metal shackles holding me suspended are really unforgiving when it comes to nerve damage. Although I have to admit, when I'm torturing someone, their comfort isn't really my priority, either.

This idiot has already given me everything I need, and E is less than five seconds away from breaking down the doors to rescue me. She's the only one I wanted on this mission anyway. She's the only one I could trust with my family's information.

Right on time, the door breaks down and a silver-haired spitfire makes her way to the asshole that tied me up here like an amateur. *Is it really so much to ask men to learn a little class when torturing someone?*

His blood is still spraying at my feet as Evie pulls the lever to let me loose. I grin at her, but the usual maniac smile we share when we wrap up a job like this is nowhere to be seen.

“We need to go,” she says, real worry in her tone. She’s never concerned like this; she’s always one step ahead. Her sudden change has the hair on the back of my neck standing up.

“What is it, E?”

“Vi—she didn’t send me a message at the hour mark. I can’t get into the cameras at your house either.”

My wife, Vi or Vinny, has been struggling with depression since we lost our daughter to cancer a month ago. She’s been turning to drugs and getting involved with some not-so-great people. And if I think they aren’t so great, that’s saying something.

“Did the cameras get cut off, or were they turned off?” E shakes her head.

“I don’t know.”

Fuck.

I’m already at the door before I have a chance to call for the cleanup crew. Normally, I’d do it myself, but not when my wife’s safety is on the line.

E throws the keys to her stolen vehicle at me as we round the side of the warehouse. The only reason I took this job was because it wasn’t far from the house. I was able to have E keep an eye on Vi outside while I got the information we needed inside. It only took three hours, so if something went wrong it means someone had eyes on the house before today.

Fuck . Fuck. Fuck.

I slam the door to the car as we get in and E buckles in, knowing this is going to be a bumpy ride. The warehouse is situated back in the woods at the base of a mountain and is only accessible through a path in the dirt. The jeep she stole may be equipped to handle the terrain, but it doesn’t make it comfortable.

Once out on the mountain roads, I take the turns at a fast pace, making E grab onto the oh shit handle more than a few times. I'm not worried anyone could be following us, the marks crew was small enough that E could take them all out while I was busy with their leader as he 'tortured' me. If you could even really call it that.

As we get closer to the house, I keep glancing at E as she types on her computer. My unease only heightens when she's unable to hack back into my security system that's apparently been hijacked. She's one of the best at this, trained by our very own. If she can't get in, then someone must have disabled everything and shut off the power to the house and the backup generators.

Her silence stretches out, making the air around us grow thick with anxiety. That's how I know it's bad. If she's not talking—if we aren't both making an effort to help each other's lives feel less like shit, then a real storm is coming.

I skid into the driveway, the wheels sliding on the gravel in front of the house. Our seatbelts dig into our necks, but E doesn't complain and I refuse to acknowledge discomfort right now.

My heart is racing as I open my door and run to the house. The front is full of large glass windows, and I immediately fall to my knees before I can even enter the door. E has her gun ready, a blade in hand as she enters ahead of me. My vision blurs and I swear my lungs turn to dust. There's blood streaking the windows, dripping down to look like something out of a Halloween Horror film and not my actual reality. My brain threatens to shut down in shock, and for a moment I actually black out.

Losing our daughter was hard. The pain of seeing her so sick for so long hurt just as much as the agony of losing her. I was able to find ways to cope and heal, but my wife wasn't so fortunate.

She was the one who spent every day in the hospital with Ellie while I worked. When we lost her, it was like my wife died that day too. Vi always had this spark about her. She was

literally running through a field of flowers when we met. I thought she was a figment of my imagination from how angelic she looked in that moment.

Vi floated through life with an air about her that made every bad feeling in my chest melt away. She was the reason I could do this job in the first place. I killed her father, who had been abusing her since she was just a small child, and her world seemed to open up before both our eyes after that moment.

When we lost Ellie, though, it was like the Vi I knew disappeared. Her eyes were constantly filled with a darkness I didn't know was possible. She would sit in Ellie's room and stare out the window for hours. Permanent dark circles formed on her face and I watched as she became a shell of a person.

She stopped doing anything for herself, and I coped in my own way by disappearing into my work. I wasn't there for her. So, I wasn't surprised when she turned to drugs, even though it broke my heart even more. I couldn't be around to see them ruin her the same way the cancer seemed to ruin Ellie.

My heart constricts remembering the day our daughter was born. Flashes of all the good times fly through my head like a movie. Their smiles, their matching flower dresses, their laughter. I already know I'll never hear it again.

I watch as E enters the house. I already know what she's going to find but still look up with hope in my eyes when she comes out to my side. Maybe the scene isn't as bad as it looks from the outside. Maybe Vi fought back and she's in there just fine.

But I know I'm grasping at straws when E kneels next to me. One thing E and I rarely do is share physical touch with each other, and we are never gentle. I don't want anything to look like I'm interested in her because I don't want any other man thinking they can do the same. Besides, neither of us needs to be gentle. We need ruthless honesty. We need to get our hurt out so we don't hurt each other. So, when she takes my hand in hers and squeezes it, I fully black out.

I don't remember running to Vi. Or holding her in my arms as I cried countless apologies. I don't feel E helping me to the

car and out of my bloody shirt. I have no memory of us burying her or anything that came along with it. My mind tries to protect me from the guilt of telling my best friend that I needed some time off.

But I do remember the killing spree I went on in the name of vengeance. I can still feel the blood coating my fingers as it dripped from the dealer's throat who took her from me. I remember the cries for mercy. There was satisfaction when his bones crunched beneath my boot, and it only elevated the high of the kill when I felt their flesh being flayed open by my blade.

I remember cutting his ears off, then slicing just below to build the pressure in his brain, driving him slowly toward insanity. The sound of my laughter in his face as he cried. Then, I made sure to paint his blood around his home and every single one of the men who helped him the same way they had done to Vi.

E was there for all of it, my personal clean-up crew she would say. I never had to talk or explain my next move; she was just always there. She fought with me. Held men down so I could take my time with killing them. E made hell look like a vacation in the wake of their deaths.

I owe her everything; I love her like the only family I've got left.



Chapter 1

Present

Water forces itself into my lungs as I gasp for air. When the damn boat ran out of gas three miles from shore, I never thought I'd make it but I'm so close now.

My stomach knots as I advance on the island, pushing every muscle to the limit as I try to get to E. I have to save her from her twisted as fuck uncle. The man I thought was my best friend. I try not to think about everything I found and just focus on her. The only one who was really there for me after I lost my wife.

The girl who cleaned me up from drunken rage fights countless times. The one who understood and never once judged me. The girl I look to as a sister.

I will protect her. I cannot lose anyone else.

The second I reach the shore, I cough up the rough sea water that forced its way into my lungs as I powered through the waves. Collapsing on the sand, I allow myself exactly sixty seconds before grabbing my phone and orienting my mind to the island. Once I have a vague idea of the terrain, based on the intel from the damn tracker Adrik put in her, I head toward the place it seems like she's been staying.

As I make my way to her quarters I notice just how many things the island is equipped with. A full-on war could take place here with the amount of supplies this place has.

Carefully I walk around the building to check for surveillance. I find two cameras and disable them with a program on my phone before moving in. Thank fuck someone thought to create waterproof phones. It's saved me countless times.

I pick the lock easily and enter the suite to find blood coating the center of the floor. My knees weaken, but I don't let myself fall. I know they have a hospital here. I need to know if someone found her in time. Adrik had a fit a few weeks back about her liking someone here. I was so happy for her and confused as to why he was acting like that. I put it aside and assumed it was just the caring uncle, but no.

As I make my way to the hospital, I'm thankful there are signs posted in various locations to help those in attendance here. The island is eerily quiet though, and I find it strange students aren't out at this time of night. The dorms I pass are silent. It's almost as if no one is here at all.

That is, until I make it to the medical center. I look through the glass, and I overhear vague reports through a cracked window about a girl who nearly died. They go into extensive detail, and it's only then I notice I'm by the physician's office, listening while he recounts his notes from the surgery. I make a mental note of every detail, and my chest hurts in a way it hasn't in years.

I was too late.

I turn around searching for another way in when I catch a glimpse of blonde hair. Before I know it, my hands are behind my back, taped up in a complex way that makes it nearly impossible for me to break free. I grunt and pull at the tape while trying to shove my opponent away—to create distance. But she holds firm, moving with me and refusing to let go.

Her long nails dig into my skin, and I have to repress a groan from how fucking good it feels. *What the fuck is wrong with me. Get your head in the game, man.*

I try to shove again, but a sharp object with two points is pushed into my ribcage with so much force I actually stop breathing for fear of it puncturing my lungs.

Slowly, my opponent's face comes into view, and I'm frozen in place. Long blonde hair, full pink lips, long manicured nails, and puffy eyes. Her eyes, fuck. They're like a sea of blue. For just a moment, I'm lost in them. At least until my arm muscle spasms and I realize I'm at her mercy.

I could swear she's a witch from the trance she holds me in, but not in a sinister way. More ethereal and breathtaking.

"Who are you, and what the heck are you doing out here?" Her voice is raspy like she's been crying and her nose is pink.

"Who are you?"

"If you don't know who I am, then you shouldn't be here." She grabs my arm and twists, causing my legs to nearly give out from the pain. I swear she just dislocated my shoulder. I grit through the burn and push back.

"I need to get to her, you don't understand. I need to know if she's okay."

This seems to give her pause and hope fills my chest that maybe she can help me out here. I mean, I don't know her at all, but she's clearly upset. "Please, just hear me out."

My voice breaks, and I'm truly worried I was too late. I never heard the end of the report. I don't know if she made it. I only know the injuries were severe.

She stops and turns to face me, her fingers still pressing in on a tendon that's causing my arm to go numb, but I ignore it. "Well. Let's hear it then."

"Do you know a girl named Evie? I'm trying to help her. Some bad people are after her and I can't find her."

"Evie?" Her eyebrows raise in recognition, and then her eyes narrow. "No, I'm not falling for this shit. No one is getting close to her. The Kings won't allow it, and I sure as fuck am not letting my friend get hurt again."

She starts to pull me away, but I plant my feet solidly on the ground.

"You don't understand. It's my job to protect her. I need to see her. She doesn't know who's really after her."

"Yeah. Okay, and you do, buddy?" She rolls her eyes. "How do I know you're not the one that's after her?" Her nails dig into my arm, and I clench my teeth. Fuck it, those babies are sharp enough to be a weapon on their own.

"I have protected her since the day I met her. Take me to her. She'll vouch for me."

"How do I know I can trust you? That you won't try to kill her the moment you see her." It's a valid question and I know just how to answer. I don't fight her. I could likely flip her over my shoulder and get out of these bindings if I had enough time to work through them, but she cares for E, I can see that. I want to respect that.

"Check my ankle. We have the same blades. I taught her to use them. Look at the engraving on the side."

She hesitates. It's a compromising position for her to put herself in. If she bends down, I could easily kick her, taking her out without too much thought. I'm much larger than her, and even though she has this monstrosity of tape holding me back at the moment, I do think that if she let my arm go I'd be able to get out of it.

But, she must read something in my eyes. "Don't move a freaking muscle."

I don't, which is odd. I'm not usually the listening type, but this isn't a joking matter. I'm not willing to risk anything here. I keep my body stiff while she pulls up my still-wet pant leg to find the blade. Standing up she examines it closely, checking the engraving with an intensity I want her to look at me with. E and I made all of our blades together, but just that one has both of our initials on it. E&T.

"What's the 'T' stand for?" she questions.

"It's for my real name, but you can call me Havoc. E does."

"Why do you call her E and not Evie?"

If she doesn't know that Evie isn't her real name then I don't want to blow her cover, but I need to give this girl something.

"Where she grew up...where I trained her, we went by first initials for the higher-ups. It was easier to sign a single letter out on jobs, and honestly, her name never really felt like her. She's been E to me since she was eleven."

We stand there in silence, the girl looking from the blade to me then to the hospital. She's contemplating, and I'm honestly glad for it. At least I know E's alive or else we wouldn't be having this conversation.

"Is she okay?" I ask, needing to know.

"No." That's all I get while she stares off into the distance. I can see the hustle and bustle of the hospital inside. A lot of people are injured, not just her.

"Can I see her?"

She sighs and slips the blade into my pocket before taking my arm again. I'm stunned she gave it back to me, but I also feel something happening here, and I'm not sure what it is. *Is she trying to trust me? Why keep up the charade with the tape and shit then?*

As we enter the building, I instantly get an answer to my question when we step out of the elevator. A man approaches her, a feral look in his eye. He looks older, closer to my age, maybe a teacher of some kind here.

“Who’s this and why do you have your hands all over him?”

The girl rolls her eyes and pushes past him. There’s only one room with the glass-paneled doors closed and a man with white hair stands just outside looking in. I’m able to hear part of the conversation behind the doors and that’s when I begin to recognize the men standing around. These are the ones Evie was asking to let in on the mission and Adrik refused.

A painfully familiar voice reaches my ears. *Boris?*

That’s been Evie’s target for years; I only just found out he isn’t guilty. If E is faking her injuries at all and going to take him out, I need to stop her. Without thinking, I rush for the door. Just before I can make it, a body slams against me, and the girl’s hands are on me again. I really need to figure out her name.

“Laney,” the guy that approached us barks. *Well, that was helpful.*

Before they can do much, I toe the door and flip it open. My eyes instantly go to Evie. I know without a doubt that she isn’t faking shit, she’s really hurt.

A flashback of carrying her out of the damn camp in Syria plays across my mind. I’m thankful now my hands are taped because they are shaking uncontrollably. I think Laney can feel it too, and her grip on me turns from painful to soft as I center myself with a breath.

“Who the fuck are you?” The guy on the bed asks, Alexi. I take in the room as I get my bearings. I know all of them. I try not to stare at Boris in the corner, if he recognizes me before I can explain he might just take me out here and now. I look back at E, how Alexi is holding her and trying to shield her body with his own. *Damn, and I thought I was protective.* I see his arms pull her closer, and decide honesty is the best way to go here.

“I’m Havoc. I came here to warn her.”



I told them who I was and what was happening, and they still insisted I be locked up. Laney is escorting me so that's one benefit to the scenario, I guess. I feel like we have grown close over the fifteen minutes we've known each other. I listen to her bicker with her over-possessive boyfriend and smirk. Her attitude reminds me so much of E but with a different spark to it.

"You shouldn't have to pretend for your boyfriend, that's messed up."

He was crowding her, making her feel insecure and small. So she basically told him to fuck off, but in a way that made him feel like it was his idea. Quite genius on her part, even if it's weird for a relationship.

"He is not my boyfriend."

Okay, not a relationship. Odd.

My arm spasms, and I look down at her. A grin pulls at my lips.

"You're kinda feisty. I like that."

She rolls her eyes. I'm about to remark just to keep our playful banter going when a new face comes into view. Damien.

"Who's this?" he asks.

"This is Havoc." Laney talks to him, and her grip becomes surprisingly light on my arm.

I figured out how the tape is placed, and I think I know just how I could get out of it if I wanted to. I just don't really want to right now. I'm having too much fun. Besides, I know this security system already. I can be out of there in five minutes if I want to be.

Damien just walked away when her phone chimes. I easily glance over her shoulder and memorize the codes he sent her. She pockets her phone and walks me inside this mini torture shed they seem to have set up here. It's actually impressive. But when she pauses and seems to go white as a sheet, I read

the message over her shoulder again and see my former best friend's name pop up.

This time it feels like she's actually sharing it with me. After a moment, she puts her phone back into her pocket and walks me to the wall with cuffs secured to it by a long chain. She removes the tape after she's locked one around my wrist.

I can't seem to shake how broken she looks. I hate how Adrik is able to control her. He's a world-class manipulator. It's obvious how much she cares about her friend. I don't know the corner he's backed her into, but how she's acting alone tells me this is not a path she would have chosen on her own.

Without thinking, I pull her into a one-armed hug. It's not comfortable by any means, and I can't remember the last time I fucking hugged someone that wasn't E, but I don't question it. My heart is aching to fix the look on her face.

She mumbles words, but I can't really make them out so I just pull her closer, giving her every ounce of comfort and support I can offer. I should probably stop to think about why I'm doing this. I'm an assassin, not a coddler. But I say fuck it and keep going with my instinct, it's rarely been wrong before.

"I've known E for a long time," I say in a low voice. "If you tell her the truth, she will forgive you. It will take time, and it will hurt, but she will forgive you."

I let her soak in my words while she connects the other cuff to my wrist. Her color seems to come back as she thinks, strength returning to her eyes. She looks like someone who just needs the room to believe she's strong and she will be. So, I believe it for her.

She leaves with a new resolve in her, that pep in her step returning before she's even out the door, and I can't help but feel proud of her.

What the fuck is happening to me?

I sit and count to fifteen. I need to make sure the cameras get a decent feed of me being a good boy before I get the fuck out of this place. It smells like blood and sweat and other

bodily fluids I refuse to recognize. I mean, I've used a torture chamber before, and it's totally normal. But I've never had to sleep in one like this. I look to my left and see a bucket. Now, I'm that much more motivated to get out of here.

I stand and stretch, curling and uncurling my fingers to return blood flow to them. I'm able to slip out of the cuffs fairly easily since Laney didn't put them on too tight. Plus, I'm well-trained in dislocating fingers to get out of tight spots.

I make quick work of hacking into the very basic security system with my phone. I wonder who told them to pick this system because the name might be a reputable company, but the feed is easily hacked with the basic package they seem to have. Laney was aware I still had my phone on me but made no attempt to take it away, so I can only assume this is the outcome she was hoping for.

I insert the video of me sitting there on repeat. My finger twitches at the end, but I'm too antsy to do it again. No one would notice anyway.

Leaving the cute little shed, I head back to the dorms and search for Laney, wanting to talk to her more—to get a better story about what happened. When I find her, she's fucking the man she claimed *wasn't* her boyfriend. I stare through the window for only a moment, memorizing the picture of her perfect tits and round ass.

The man has a nice dick too, if that's even a thing. He clearly knows what to do with it at least. I abandon the scene before I get a hard-on, *okay even more of a hard-on*, and have to take care of myself in the bushes like some sort of deranged stalker that I am *not*. Well, at least not right now.

I head to the hospital again and this time, I'm able to get in undetected. I park myself in the room by E's and keep one eye on her door. These men look like they're protecting her, but I need to see more to know for sure.



Chapter 2

A loud knock sounds at my door. I had just gotten back to take a shower after Laney left to talk to Evie. Wanting to hurry, I was in and out in under ten minutes so that I can be there for when she gets back. Thinking about it more, I decide I'll just go to the hospital to check on her. If there's any fallout with the guys, I might need to step in. Alexi is not known for staying composed when it comes to his girl.

I wrap a towel around my waist and turn off the shower to answer the door, hoping whatever it is they won't take long. When I open the door, Boris is standing there with a strange look on his face. I can't tell if he's pissed off or sad. I've only seen those two emotions cross his features, and the sad one was reserved for my adopted mother's funeral.

“Can I come in?” he asks. I take a step back without saying anything. He got me this job, and kept me from falling back into the hands of my real parents. Of course he can come inside, and he knows it.

“I’m going to change. Give me a minute?” I say, heading toward the bedroom.

He nods, but his body sags in exhaustion.

“Finish getting ready. I might just shut my eyes on the couch for a minute.”

I do as he says, knowing he likely needs some time to rest and think. We’re all running off of minimal sleep at this point anyway. I decide to take my time shaving before I throw on some sweats. Unlike Alexi, I don’t feel like I need to impress the man still sporting a three-piece suit after being up for twenty-four hours.

Boris honestly needs a shower more than any of us, but I know better than to suggest something to him. It has to be his idea or it’s not happening. I think I have a love-hate relationship with him that could rival most enemies-to-lovers novels. He saved me, sure, but he also expects a hell of a lot from me.

I go out to the couch to find him fast asleep, his head back and only the top button of his suit unfastened. The normal calm that people express when sleeping is nowhere on his face though. In fact, his eyebrows are scrunched and he looks older than I remember. I last saw him just a few months ago, right before coming here. But for him, it looks like ten years have passed. *What’s been happening?*

He lifts his head as I sit. “Thank you for those pictures. I’ve been looking for her for a long time now. I think you might have helped all of us more than you realize.”

When Laney confided in me about going behind Evie’s back, I couldn’t judge too much because I did the same thing, although I had no idea what I was really doing at the time. I’d come to care for the girl after all the shit that happened to her.

I don't want Boris, or anyone for that matter, to think that I set her up on purpose.

"I didn't send those pictures for you to find her. I didn't even know you were looking for a girl. I sent them because I wanted to help you understand that these boys found something that's important to them. Someone they felt was worth protecting and in turn, you would protect her too. I didn't want you to be caught off guard by their relationship dynamic."

"Their relationship dynamic?" His confusion should feel normal. While I don't understand Evie and how she manages to keep three very stubborn mafia men entertained, I was here to see them all grow together and form this bond. It's something real, and serious. It's not a game to them.

"They all love her, more than I've ever seen men love a woman. I wanted you to understand before they brought her back with them. I had no idea who she was."

He sighs heavily and leans his head back again.

"I know, I know. It's all... overwhelming. I found her then almost lost her so many times. To see her injured this severely is detestable. She looks so much like her father I feel actual agony. Seeing her in pain continues to remind me of losing him as constantly as if the scene were on repeat in my mind."

The tone of his voice is one I haven't heard before. He sounds exhausted, defeated even. My adopted uncle found me just a few years after losing Damir, and I could tell even then how much it bothered him. But this seems like so much more.

"I'm sorry you're feeling that again. You should rest here. There's a guest bed in the back with a shower and other essentials stocked." I'm not the best comforter unless it's for Laney, but I'm willing to try for my family.

He nods without making a move to get up. After a few minutes of silence, I decided to tell him what's been on my mind ever since Laney opened up to me earlier.

"I need to talk to you about something."

“I truly cannot handle more bad news, son.” He sits up and crosses his legs while squaring his shoulders, all business in an instant.

I mirror him, something he seems to appreciate from Alexi. “It’s not bad. I just want to go to the board about Laney. I want their permission to have a relationship with her, and I want her to be brought in on who I am.”

“Laney?”

“Evie’s friend, the blonde one. I want a relationship with her. She’s mine, and I want to be able to show it.”

He sits forward, hands leaning on his thighs. “You want my permission to fuck a student and to also bring her into our organization. Plus you want to reveal your identity to her when my own son doesn’t have a single clue who you are?”

Shaking his head, he sits back laughing. I grip the arms of the chair until my knuckles turn white.

“Something funny, Uncle?”

The look he levels me with is one a father might give a small child talking about his first crush.

“It is quite humorous of you to think I would even consider that. If you want to claim her, then claim her. I really couldn’t care less who you happen to be sleeping with. There is nothing in the rules about you not being able to fuck a student, so you don’t have to take it to the board, or me, for that matter.”

I hadn’t thought about that. I honestly just thought it was forbidden because normally it’s not okay for students to sleep with their teachers. I mean, I know this is the underworld and all, but I still figured we had rules. In fact, it’s kinda fucked up that we don’t.

How did I not know that any of my staff could be fucking these students? I really should have read that book about my job description more intently. That actually explains why so many professors thought they could proposition Evie after that damn video got out.

The video Laney sent out.

It makes sense why she felt the need to do it, but that doesn't make it any less devastating. I really hope Evie can forgive her. Speaking of that, I want to be there for her when she gets back to her room.

I get to my feet, choosing to ignore my uncle for now. Grabbing the spare keys by the door, I toss them at my adopted uncle. He snatches them out of the air and stands.

"I'm going to be staying with Laney, make yourself at home."

"Wait."

I stop in my tracks while grinding my molars. I loathe when he uses that authoritative tone with me.

"What?" I ask through clenched teeth.

A hand lands on my shoulders, and it takes everything in me not to flinch at his touch. He's never been abusive to me, I'm just not one who's used to being touched. And unless it's Laney, I don't really want to be.

"I just want to warn you." His voice is soft. "If you do choose to be with her publicly, it could make things hard for her here. If she is successful, everyone will always question if it's real or if it's because of you. Including her."

He squeezes my shoulder once, and then turns around toward the second bedroom, closing the door behind him. What he said isn't wrong, and I need to take it seriously. As much as I want to tell the world she's mine, I think I'm going to have to settle with her being the only one who knows that. At least, for the next few months.



Chapter 3

I came back to my room after my talk with Nessa feeling a little better. At least, until I walked into the door that is.

“Get the fuck out. You don’t belong here.” Arrow has his finger in Havoc’s chest while Havoc is grinning like a dog about to snack on a bone.

“E said I could take her room. I didn’t expect you to be here though. Last I heard this was Laney and E’s suite.”

“Yes, and Laney is mine so that makes this my space as well.”

That has me nearly running back out the door. But no, they will not make me feel uncomfortable in *my* place.

“First off,” I say in a raised voice, gaining each of their attention as I slam the door behind me.

“I am not an object to be claimed.” I glare at Arrow. “We fucked, that’s the extent of the commitment we have discussed.”

Turning my gaze to Havoc, I narrow my eyes. Arrow is fuming over my comment, but I don’t really care.

“When did Evie say you could stay here?”

He continues to grin while pulling out his phone and showing me their message thread. I know Evie’s number so the moment I see it, I know he’s telling the truth. He really has no reason to lie anyway.

“You can stay here but keep out of my space,” I tell him.

“You got it, boss lady.”

Havoc turns on his heels to walk into the other room then slams Evie’s door shut. Arrow’s arm wraps around my chest while his body presses against my back.

“I don’t trust him,” he says in a low tone.

“Do you trust anyone?”

“With you? No.”

“I’m not yours, Arrow.” I sigh, leaning into him just slightly. I’m not his, but leaning into his strength helps me get the next words out. “We need to talk about Evie.”

He moves back and guides me into my room until we’re sitting on my bed. I take a deep breath, not wanting to rehash everything but knowing I need to. At least the tears have dried up. I don’t think I could cry anymore right now.

“How did it go, did you tell her the truth?”

I nod but flinch when someone bangs on the door hard enough to splinter it.

I have no doubt in my mind it’s Alexi. He has every right to come here and finish me off. Although, I think if Evie was planning on doing that, she would do it herself. Honestly, I’d let her. Sometimes, it feels like there really isn’t that much left for me in this life anymore.

Before I can get up, Arrow is pushing his way through the door. It pisses me the frick off. While it can be endearing that he wants to jump into battle for me sometimes, I want him to be in the fight *with* me. Which is the main reason this can't go much further. He doesn't see me for who I am.

I rush to get in front of him, but he *arm bars* me and keeps me behind him as we walk into the living area.

What the actual freaking heck?

I shove him to the side as we get into the living area only to find a very shirtless Havoc holding a gun pointed at Alexi.

Is this even real? Did I just enter an alternate universe: where this baddie assassin that I hardly know, and the dean of the school for the children of the underworld, put their bodies in front of me in a fight?

When my mind snaps back to reality, I don't think I've ever been more angry, which is the only reason I let the swear word past my lips. It's not that I mind swearing, but I had a younger sister that I wanted to protect from everything in this whole world. And the habit of watching my words was the least I could do for her.

“Get the FUCK out!”

Both men turn to me in stunned silence, and I take that as an accomplishment. I continue to bark orders until the two Dobermans at my front go their separate ways. They are *infuriating*, yet I'm kind of turned on by their protectiveness.

No, ma'am. We are not doing that right now. You just got laid seven ways to Sunday. You do not need any more orgasms right now.

I take a deep breath and sit on the couch with Alexi, preparing to barter for my life. It's when he chooses to spare me that I start to look at him differently. He wants to be a good leader, and he cares for my best friend in a way I don't see many men in this world care for their women. He puts her on a pedestal that seems more like a throne.

He wants me to help him keep her safe. But if there is anything I know about Evie, it's that her safety has to be in her

own hands. She will only grow restless and uncomfortable if eyes are on her all the time. It happened before when Lev and Damien tried to protect her from anyone coming her way. I had to threaten Lev with a deadline to tell her the truth about the people they had locked in the shed.

I'll find a way to make sure she doesn't get like that again, I just don't know how yet. I'll have to be careful because I know Alexi. If I go against his wishes, my life will only get harder.

I reluctantly agree to his demands, and he decides to be an asshole by telling me the guard dogs currently marking their territory in my home are in love with me. I shake it off. He's just trying to get a rise out of me.

I'm not ready to go deal with Arrow just yet though. When I want to hit things, he's all too eager to offer up himself as the punching bag. Right now, that's just too much. He doesn't deserve to hurt just because I'm frustrated. So instead, I decide to talk to the man who manages to match my attitude and gives it back with just as much vigor.

I knock on Evie's door because I'm polite and can recognize boundaries. He cracks the door slightly, assessing me before swinging it all the way open and gesturing for me to come inside. He doesn't speak, just stands there expectantly. I can't figure out if it's a power move or not.

Does forcing me to talk first give him the upper hand? Or me?

Choosing not to overthink it, I decide it's best to just say what's on my mind. Crossing my arms over my chest, I ease the weapon from my pocket to slip over my fingers in a move he can't see, just in case he tries to get sassy with me.

"I wanted to come in here and set some ground rules. You may be staying in Evie's room, but this is my space. Don't answer my door. Don't poke at Arrow. And don't try to defend me. I can take care of myself."

He nods, pondering over my words before taking a step into me. Crowding my personal space as if it were a challenge, he

tries to make me feel small. I know this game all too well, so I know better than to show my cards yet. I only level him with a glare.

Havoc leans in until our noses are almost touching then whispers.

“Even against ruthless assassins?”

The sound of a gun cocking reaches my ears just before it’s pressed to my temple. I refuse to flinch under his tactics though.

Instead, I lean into him, parting my lips slightly to get his attention. His eyes drop to my mouth just as I catch the inside of his bicep with the tips of my weapon and cut the underside of his arm.

The move causes him to flinch, but not in a way that makes him squeeze his fingers, which would have killed me if the thing was loaded. Instead, it forces his hand to open on reflex, and the gun clatters onto the floor.

“Especially them,” I hiss in his face. His nostrils flare, but he doesn’t back down. With his other hand, he grabs my hair and tilts my head back. I only smile at him as I move my hand and force my weapon to push between his ribs.

We could both seriously hurt each other right now, but I’m not afraid. This is foreplay for people like us. By the way his pupils are dilating, I can tell he feels the same way.

He lets go of my hair, and I move my kitty ears from his chest. We stand there for a moment, assessing each other in between deep breaths. As blood trickles down his arm, my face twists into a grimace.

“Don’t bleed on my floor.”

Really, this is Evie’s room, but I have a feeling she wouldn’t want blood stains on the carpet any more than I would. A manic grin splits his face as he wipes the blood from his arm with two fingers, then sticks them in his mouth and sucks it off. All the while, he keeps his gaze locked on mine. I don’t know if I’m turned on or sick by the sight. By the way my knees nearly give out, I’m terrified it’s the former.

I should be horrified, I hate blood. I don't mind shedding it when it's needed but usually prolonged exposure makes me woozy. *Why would my reaction be any different just because it's him?*

Not wanting him to see my reaction, I flip my hair and stride out his door. I don't know what just happened, but I'm hoping like hell he can't tell just how much that affected me.



Chapter 4

Apparently, it's movie night. E texted me an hour ago and told me to meet them all at the library. I assumed the plan was to use one of the massive rooms here for more planning of some kind but no, instead everyone is watching a chick flick—which is actually kind of hilarious. It's about this hot blonde who accidentally drunk married Ashton Kutcher in Vegas and now wants to leave him. That would clearly never happen in real life, but okay.

One of the guys orders pizza and I have to admit out of all the foods in the world, this is one I don't care for. But I know it's E's favorite so I decide fuck it, I'll grab something different later.

I sit next to Laney, my body attempting to shield her from anyone who could hurt her. I don't know this group's dynamic,

and it's all very unsettling. It's clear she has something going on with this Arrow guy. But I feel like we had a connection, and whether she likes it or not I feel the need to guard her.

I don't like the way Alexi keeps eyeing her like he would slice her throat open if she made one wrong move. At least I know I have Arrow as backup if he tries anything. While I understand Alexi's issue, he also needs to calm down. Am I pissed Laney hurt the girl who's like a sister to me? Sure, but I can also understand her circumstances. I know Adrik, and he's ruthless when pursuing what he wants. Case in point, E.

Lev breaks me from my thoughts when he mentions pineapple on his pizza. The idea actually makes a little bit of sense, the sweet combined with the salt should be good. Lev offers me a taste and holy shitballz, that stuff is amazing.

I'm torn because Laney and E clearly can't stand it, but Arrow loves it and I'm not sure I want to be on his side with anything right now. The way he looks at Laney, like she's only his to touch, puts me on edge.

I shrug and play along, deciding the middle ground is a good place to be.

I'm beyond surprised E is so against the pizza. She struggled with food after we got her back from the prison camp. She would hide all sorts of snacks in her room and was very specific about meal times staying consistent. When our chef for the compound was late one day shortly after she returned, I watched her have a full-blown panic attack in her room.

I sat there the whole time, not knowing what to do but not willing to leave her alone. I think for her, being deprived of food and water during that time in Syria left a bigger mark than she noticed. It's gotten better, but I'm shocked she would turn down any kind of nourishment.

When Alexi says he would rather drink wine out of a red solo cup than eat the pizza, I nearly lose it. *How else do you drink wine?* But Lev makes me full-on belly laugh as he mocks them all. E's face scrunches up in actual rage over the situation, only making it all the more funny to me.

Boris joins us eventually and E seems to accept his presence in the room. In fact, everyone here seems to get along well. No one seems afraid of one another or appears to be masking their feelings. It's a room full of people that strangely feels like family to me, and I've only just met them. It helps some of the tension leave me so that I can get to know the people around the room more.

Nessa and I end up having a great conversation about sharpshooting. Her knowledge is impressive. She tells me about a bullet she and her father designed that's supposed to break off in mid-air and have the capability to hit two targets at once.

They have been working on the design ever since she was a child, and while it could only work in very specific situations, it's a great idea to see come to life. Her passion for the subject is clear; it's her distaste for her father that seems to throw me off. The Irish mafia has always been a very close-knit family-like group, much like the Italians. It's strange to see the inner workings and just how much Nessa seems to distrust him with her life and future.

Eventually, we all filter out and back to our rooms. Unfortunately, I have the pleasure of watching Laney's perfect ass sway in front of me for the entire walk back to her suite. Or fortunately. I don't know yet.

All I seem to know is that if I don't get these jeans off fast, my dick is going to have an imprint of the zipper with how painfully hard it is.

We make it back before my cock is severed by my pants, and Laney turns to wave goodnight. I blow her a kiss and wink just to piss off Arrow, but also because I can and want to. I am a criminal, after all. I do whatever the fuck I want.

But when the sound of her moaning comes through the walls a few minutes later, I can't help thinking I'm not taking what I really want. She's too young, too innocent and sweet for someone like me.

"Yes," I hear her scream. I'm so torn between running in there and trying to join them and holding back because Arrow

doesn't seem like someone with the capability to share.

I bite my cheek and take a very deep breath. My fists clench when I hear her again and I decide, fuck it. I lean back on the bed and kick off my jeans. These walls are thick, so if I can hear her, it's because she wants me to. *Or he does.*

Either way, it doesn't stop me from wrapping my hand around my dick and glancing down at the eight metal studs gleaming from between my fingers in the moonlight as I pump in time with every one of her sweet sounds.

I hear a crashing sound, but the whimper that follows doesn't seem like one of pain. *I should know.* My hand moves faster over my length and I picture her in that pink skirt, riding me like the magical creature I know she is. I imagine her mouth parting as I slide my piercings into her, stretching her in a way no man ever has.

Then I think about Arrow stepping in, guiding her movements on my cock and helping her ride me even harder. His legs would land on either side of mine, and he would lean her forward so I could kiss her. My fingers would play with her clit, keeping her distracted and relaxed as he entered her ass so we could fuck her together.

The sound of her coming and the vision in my head has jets of cum covering my shirt before I could remove it. Her cries die down, but my heart is still pounding. If only I could allow myself to pursue her, then one day this could be real.

I can't allow myself to dream of a future with her because I can't give her all of me. Assassins are incapable of having hearts to offer when they're in the business of ripping them out of their enemies. So, instead, I push all thoughts of her away and clean up, trying to keep my mind focused on the mission ahead.



We're getting on the plane to Russia, and I'm trying not to think about the fact that I pledged my life to the Russian mafia just to go on this trip. It was an easy decision at the time. I

meant what I said, I'll do anything to protect E. It's just a big shift in my life.

Adrik hates Boris with a passion I never knew existed in him. I thought he was ruthless before, but the depths he went to with his revenge plan have me questioning if I ever knew my friend at all. Correction, former friend.

The sight of E straddling Damien after eating a slice of bacon from his mouth is enough to get me out of my head, even if it is just to make a snide remark, but she would expect nothing less.

"There are rooms, Evie. Use them," Laney says next to me. I laugh before adding my two cents.

"Make better life choices, E." Laney laughs with me while Alexi pins us with a glare and Damien scoops her up to take her to the room in the back.

"Judge her choices again and I'll make you regret yours." He stands and straightens out his suit before walking to the front of the plane.

I believe there's a bar closer to the cockpit, and I debate on heading up there with him. He might pretend to hate me, but we both know the kid adores my presence. I mean, who wouldn't?

When Lev follows into the room with E and Damien, I look back at Laney.

"What are they even doing in there?" I ask her, although I'm not sure either of us wants to know the answer.

"Did you really just ask me that?" Her face turns a cute shade of pink and if I didn't know any better, I'd think she was embarrassed.

If I hadn't heard her moaning so loudly last night, I would have put money on her being a virgin with how cute and innocent she always appears.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realize you were a prude." It's just a joke, but the glare she levels me with has me questioning my idea of who she is.

She holds my gaze until I break it, then proceeds to stare out the window. I can't get a read on her. It's frustrating.

"Sooo..." I draw out the word.

I don't do well with silence when it comes to her. Anyone else and I'd be content to pretend they don't exist, but with her, everything feels different. I want to know what she's thinking at all times of the day, and even more so when she's carrying this pained expression.

Her eyes never leave the sky while I fidget next to her. I find myself wanting to play a game with her. The one where she pretends there's nothing between us, and I poke the bear if only to get an outlandish reaction.

"Are those little kitten knuckles your only weapon? If so, you might want to find something that keeps more distance between you and your target."

She doesn't rise to my bait, but instead answers in a calm unbothered voice.

"I am proficient enough with a bow that I can hit targets moving at seventy miles per hour."

This takes me by surprise. I should actually know better because a bow is my second favorite weapon, and the arm and shoulder definition on her reflects someone who is well-trained in this skill. But she seems too soft for that kind of training.

"Prove it," I say, throwing up a challenge. I don't just want her attention at this point, I need it. When she makes no moves to do so, I laugh to myself. "Yeah, boss lady, that's what I thought."

She sighs then finally looks at me. Her eyes seem tired, and I have to wonder if she's been sleeping. I heard her rummaging through the kitchen last night and when I came out with my bags packed, she was wrapped up on the couch staring at the television as if she hadn't even gone to bed.

Laney hands me her phone with a video of the driving course and sure enough, she hits the target on the side of the car as it drives by at seventy-three miles an hour.

Holy shit, I'm hard. The look on her face is the only thing keeping me from making more sarcastic comments or begging her to suck my dick.

“What’s wrong?” I ask. She pockets her phone and tries to look out the window again.

Deciding I’m done tolerating her behavior, I stand from my seat and grab her under the arm to haul her up.

“What the heck?”

She attempts to pull her arm from my grip, but it’s a weak ass endeavor. Moving to sit down on the couch, I pull her into my lap and force her eyes to meet mine.

“I asked you a question. I expect an answer.” Laney huffs and pushes at my chest, but I make no room to allow her to get up. I have no idea what the fuck I’m doing, all I know is that I need to fix this for her.

She tries to turn her face away from me, so I pinch her chin and force it back. Not enough to hurt her, but enough to make it very clear that she *will* answer me.

“I...” her voice trails off and her body sags in defeat. “I’m scared.”

It’s just a whisper, but I hear it louder than a megaphone in my ear. And, shocking myself, I find I would do almost anything so that she didn’t feel afraid.

“Of what?” If I can get to the bottom of it, then maybe I can help. She had the balls to take me on the second she met me, even though I have a solid foot and a half plus a hundred pounds on her. She should have no reason to fear anything if she doesn’t fear me.

Is that bragging? Sure. Do I care? Not a single fucking bit.

Instead of looking at me, she tucks her face into my chest and I let her. Admitting our fears is sometimes just as scary as facing them. All I want is for her to turn to me in this moment instead of away.

“I’m scared I won’t be enough. That whatever we have planned, whatever is about to happen next, I won’t be enough

for any of you.” Her hands clutch to my shirt, and I let her tears fall while I hold her close.

“What makes you think you won’t be enough?”

I’ve never been the comforting type, never the talk-it-through guy. Not for myself, not for E, and especially not for anyone else. Except, with her it’s different. I find myself wanting to help her find a way through this, and I need more information if I’m going to be able to do that.

“I’m always the weak link. I can’t fight nearly as well as the others. I don’t know how to use a gun, and no one sees me as anything more than the Barbie doll I pretend to be. Heck, I can’t even keep up with Damien on our runs and he’s the slowest one!”

That’s what she’s worried about?

“So all you need to do is train a little harder.” I shrug, perplexed as to why she thinks this is such a big deal. Women’s minds are fascinating. “Endurance takes time to build, but you can build it. Fighting can be learned. Hell, I’m sure the great Mafia King has a shooting range you can use over break if you really want to learn to use a gun.”

I’m feeling pretty proud of myself and my ability to give her answers until she looks up at me with her eyes slitted.

“Oh okay, let me just train harder.” She pushes herself out of my hold and takes a step back. “Easy as that, huh? Just throw a few more punches at the bag, just run a little further each day and then maybe something will change. Eventually. Cool, great advice there.”

Wow. Okay, so logic is not the right thing to bring up when she’s upset. Noted. Laney tries to move back to her seat, putting even more distance between us, but I don’t understand. I grab her, needing to see where I went wrong.

“Wait, why are you upset?”

She throws her hands up in the air, breaking our contact and dammit I’m really starting to fucking hate that.

“Who’s going to help me train harder, Havoc? Evie can’t run. I don’t know if you’ve seen Alexi lately, but he’s in full planning mode and also the last person in the world I want to be close to like that. Damien and Lev aren’t going to leave Evie’s side or each other for that matter. I know no one where we are going, and I doubt ‘the great Mafia King’ is going to trust me enough to provide resources.”

Her face has the audacity to actually look confused. *Does she not see me, standing here, right in her fucking space? Me. The Shades’ assassin. One of the best in the entire fucking world. Am I not even a thought in her mind?*

Well, that’s going to need to change. Now. I crowd her and push her back into the wall of the plane.

“You have other options, boss lady. Look around.” I make sure I’m the only one, the only thing she can see. The moment my words click, her eyes widen at my offer.

“*You* want to train me?” She nearly gasps, as if me wanting to be in her presence would be such a burden to us both.

“Only if you beg nice and pretty for me.”

That gets her laughing. I don’t even care that it’s at my expense.

“Not a chance in the stars.”

“There’s a lot of stars, I’m sure one of them will get you on your knees begging for my help.”

The fear and trepidation from before is gone, replaced with the confident, spunky girl beneath. I can see her turning into the strong woman I know she is right before my eyes.

She stands taller, then presses onto her tiptoes until she’s only an inch from my face. My eyes are drawn to her lips, but not because I want to kiss them. Okay, not *only* because I want to kiss them. I’m drawn to them because she’s smiling, and it’s like all the colors of the rainbow flash before me.

“Please,” she whispers. My dick stirs, but I don’t move a muscle, not wanting this moment to end. “Please teach me everything you know.”

“I know a lot,” I shoot back with a grin.

She bites her lip and bats her eyelashes at me before dropping back onto her feet. “Somehow, I doubt that.”

We both laugh. She tries to duck under me to move away, but I grab her and pull her body to mine, causing her to let out a squeal of excitement. I maneuver her back onto my lap all while ignoring the hard-on under my jeans while managing not to stab her with it, like the gentleman I am.

“I’ll train you, then you won’t have anything to worry about.” I tuck her into me and her arms wrap around my torso instinctively as she squeezes.

“Thank you.” The breath of relief that follows her appreciation mends a part of my shattered heart I wasn’t aware could be fixed.

For the first time in over five years, I find myself wanting to see what it would be like if it were whole again. Despite all my scars, I think this girl could find a way to make my dejected heart even better than before.



Chapter 5

We've been in Russia for a little over three days and I watch as Evie fidgets with her bedding for the tenth time during our conversation. She's bored and irritated. While I know Alexi's intentions for us to always be with her were out of a twisted sort of love, I also know my friend isn't going to last much longer like this. Which means, it's time for my plan to begin.

Checking the time, I know in about five minutes Alexi is going to message for an update.

Perfect.

Shooting a risqué text to Arrow that I know will grab his attention, I begin my mini mission I've named 'help Evie see her boyfriend is being crazy without anyone knowing I planned the whole thing'. It's a little long, but hey, I can only be so creative.

“What do you want to do today, girl?” I ask, my fake cheery smile on for the world to see.

She sighs, and I can tell she’s working her way up to telling me to fudge off. “Not to be rude, but I kinda want to be alone today.”

Arrow responds at the perfect time, and I shoot off a reply before smiling at my friend. It dings again almost immediately. At this point, I’m not even pretending to smile. Not only did this man take the bait, but his dirty talk is next level. I’m squirming in my seat after just a few messages.

“What’s got you all hot and bothered?” Evie asks, and I hand her the phone with one minute to spare. *I should really get an award for this.*

I started our conversation with a picture of my ass in a bright pink thong and freshly manicured nails.

Laney: Do you think this goes well with my new nails?

Arrow: I want to paint those cheeks of yours red with my handprint, baby girl.

Laney: I prefer a flogger, though your hands do have a wide span, maybe they will feel better.

I love playing these little games with him. He’s great with conversations about normal stuff, but these messages are ones that have me wanting to beg for a flight back to the island.

Arrow: That’s it, I’m on the next flight out to Russia. Boris can shove his orders to stay here up his ass.

I have no idea why he would be following Boris’ orders, but maybe the mafia leader has more pull than I’m aware of. Either way, we both know there is no next flight out. But the thought of him dropping everything just to come here and smack my ass has me all tingly.

Laney: Well, we don’t want to get caught, sir. I could be expelled.

I know it’s not against the rules to be with a teacher, but I also like the idea of sneaking around with him. Just the thought of blowing him under his desk while the students take

a test in the same room has me nearly dripping. I shift to keep myself from making a mess.

Arrow: Oh, my dirty girl, I'm the Dean. I can assure you, you'll be staying right here within my reach for as long as I can keep you.

I watch as Evie reads our messages, and the girl who's literally having sex with three men blushes before my eyes. Then I hear the ping, right on the dot. When Evie's eyes narrow, I know she's seen what I need her to.

I quickly explain that her boyfriend is an overprotective asshole. I don't have to go into much detail because she knows him and his antics. Before I know it, I'm heading out of her room and praying for the poor man that's about to come running.

My phone chimes again, reminding me I have a very steamy conversation to return to.

Arrow: You busy touching that pretty pussy and thinking of me?

Laney: Who says I'm thinking of you?

I know what I'm doing, so I rush to my room. Sure enough, the moment the door locks behind me, a video request pops up. I ignore it only long enough to send him a private link. After a minute he starts to call again and I stare at him for a moment before answering. The sight of him in his bed with his arm tucked behind his head, his hair freshly wet from a shower, has me pressing the green circle way sooner than I would for anyone else. He's so fucking hot it's unreal.

I quickly lay on the bed and lift up my skirt while the connection loads. His eyes light up when he sees me with my hand inside my pink lace thong.

“Fuck, baby girl. You're going to kill me.”

I giggle as I move two fingers around my clit, then easily slip them inside. My light laughter turns into a groan when I imagine it's his fingers. I'm so done picturing him inside me. Now that I've had the real thing, this is nothing in comparison.

“Take those off right now and show me what you’re doing to yourself.”

I obey, but definitely much slower than he wanted. I drop the phone when I lean forward to remove them all the way and fake a moan just to piss him off.

“Show me.” His command is breathless like he’s stroking himself just for me.

“I’ll show you mine if you show me yours, sir.”

I catch sight of his eyes nearly rolling to the back of his head as he angles the camera so I can see his thick length in his hand as he pumps himself up and down.

I grab the wifi connected toy from my nightstand, because heck yes I brought those with me. I’m a much nicer person when I have at least one orgasm a day. This one is a black thruster that also vibrates; it’s also the one I just sent Arrow a link to so that he can be the one to control it. I lay it on the bed next to me before grabbing a pink glass butt plug.

I set my phone up on my tripod that sits on my nightstand, making sure he has a full view of my body on the bed. This isn’t my first rodeo.

I grab the pink-tinted glass and show it to him.

“Shit yes, baby. Suck that before sliding it into that tight ass.”

“Spit on your cock and maybe I will.”

He growls as he sits up, kneeling on his bed.

“Say cock again.”

“Spit on that big cock for me, sir.”

He lets out a shuddering breath, then I watch as a stream of spit leaves his mouth and slides over his thick head. His thumb swipes over the reddened tip, causing me to bite my lip.

Since he obeyed, I oblige and open my mouth wide for him to get a clear view. Sliding the glass between my lips, I hum around it. He visibly shudders just in time for me to poke my

tongue out and really coat it. As sexy as spit is, you need a lot of it if you're going to use it as lube.

Once it's nice and coated, and my pussy is weeping over how sexy this man is, I turn so my ass is facing him. Lowering my head to the mattress I take my time to slowly slide the cool glass into my ass.

I've always been an explorer of my own pleasure. There's something unique about the cool glass and the forbidden aspect of it going where no other man has been before. I feel myself shaking as I adjust to lay on my back, the fullness already feeling so good I'm squirming with need.

I open my eyes to watch Arrow's movements. His forearms, which are clearly made for holding a bow, flex tight and his veins pop out. My back arches without my permission, and I palm my tits before pinching my nipples.

"I wish it were my cock filling that pretty little ass of yours. Would you like that, baby? Want me to pump you full of me?"

I nod, melting into the mattress over his filthy mouth. He continues to stroke himself, picking up speed as he watches me play with my nipples.

"That little glass plug doesn't have anything on me. But it'll help get you ready." My head drops back as I imagine how full he can make me feel.

"Fuck, baby girl, you're so fucking hot. Look what you do to me."

Arrow angles the camera even closer, until his dick is the only thing in my field of view. It looks painfully hard as precum seeps from the engorged tip, giving me this insane urge to want to lick it off.

I beam under his praise while simultaneously admiring his impressive length. Praise is not something I've ever needed from a man, but with him things are different. With him, I want to earn his beautiful dirty words.

"You're pretty beautiful yourself."

He chuckles, backing the camera up a bit to put himself back into my view while stroking harder as I slide the thick head of the toy down my center. “I’m beautiful?”

I nod. “Like a piece of art.”

He hums in an approving tone.

“Baby, if I’m a piece of art then you’re the museum it sits in. You’re so fucking stunning on the inside and out. I can’t get enough.”

His words hit home. A tear almost falls from just how much that means to me. I’m used to being told I’m beautiful. It’s something I try hard to maintain in order to keep up the act. But no one ever sees the inside and thinks that’s anything worth keeping. Not until *him*.

“Did you click on the link? I want you to control it. I want to imagine you inside me.”

“Got it right here, baby. You ready?”

I nod and he starts up the vibrations.

“Use that toy to play with your clit for me, don’t put it inside yet.”

I do as he says and all too soon, my legs are trembling, my body begging for release.

“Slip it into that dripping pussy for me,” he orders, his voice trembling as much as my legs.

I push the toy in slowly, allowing myself to adjust to feeling so full. He starts the thrusting, and a gasp leaves my lips. I imagine it’s him moving inside me. His thick length pressed right against that spot that has my toes curling and my hips moving without my permission.

“Hell yes, baby. Ride that like you wish you could ride me.”

“Yes, sir.” I pant between each word. I feel so beautifully full and seen. I swear I’m floating among the stars until Arrow pulls me back, grounding me here and making me think of only him.

“Remember how I licked and sucked that sweet pussy until it couldn’t take any more?”

“Yes, please. I need it. I need you.” I push the toy in as far as it can go just as he increases the thrusting pace and vibrations.

I watch him getting off on the control, and the sounds I’m making are just for his ears this time. His grip is tight while his stroking grows frantic. The head of his cock is nearly purple as precum pools at the tip. The way he’s breathing makes me feel like he’s holding back, but I don’t want him to. I want it all with him.

“Come with me? I’m gonna...” I sink into the feeling, letting my walls flutter around the toy before clenching and pulling the rapid vibrations into my core.

“I’m coming. I’m...”

“That’s it. Come with me, baby. Let me see that perfect face when you let it all go.”

My eyes connect with his, and I explode. My entire being floats into space before crashing back down in the most pleasurable freefall I’ve ever experienced. Every time with him is like the first time. I never thought something like that could be possible.

A knock sounds at the door, startling me from my post-orgasm daze where Arrow and I just stare at each other.

“I have to go. Thanks for that.” I give him a wink, and he laughs shaking his head.

“Thank you, baby girl. Be good.”

“I’ll consider it.” I hang up to him laughing and a huge smile on my face.

I assume the person at the door is Alexi, ready to hand me a new one, so I take my time cleaning up the mess and wiping down my toys.

Another knock, this one much more persistent. Yup, that’s Alexi all right.

I pad over to the door and fix a strong expression on my face. It's kind of difficult because all I want to do is smile with just how relaxed I finally feel.

Opening the door, I ready myself for the fight of a lifetime with the prince of the underworld, only to be met with very green eyes and way more tattoos than I'm used to seeing.

“Havoc?”

“Ready to start training?” He has a bounce in his step until he takes in my outfit. “You didn't get my message did you?”

I check my phone and sure enough, he messaged me right before Arrow called.

“Sorry, I was a little busy.”

“Why does your room smell like sex?” Havoc asks as he walks in.

I'm not sharing my secrets with him, but the look on his face tells me he already knows so I just shrug.

“What should I wear for this?” I ask, walking over to my closet. Being the over-packer I am, I know I have a good range of options available, but he's the expert, and I want to know what's best.

“Shorts and a tight sports bra are best. Loose clothes can snag easily as well as give your opponent something to grab you by.”

I take in his tight black tank top and gray sweatpants that are anything but loose. My eyes must linger a little too long because he clears his throat, causing me to blink back to a reality where I didn't just stare at his crotch.

I turn around and grab a bra and shorts, then remove my shirt. I'm not really a modest person. My body is my own to share with whoever the heck I want, and I don't mind getting dressed in front of him. He, however, seems to freak out for a second.

“I'll um, I'll just... wait outside.”

He turns to leave just as I get the bra on and face him.

“I don’t care if you stay.”

I don’t say it too loud. He can choose to ignore me and still leave. But for some reason, I want him to stay. I want him to know I feel comfortable with him and trust him with this piece of me. Deep down, I feel like I always have. Even when I tried to pretend on the plane or ignore his presence in my suite.

“Oh.. um. Okay.” He makes his way back into the room hesitantly and sits on my bed.

I turn around quickly before he sees me silently laughing. Have you ever seen those videos of animals approaching a harmless object with so much trepidation that they nearly fall over, only to realize the object was a shirt that got caught on a tree or something?

That’s what Havoc looks like sitting on my bed. His butt is hardly touching the edge as if he’s just hovering. My phone dings, and I answer it after sliding my shorts on over a new thong that matches my outfit perfectly.

Alexi: I do not appreciate being played like some sort of fool. Pull shit like that again, and I will make sure you are out.

Laney: I’m not dumb, so I know that’s an empty threat. Be glad she knows. I watched her anxiety nearly overtake her today and send her into a panic attack because she could sense something was off.

I go into the closet and put on my running shoes, knowing cardio is going to be part of this training. So annoying.

Alexi: That doesn’t mean you tell her without my permission.

Laney: Wrongo, my friend. Girl code states otherwise.

I laugh, picturing the face he’s going to make at that.

“What are you laughing at?”

“Alexi is pretending to be mad at me.” I open the door and Havoc follows me out then takes the lead.

“Pretending?” he questions with a raised eyebrow.

“Yeah, pretending. I’m very good at what I do, Havoc. And knowing how others feel before they do is a big part of what I was trained for.

Alexi: I’m going to need a printout version of this code.

Laney: Sorry, can’t. It’s top secret.

The smile won’t leave my face, even as we turn into the most intimidating gym I’ve ever been in. It looks like something straight out of the movies. Like a villain’s workout arena/dungeon.

Alexi: It’s a good thing she needs you.

Laney: Love you too, buddy!

I put my phone down, but it chimes again with a message from Arrow. Instead of leaving it on the side of the room, I figure I can message him while stretching. Havoc starts walking me through the warm-up, and I notice him getting agitated every time my phone makes a noise. I turn it to silent, but that just causes him to stare at me.

“If you want me to train you, then I will. But that has to go.”

I look up to see him pointing at my phone. His jaw is tight and his face red. I know it’s not from us working out though because I’m not even starting to sweat.

“You’re acting jealous,” I sing-song.

He scoffs. “Oh, please. Baby girl, I have nothing to be jealous over. You aren’t even mine.”

Internally I flinch, although I don’t know why.

“Exactly. So what’s making you act like this?”

He shakes his head. “Whatever. If you want to be distracted right now then that’s your choice to make. Just get on the mats. I’m going to run you through some of the basics you should have learned in school to gauge where you’re at.”

He walks over to the mats while leaving me to follow. I do, but only after tucking my phone into my bra and putting it back on high volume. I know it’s a bratty thing to do, but I

can't help it with him. He's so broody and stern in here. I'm not sure I like it.

Starting with basic blocks, I quickly realize having my phone on me is a bad idea. I miss two jabs that even a beginner should have seen coming. He only stops short of knocking me out because of his impeccable control.

When we move to basic grappling, he pins me every single time with little effort. My phone pings for what must be the eighteenth time, distracting me just enough for him to get me in a chokehold. Beyond frustrated, I tap out way too early and throw my hands up in the air.

“Okay, OKAY! You were right!” I get up and march over to the side of the room to turn my phone off before nearly throwing it.

“Damn right, I was. You wonder why you're not good at this. Maybe you just need someone to teach you to focus. You were able to incapacitate me when you first saw me so I know you know this stuff, Laney.”

I glare at him and he smirks, his jaw finally relaxing for the first time since we walked in here.

“Come here.” He gestures to where he's standing on the mats.

I shake my head, not ready to get back into it again just yet. I'm too frustrated. My phone isn't the only thing that's been getting to my head. His touches feel too good, even if they're meant to hurt. I want him to touch me, and it's getting me all mixed up inside.

“Laney. Come. Here,” he punctuates each word, his command not leaving room for a bratty argument or resistance.

My shoulders sag and I give in, trying not to let him see just how much I want to be by his side right now. He sits down and crosses his legs so I mirror him.

“Have you ever meditated?”

“I have too many thoughts to meditate.” The corner of his mouth lifts in a clear attempt to hold back a smirk. “What?”

“The point of meditating is to help clear those thoughts.” Leaning forward, he takes my hands in his.

“Close your eyes.” I listen to him immediately, my body willingly submitting.

It’s not normal for me to truly submit, not without making sure to give my own orders in return. But this isn’t the time for that, and I find that with him, I don’t want to have to always give a snarky remark.

With Arrow, I feel like I have to. He always wants to baby me, to hold me in his arms and stand between me and the world. But with Havoc, I feel like he takes my hand and pulls me to the side, letting me see that I’m strong enough to take on any task alongside him.

Neither of them are wrong, they’re just different. In some ways, I feel like I need both of them, but that could never happen. It’s too far-fetched to think of either of them being willing to share.

“Take a deep breath and hold it in for five seconds. When you let it out, focus only on how your body is feeling with the exchange.”

I do as he says and try to imagine my anxiety flowing out of me just like the air I expel from my lungs.

“Good.” He takes a hand and presses it to my chest.

My heart rate picks up, but I keep my eyes closed. I know he can feel the rapid thumping just under his palm. *But does he know why?*

“Again. I want to feel you letting everything go with that breath. Let the only thing you focus on be the pressure I’m holding right here.”

Keeping my eyes shut, I do it. Again and again, until all I feel is him, all I’m aware of is him.

“Beautiful,” he breathes as he slowly removes his hand. “You have so much power inside you. Embrace it. Hold onto

it. Let it drive you.”

Feeling vulnerable but oddly safe, I let my words tumble out while keeping my eyes closed.

“I don’t feel powerful. I feel like all I am is a pretty face. A very controlled, pretty face.”

An oddly soft but calloused hand cups my face as a rough thumb slides over my cheek.

“Even the most breathtaking creatures are fierce. How else would they protect their beauty?”

My eyes open, and I gaze into a haze of green that reminds me of the vineyards I grew up in. I swear I can smell the fresh basil as my mother cooks, and hear my sister running through the fields as my brother chases her. Tears spring to my eyes all too quickly at the thought, the memory of when things were good.

“Sometimes people wear a mask for so long, even they forget who they are underneath it.”

“I see you, and you’re so much more than just a beautiful face.”

My hand holds his as we sit there with each other in silence, the world slowly fading away. For once, the rapid thoughts stop. The posture, the need to control, finally stops. We sit there, suspended in time, and nothing else matters. Right now, all I see is him.



Chapter 6

It's fucking cold on this island at night. I understand why we have to do these searches in the dark, but it's really getting on my last damn nerve. *Who else could hide here? Where could they even be hiding at this point?*

Unless someone is living underground, there is no way anyone is left. I haphazardly look through the trees while trying to listen to anything other than my chattering teeth. Nessa flanks me, watching from behind while covering my back. We've been at this for almost a week now.

"I don't fucking see anything." My voice shakes as the cold starts to get to me. As much as I joke with Laney about going up to Russia, I would really rather never be in those cold winters ever again. The island is bad enough.

“Oh quit your complaining. We’ve been out here for an hour, you eejit.” Shaking her head, she walks past me.

“You know, for someone who tries to hide their lineage, you sure do use a lot of Irish insults.” I smirk when I get a reaction from her.

She scoffs and marches ahead of me, not sticking to our protocol at all. Not that I was following protocol with how little I seem to be scanning the surroundings. My mind is still stuck on my girl.

“Alright, *lad*,” she emphasizes the word to make a point, “let’s keep moving.”

We continue on for another hour. In that hour, I debate tossing the leather gloves because they are essentially useless. I throw two more fits about the weather all while my teeth chatter louder than a woodchipper.

“For fecks sake, Arrow.” Nessa throws her hands in the air, clearly irritated by my antics.

“Let’s just go, no one is here. I want to get back and talk to my girl.”

I really have enjoyed my time with Nessa. She’s come to feel like a sister. We are always on each other’s case, but as I’ve gotten to know her, I’m starting to see who she really is. It’s what makes me feel comfortable to be myself and not a teacher with her.

It’s also how I found that she’s a talented driver and even more skilled at shooting moving objects. I plan to have her help teach the advanced driving skills course with Damien and give tips to those working on their long-range shooting skills. We have the instructor there, but it’s easier when we can have other students who know what they are doing to be in the car with the ones learning or up in the trees with those shooting.

“You’re a disgusting, hopeless romantic. You know that, right?” she says with a smirk and I nod, knowing it’s fully true. “Go talk to your girl, Arrow. I’ll see you tomorrow night.”

I nearly skip back to the teacher housing while calling Boris and Alexi to update them on the sweep and let them know that if nothing comes up by Christmas, we should redirect our resources elsewhere. Alexi hangs up and when it's just Boris and me, I linger on the phone.

“Something you want to say, son?” I equally love and hate when he calls me that. I love to feel like I belong, but I'm *not* his son.

“I want to tell her.”

He lets out a sigh. One that closely mimics the sound of a disappointed parent. I bite my tongue, holding back my words.

“It hasn't been long enough yet. I'm coming to trust her, but I need to see a little more before we are there.”

I hang up the phone then, not having anything left to say to him. If he wants to dismiss me and the people I care about, I'm going to dismiss him.

Wow, I really am a child.

I shoot Laney a text, telling her to call me. It's early for her, but I want to hear her morning voice. It's so cute.

Laney: Headed to training. Call you when we're done.

Training? She mentioned she might work out more there to build her endurance, but I didn't know this was an actual training regimen in place.

Arrow: Who's training you? Are they as good as I am?

I try to tell myself not to be jealous, but when I see his name pop up, my anger gets the best of me.

Laney: Havoc. Gotta turn off my phone to stay focused. Teacher's rules.

My impulse control and anger issues tunnel my vision. Before I know it, I'm launching my phone across the room, causing it to shatter on all sides. *Who the fuck thought it was a good idea to make both sides of the phone glass?*

Whatever. I'll get a new one when I wake up. One that's made from a company that knows how to actually make a decent phone.

Moving to the bar, I grab the whisky and pour a double, trying to calm my racing thoughts. I need to get this side of me under control. I can't just lash out every time things piss me off.

Guess anger issues run pretty deep in the family. I tip the glass back, downing the drink in a single gulp before pouring another. I'm aware I can't drown my issues in alcohol and hope that I wake up with them solved.

But this is all I have right now. So, I pour myself a third glass. The burn makes me wince and I find that as I try to move to the couch, I have a slight sway in my step.

I didn't eat much today, so that must be why it's hitting me so hard. That, or the fact that I haven't had much to drink at all since spending time with Laney. Shaking my head, I toss the amber liquid back and decide this will be my last one.

Maybe a movie will help me keep my mind off things. Suspense usually calls to me, but right now I want validation in my anger, so I turn on Rocky. Nothing gets the frustration out like watching a man knock his opponent to the ground.

By the end of the movie, I can hardly keep my eyes open, but I've decided that I'll text Boris tomorrow. He has until my girl comes home to tell her the truth. After that, I'm doing it. No matter how much this Havoc guy worms his way into her life, I will prove I'm the better fit. I'm *the only* fit.

His bright green eyes, muscles, and constant snark will never be able to diminish the care and love I can bring her. And that's what she deserves. I've never wanted to protect someone like I do her. Laney's as fierce as a tiger, yet carries the gentleness of an angel.

I know she has claws and can protect herself, but if it were up to me, I'd make sure she never has to.



Chapter 7

It's almost Christmas, and as I sit on my bed I reflect on all of the things that have changed since we arrived. We came here to hatch an escape plan and are leaving with a revenge plot. I saw Evie torture a man. Not like you see in the movies, like a legitimate full-on blood spraying across the floor torture parade.

I've never seen so much gore before. My father may not have cared much about me using my body to get him ahead but he kept me far from the bloody side. I sigh, thankful Lev is planning something because I need a good distraction. I will spend the evening getting out of my head and putting on that fake smile—until even I believe it.

I send Havoc a text, inviting him to movie night. I might have gotten upset with him after the whole torture thing with

Evie, but I still want him to feel included. He's gone out of his way to help me feel stronger and more prepared, the least I can do is offer an olive branch.

Less than five minutes later, there's a knock at my door. I open it to find a bag waiting there with no one in sight. I'm hesitant to open it until I get a whiff of his scent.

I don't know how to describe it, but it's like a sweet strength, lighting my veins up with renewed life. I grab the bag and bring it to my bed, wondering what he could have left me.

For my unicorn,

*A little something for you to hold onto when we
have to bathe in the blood of our enemies.*

-Your humble torturer

I laugh as I pull out a very large stuffed unicorn. Somehow, it smells just like him. I hold it close and breathe him in, allowing his scent to envelop me. It's a heady aroma of rum and spice, something sweet with a kick, reminding me perfectly of him. This man, born of chaos, is doing things to my heart.

I text him to come to my room, needing to thank him for this, but also wanting to get to know him more while also showing him more about me. A minute later, he walks in as if he were just waiting for my permission.

"Do you like it?" he asks sheepishly.

I grin as I tug it close to my body.

"I love it. His name is Francis."

Havoc barks out a laugh at that, a sound I'm beginning to truly love.

"Out of all the names in the world, you picked Francis?"

He sits on the bed next to me, and I wrap my body around him in a hug with Francis right in the middle—making a unicorn sandwich.

“I just imagined what I thought your real name might be and picked that.”

When I grin at him, he pulls me closer and tickles me. I die of laughter in his arms and he chuckles along with me.

“You think I look like a Francis then?”

I shrug. “Maybe a Eugene.”

He shakes his head at me. “Don’t you remember seeing my blade? My name starts with a T.”

I ponder on that for a moment, lifting my finger to my chin as if I were deep in thought.

“Okay, so Theodore.”

“Like the chipmunk? That’s how you see me?”

I pinch his cheeks. “A cute little chipmunk.”

He bats away my hand. “Try again, rainbow girl.”

“Fine,” I sigh. “But this is the last time I’m changing his name. I haven’t even had him for an hour and he’s had three different names.”

“Oh, well good thing he’s an inanimate object.”

I gasp as I pull my new friend between us.

“How dare you talk about Tobias that way.”

Havoc goes still under me and clears his throat.

“I like that one,” he says, his voice raspy and not at all like him.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m good.”

“Havoc.” I take his face in my hands as he tries to look away. “What’s wrong?”

His throat bobs and I feel it just under my fingers.

“Vi, she was the last person to ever call me that.”

My eyes go wide. “Holy shrimps on a stick, did I actually just guess your real name?”

He nods and I wrap my arms around him, keeping him close. These men don't talk about their real names with anyone. Part of me is even surprised his wife knew it. I pull back to look him in the eye.

"This will stay between us, I swear." His hands dig into my hips. "And I don't have to call him that." I point to the stuffed unicorn that is now smashed between our bodies.

"I think that's the perfect name for him. I want to know that you go to sleep with him tucked under your arm every night. I want to know he's what makes this life a little more bearable."

I feel like we're no longer talking about a stuffed children's toy.

"I want you to look at him and see everything I see in you."

My brows pinch as I slide off of his lap and sit next to him. Looking down at Tobias, I comb my fingers through the pink hair on his mane.

"Is this really how you see me?" I ask, sitting back.

He looks puzzled, but I think he understands what I'm saying. I don't want to just be seen as the pretty thing.

"Baby girl, I didn't pick that for you because I think you're just pretty on the outside. Sure, you remind me of the rainbow. Your personality is as bright as the sun itself."

He takes my hands in his as he levels me with his stare. The kind of look I know is seeing straight into my soul.

"These mythical creatures are known for drawing in their enemies with their beauty, only to slay them with their horns when they get close. I've decided to call you my unicorn because dying at your hand would be the most magical kind of death."

Tears glisten in my eyes as I take a deep breath. Somehow, right now, I don't feel like I have the weight of the world on my shoulders. I feel like me and only me. I can't remember the last time someone made me feel that way.

Digging deep, trying to picture it, my thoughts drift to Arrow and how I felt after we had sex for the first time. When

he cuddled in bed with me and held me close. Maybe I can remember the last time after all.



Chapter 8

I haven't Christmas shopped in over four years. In fact, the last time I shopped for anyone that wasn't me was about four and a half years ago when E was having a rough time. I found her lying in her bed on Christmas day with a dazed expression on her face and glassy eyes.

I had gone to find her because I was hurting too, and some days she was the only one who understood. I think more often than not, we sought refuge in each other's company.

At three years old, Ellie had just been diagnosed with leukemia, and not a single doctor could give us hope that she would see the snowfall next year. Playing in the snow was her favorite, but after all of the treatments and her lowered immune system, she wasn't able to do much more than sit up in bed for mealtimes.

Vi and I had to feed her towards the end because she was too weak to feed herself, and her hand-eye coordination was off balance. I told E we were going shopping then. I needed to get something to make my girls smile, and she was always the best person to help with that.

Ellie was named after E in a way. I told Vi she could pick any name she wanted as long as it started with an E. Vi loved E as much as I do. So, when she told her first to make sure the name felt right, I wasn't in the least bit surprised that I was the last to hear what I would be calling our daughter.

E would join us for dinners sometimes and was always like an aunt to Ellie. She pulled away at the end though, just like I did. Thinking back on that, I realize that was when things started getting worse for her at the compound too.

She had made many examples of men who had tried to touch her, but there was always this haunted look in her eyes as if something vital had already been stripped away. I push away thoughts of the past that threaten to darken my day. I refuse to think of the final days with my sweet Ellie.

I only ever want to remember the good times with her, and Vi too. If I spend too much time focused on what could have been, I'll forget about all that there still could be.

So, I go on a hunt for E. I figured I needed her expertise if I was getting a gift for her best friend. When I walk into the kitchen, Lev invites me to join them for breakfast. It gives me the opportunity to see how easily E and her three men all fall into step with each other.

Alexi cooks the eggs and bacon while Evie pours coffee. Lev prepares the English muffins and Damien floats around them all, handing them what they need just as they need it. It's a beautiful thing seeing them all care for her and one another.

"E, come shopping with me today?" E gleams with excitement, likely remembering the last time we went shopping and accidentally happened upon a carnival on the way home. We had the craziest, most random day that included way too much cotton candy.

Alexi raises his eyebrows, but I just nod to him.

“I’ll have the new team with me, and I’ll only be taking her to the places your father has approved of.”

I can see he wants to protest, but when E throws her arms around my neck in a hug and I spin her around laughing, he relents.

“Grab me some new boxers while you’re out?” Damien asks E with a knowing grin on his face. “You owe me.”

I cover my ears, pretending not to hear anything. This girl is like a sister to me. While I’m glad she’s found men to love her, I sure as fuck do not need to be hearing anything about their sex life.

After kissing all of her men, E grabs my arm and nearly runs us out to the garage where a car is waiting for us. Well, three armored black SUVs to be exact. Already knowing the charade, E climbs into the back seat of the middle car, and I follow her before gesturing out the window for everyone to move out.

“So, how’s the new position treating you?” E asks.

I smile back at her. “I have no idea why Boris is training me to be like a second to him, but I’m enjoying this way more than I ever did with Adrik.”

“What makes this so different?” I think of all the reasons why as we approach the gates and the rolling hills of the estate come into view.

“I feel heard here. I get the time to do the things I enjoy. Things like training with Laney and being taken seriously for the skills I have. Boris already trusts me with his people, and I’m actually getting to know them. I’ve met some of their families and I even like them. It was never like that before.”

“Hey,” she says, pushing my shoulder. “You always liked me.” She’s just joking around so I mess with her.

“I tolerated you,” I say sarcastically.

“You love me and we both know it.”

I wrap my arm around her and pull her in for a quick side hug. Neither of us have ever been very affectionate unless it came to Ellie, but lately, it feels like there's a shift with us. I feel even more protective of her, like I want to have her close, but not in a romantic type of way.

"I do love you." I need her to know that I'd give anything for her. It's the only reason I'm about to leave soon.

"I love you too. So, who are we shopping for today?"

"I got Laney for the gift exchange. We both know I need some help with this. The last time I got something pink was when Ellie was like two and her mother could still convince her pink was the best color." My eyes feel wide with panic. I don't want to fuck this up. I want to give Laney something sincere.

"Oh my gosh, was that when you got that fluffy pink sweater that had her dying of sweat in under five minutes?"

She bursts out laughing, and I find myself joining her. I never talk about Ellie. Never. And even less about Vi. But for some strange reason, it's been getting easier to remember the good.

"Yeah, I'll help you, buddy. Even if it is out of selfishness of me not wanting to hear her complain for ages. That girl can talk up a storm when something pisses her off."

"You're telling me. You know I've been training for the better part of my life, but this girl is the most distracting woman I've ever met. What should be a one-hour session turns into three or four hours because she won't stop talking."

E's eyes light up with a mischievous look.

"Yeah, I'm sure it has nothing to do with the fact that you're crushing on her like a love-sick puppy."

We pull up to the row of shops that aren't far from the estate. The only employees are people Boris knows and trusts. We let the first van of men empty and set up a small perimeter before heading in.

“I am not a puppy. She’s cute but way too young. Besides, she’s got something going on with that Arrow guy.”

The words taste like acid on my tongue, completely contradicting the way I feel about her. Looking around I try to ignore the fact that it physically hurts my chest to think about her with another man or that the hours we spend training go by too fast, or that I might be falling madly in love with her best friend. *Okay, yeah, I’ve lost it.*

“As far as I know, she and Arrow aren’t an exclusive thing.”

E shrugs as I hold open the door for her at the first shop. It’s a custom t-shirt place, and I have a strong feeling everyone will be coming here with their ideas.

“But she still cares about him, and the guy looks like he would murder for her.”

“Wouldn’t you?” Her eyebrows raise knowingly.

“I would,” I admit. “But I don’t know if he would share her.”

“Could you?”

Without hesitation, I reply, “Yes.”

E smiles. “Then I think that’s your answer.”

She holds up a bright pink crop top and an idea comes to mind. I take it to the front and chat with the designer about my idea. She looks mildly confused until she notices the escort and must realize who I work for.

“Will this be sent to the estate?” she asks and I nod.

That’s when a necklace catches my eye. It’s a gold unicorn. Perfect. Picking it up, I hand it to the cashier to add it to my bill, requesting for it to be specially wrapped just for my girl.

As we walk out, E links her arm with mine.

“How did you know it was all three of them for you?” I ask her, needing to know if there’s a sign I should be looking for.

She shrugs. “It was always the four of us. The idea of any of them alone never felt right.”

“I don’t know what I should do. I’ve never been so confused about a girl before.”

“Poly relationships can be a really beautiful thing if everyone is in it for the right reason. Talk to her, tell her all about how it was ‘love at first sight’ and that you’re willing to share”

“E, with her, it was love at first threat.” I laugh and she laughs with me.

Conversation is easy with her as we make our way through the few other shops on the block. More than a few times, I catch members of my team staring at E with undisguised interest. I level them with a shriveling glare. Boris isn’t forthcoming to his men about my past, so I’m not sure who they think I am, but they have all learned quickly that my word is law.

Regardless, I’ll make sure they know E is off-limits unless they want to end up butchered, slowly. I think she notices my power and authority, and I so badly want to tell her the truth about my assignment with him.

Initiation matters in the Bratva, but I’ve been given some leniency to help pull off this plan. It’s the only reason I keep my mouth shut and pray this doesn’t blow up in my face.



A few days later, I knock on the door, feeling weird as fuck. I tried to go to E’s room, but her bed was made and cold, which really only left one option. I hear some feet padding across the floor and Alexi comes into view, a pissed-off look written on his face.

“You do realize that in the rare moments we all actually get to sleep, the last thing we want is to be woken up for no damn good reason.” His sleep-covered eyes meet mine and I give him one of my signature smiles.

“Well, sleepy head, I’m leaving for my initiation mission, and I wanted to say goodbye to E before I left since I’ll be gone for a little over a month.”

His eyes widen before narrowing at me.

“Where the fuck is my father sending you for over a month?”

I shrug. He knows I can't tell him.

“Could be shorter. We're just now coming up with a plan, but you know how it is. Sometimes it's two weeks, other times it's three months.”

He shakes his head before an equally sleepy-looking girl steps out from behind him.

“Go get your present for him,” E says, shoving Alexi in the ribs.

Well, this should be interesting.

“I heard you say you're leaving?”

I nod and her arms wrap around my waist. It's not the usual affection I receive from her. As I pull away, she tightens her grip on me and her voice sounds sorrowful as she whispers her goodbye.

“Thank you for coming here. Thank you for always choosing me.”

I wrap my arms around her and pull her as close to me as I possibly can while my heart twists in knots.

“Anything for you, E. You're the only family I've got left.”

She pulls back with a grin, wiping at a tear that falls.

“That's not true anymore. We both have more family to fight for than I think either of us knows what to do with.”

Alexi comes back to the door, scowling. But when his eyes look down at E, his tone changes to genuine concern.

“What's wrong?” he asks. The man may be a total prick to the rest of us, but he looks at her like he can't live without her. Just like the moon craves the earth-always beside her in endless orbit.

“Havoc was just reminding me of how much I have to be thankful for today.” Her eyes light up as she kisses his cheek

then heads back into the room.

Gone is the pissed-off guy who opened the door. I have an odd feeling the man before me is just Alexi, not the heir to the Russian mafia. He hands me a black bag with neon pink tissue paper, and I can't bite back the smirk.

"I thought it matched your taste in women," he remarks.

I actually laugh, no matter how hard I try to hold it in. He's not wrong. I open it and hold up a sick sweatshirt that says 'Feeling Stabby' complete with throwing blades and a skull. It's absolutely perfect.

I hug him, although it does feel ninety percent one-sided, but I ignore his hesitation. With a quick pat on the back, he releases me and steps back.

"This is perfect." I tuck it into my bag, intent on wearing it on my flight today.

"Merry Christmas, Havoc."

"Merry Christmas. Make sure E gets everything today, she deserves it."

When he nods, I trust he will follow through. I head to Laney next, needing to give her the gift I've been waiting for and to tell her how I feel. My hands shake a little as I hold the gift close.

No big deal, just going to go profess your love for a girl who is way too young for you and hope that she's open to a throuple. Totally normal Christmas morning.

I set my bag down before knocking on her door. When she runs to it in a tizzy about it being too early, I have to hold back my laughter. I pull her present out from behind my back and explain why I'm there. Her expression turns from pissed off to a delighted kind of excitement, and I find myself never wanting to look away.

Her joy is as beautiful as she is.

Laney pulls me into the room and sits on her bed to open the present. I hover nervously by her side, but when she sees it

and launches herself into my arms to thank me, everything feels right in the world.

She pulls back, and I give her only enough space so that my lips can crash to hers. Fire ignites in my veins, warming me up from the inside out, my whole body heating with electricity the moment I feel her kissing me back. I push into it until my tongue swipes across her lips and she opens for me.

I press my advantage, dipping her back and holding her tight while I claim ownership of her mouth—to make my intentions very clear. Not only do I love her, but I want my whole world to revolve around her just like in those sappy movies. I want to spoil her, protect her. Most of all, I just want her to call me hers, even if she's someone else's too.

Of course, being a man and an assassin who has no idea how to healthily express my feelings, I attempt to push all of those words into the kiss. Apparently a little too hard because her ass falls back to the mattress. When our lips part and I pull back, she's just staring up at me.

Does she feel the same way? Is she confused? Does she want me to leave? Her blank expression has my mind in high gear.

Naturally, I have to make this more weird because I'm overthinking everything at the moment. So, I make light of my declaration of love and hope I didn't just freak her the fuck out.

“Had to have at least one kiss before I left. You never know when a day in the mafia could be your last.”

Her mouth falls open, as if she wants to say something, but I take the pressure off of her when she freezes. Pulling her to her feet, I kiss her forehead while inhaling her vanilla and cherry blossom scent I've become addicted to. For just a moment, I allow myself a slice of peace and hold her close.

She felt it, I know she did. I'm not going to stand here and question my feelings for her now that I've made them perfectly clear.

So instead, I walk to the door. Just before I leave, I look back at her. Pink cheeks and hooded eyes with those plump swollen lips makes me question leaving just yet. But she needs to decide if this is what she wants.

“See you soon, my unicorn.”

I close the door behind me, trying to slow my heart rate. Adjusting my hard-on, I head to the garage with the mission in mind. The mission that I need to complete to get back to her. And I've never been more determined.



Chapter 9

After we wrap up Christmas morning, I decide to put some of the bath bombs Evie got me to use. Damien keeps saying he can't wait to try his in the tub with his girl, so I feel like it's time to call it a morning.

Nessa messaged me earlier saying she was bored and suggested we call each other today. So, I make plans to do just that.

She's been talking to me more often, and I find that I'm really starting to like our conversations. Her 'I don't give a fadoodle' attitude is so different from Evie's, but still just as strong. It's kind of fascinating.

After hugging Evie and thanking everyone for the presents, I run to my room and start a bath. Once I've added the bath bomb and some bubbles, I grab a bottle of champagne I saved

in my fridge for a moment just like this. Drinking in a tub full of bubbles is literally the best thing ever.

Which gives me an idea.

Laney: Hey, do you have any bath bombs?

Nessa: In fact, I do. I just got some as a gift.

Laney: Perfect, draw yourself a bubble bath and get a drink. Once you're in, give me a call.

Correction, bubble baths, champagne, and new bestie video calls are officially the best thing ever. I used to do this with a friend I had when I was growing up and I loved it.

I pour my drink and set the bottle next to me on the edge of the tub. This is going to make for a fun dinner tonight. The whole bottle won't make me sloppy drunk, but maybe it will be enough to help me ignore how much I'm already missing Havoc.

It's strange how he's become such an important fixture in my life already. His constant touches in the gym. More than a few times we would end up in odd positions with him between my legs or me straddling him, and we'd freeze.

Time seemed to stop just for us in those moments. His bright green eyes became something I craved every morning when I woke up. Knowing he's not here now leaves an ache in my chest that has me constantly rubbing at it.

Havoc looks at me in a way no man ever has before. I don't feel like an object to him; I feel like a warrior. When we train together, he's sure to point out all of my strong points while coaching me on my weaknesses. But he has this way of pointing them out that doesn't make me feel less than or like a failure. He believes I can grasp every concept he teaches me. I think he's the reason I'm finally starting to get stronger physically and mentally.

He's given me so many techniques to build endurance as well, making sure I no longer feel like the weak link in the group. For the first time in a long time, I feel like someone really sees me. It's in the way he looks at me, comforts me, and buys me gifts. It all makes me feel like someones really

paying attention. Almost as if he knows what I need before I do because he's caught a glimpse into my soul.

I shake off the thought as I submerge my body into the warm water. Every muscle I've been pushing so hard the past few weeks starts to relax as I sink into it. The champagne is cold as it meets my lips. Before I know it the bubbles are going to my head, making me want to giggle to myself. When a video call from Nessa pops up, I answer immediately.

"Hey girl," I say cheerily.

Nessa, being Nessa, looks mildly uncomfortable. I've found that's her normal state though. I shrug it off easily and get to the girl talk.

"So, what kind of presents did you get today? Anything special?"

I try not to think about how this is the first Christmas I'm spending without my family, or how much I miss them. Our traditions were always so strong, and I never thought there would be a day that I wouldn't even be able to call them for the holiday. Swallowing past the lump in my throat, I focus on the call and let my new friend distract me.

"Actually, yeah." Even though the bubbles are covering us well, Nessa still drapes an arm over her chest as she speaks. "So, I'm going to tell you something and this is going to stay between us. Deal?"

I lift a brow but agree. "Deal."

"Boris had like fifty gifts delivered to me today."

My eyes widen in shock as Nessa scoots down into the water, almost as if she's trying to shy away from me.

"Boris? As in the great Russian mafia king? Like, Alexi's dad. That Boris?"

After Christmas with him and the gifts he gave us, it's clear the man cares, but to send that many gifts...

"Weird right?" Her cheeks tinge with a pink hue, and I have a feeling it has nothing to do with the temperature of the water.

“Nessa O’Neill, do you have a crush?”

“Noooooo, I just. Gobshite. Okay fine, maybe. But he’s literally old enough to be my father!”

I laugh. “Nothing says daddy issues like dating a man your dad’s age.”

Nessa chokes on her drink then glares daggers at me, but I shrug it off. We both know she hates her father.

“So wait, what did he get you?”

She rolls her lips, even as they pull into a smile.

“A little bit of everything a girl could ever want. Bath bombs and oils in my favorite scents, which I had no idea how he knew about unless it was just a lucky guess.”

I laugh. *Does she even know who Boris is?*

“Ness, that man has more resources at his fingertips than we will ever be able to comprehend. I bet he found a way to look into your past purchases.”

She rolls her eyes, but I can see her interest piqued.

“Anywayyyy, he wrote a note too, and I am just so confused. I want to be off this island before anything can happen. I have a strange feeling Alexi might murder me if he knew.”

“Between me and you, babe, that man is a teddy bear dressed up as some baddie mafia king. He is literally the most gentle person with Evie and didn’t kill me after he found out the truth. Classic closet golden retriever right there.”

Nessa chuckles at that. “Yeah, okay, and I’m secretly an emo mommy domme.”

“Hey now, don’t knock it till you try it. I could see you rocking black leather boots with that hair.”

She shakes her head and I laugh, taking another sip of sparkling wine that tingles my nose.

“Enough about me and my ‘daddy issues’, how are things going for you? Arrow is out here walking around like a

slapped puppy because he misses you so bloody much.”

A grin spreads across my face. “Really?”

“If you don’t get back here soon, he might just actually lose it.”

“Can I tell you something?”

“Even if I said no, you’d still tell me.”

Biting my lip, I reply, “Yeah, but this one is kind of serious.”

Nessa settles back, getting much more comfortable in the tub. I don’t know what’s in the rocks glass she’s sipping on, but she seems to be more relaxed, so it must be working.

“Go on then.”

Topping up my glass of champagne, I try to find the right words.

“I think I may be starting to have feelings for Havoc.”

She nearly shoots up out of the water. “What the hell? Are you trying to get yourself killed?”

My face must say it all because she seems to understand right away. She slides back under the bubbles and we don’t mention the fact that I just saw her tits, or the very impressive Celtic knot sternum tattoo she has.

“You like them both, don’t you?”

I nod. “It’s weird. I don’t know how it happened, but I feel a pull to both of them. I don’t want to have to choose.”

“What is it with everyone around me living some kind of reverse harem novel?”

“A reverse harem is three men, Ness. This would be poly, it’s different.”

“Either way, I want to know how I get one of those.” She dramatically sighs, and we both giggle. “Anyway, what does Evie say?”

“She’s Evie. I’m not like her. She wants me to tell them what I want, to grab it by the balls and take it. I don’t know

how to do that.”

“Then what are you going to do?”

I sit back in the water, splashing some over the side with my dramatics.

“I don’t know.”

We sit there in silence for a minute before Nessa breaks it.

“These lives we live really are fucked, aren’t they?”

“Tell me about it.”

Well, this is not going how I planned. I wanted a fun chat with a friend, not this moody mess of a mud puddle.

“Oh, I have an idea for when we get back to the island,” I say, nearly dropping my phone into the water with my sloppy movements.

Nessa perks up at this. “Okay, give me the details.”

“Alright, so I’ve been thinking.”

“That’s dangerous.”

My mouth drops open. “Shut up, you brat.”

I swish my hand at her, only to spray my phone. We both crack up at the ridiculousness of the moment.

“Okay, okay, what was your idea?”

“I want to dial back the competitiveness on the island. So much crap happened because of the hierarchy that’s being forced on the students. I know Evie and Alexi want to change it, and I think we should start by reaching out to students who might be struggling.”

“Struggling, how?”

“Like, say someone is doing exceptionally well at hacking, but they are struggling with combat. Let’s help create a time in the day or week when we can all use the skills we are well-trained in to help others. Damien and Evie could work in combat, you in sharp shooting and driving, and I could help with tactics and manipulation as well as poisons.” I pause, giving her a moment to think about my idea.

“That could actually work really well. What about the others?”

“I was thinking maybe Alexi could aid in business tactics and Lev could do his computer thing. If we all add something and make it more about working as a team to be better instead of pitting us against each other, then maybe we can start creating a better world.”

“Laney, that’s really fecking smart.”

“Thanks,” I say as I flick my pulled-up hair dramatically. “Some call me a genius.”

“Well, I wouldn’t go that far.” She smirks and I fake being upset.

We talk for over an hour, until both our baths have run cold. Once we have a solid idea, I jot down notes in a tab on my phone so I can send Alexi the idea later. I want to make sure it’s all thought through well before sharing, or he will shut it down.

He might not be thinking how important it is to have people at your back. But if this new family has taught me anything, it’s how much we all really need each other.

If I can do this right, then maybe all of the pain and suffering will be worth it in the end. If we can leave this world a better place than we found it, then there has to be peace on the other side for us.



Chapter 10

I arrive at a familiar gray building and square my shoulders to prevent a shiver from racing down my spine. I don't think there's any evidence that could be used against me here. Nonetheless, it's like walking into the lion's den while willingly wearing fresh-cut steaks as underwear.

So, stupid basically. That would be the word to describe what Boris and I have been planning.

I walk up the steps, knowing *he* will be here today. It's Thursday, the day we train new recruits and scout others. Entering through the double doors, I try not to wince as the familiar gym scent assaults my nose.

Serves me right for getting accustomed to that sweet vanilla and cherry blossom scent. Familiar eyes glare at me from across the room, so I affix my normal 'nothing can touch me'

smile to my face while parading around the raised ring like I own the place.

Fake it till you make it has never applied so well to my life. Okay, maybe it has, but no one needs to know that.

“Hey, brother,” I say enthusiastically, ignoring the questioning look Adrik pins me with as I clap his shoulder and pull him in for a brief hug. My muscles are all as stiff as can be, but that’s pretty normal for us anyway.

“Don’t ‘hey brother’ me, you prick. Where the fuck have you been?”

His scowl would be enough to melt most men’s defenses. Good thing I’m not most men.

“I was on a mission. Took down three diplomats without raising any suspicion. Have you not been getting my hit correspondence?”

He hasn’t because I haven’t sent any, but Adrik is a full-on idiot anytime technology is concerned, so I expect him to lie through his teeth.

“Of course I’ve gotten them.” I have to physically fight an eye roll so hard I nearly give myself a headache just thinking about it. “Why haven’t you answered your phone?”

“I swear I said in my last communication my phone got destroyed, and I was in one of those situations where a new one wasn’t a priority. What’s going on? Why are you acting like I’m a suspect for a crime I’m not even aware of?”

I fake my most confused face as I look my friend up and down. Former friend. *How did I never see him for who he is?* His black hair speckled with silver is unwashed and unkempt while his suit looks like it hasn’t been washed in a few cycles now.

He must finally fall for the charade because he lowers his eyes, and the exhaustion pulling at him reveals itself as clear as cracks in armor.

“A lot has happened while you’ve been gone, including Eydis going dark on us.”

My brows shoot to my hairline in actual surprise. I wasn't expecting him to be the one to bring her up, but now that he has, I have to be careful.

"She always finds her way. I'm sure if that was the choice she made, then she made it wisely. We are the ones who trained her after all."

"So you're not still pissed at me for sending her there?" The way he watches me makes me feel uneasy. *Does he know something?*

I shrug, turning to watch the fight so I don't have to look him in the eye.

"She's your niece. Whatever you have to do, that's on you."

He nods then sits back down to watch the fighters in the ring along with me.

"Hey, how's E's program been going? Is the team still here?"

He lets out an annoyed growl. "They refuse to leave. Since she hired them, they won't go until she dismisses them."

I chuckle and he huffs.

"So they are just as stubborn as she is then? Shocking." I mock him while secretly being proud of E for going after the things she wanted no matter how much he tried to sway her otherwise.

I go through the moves, easily falling back into my old routine as I make my rounds with the recruits and offer advice to those fighting. I walk a few of them through warm-ups and fall into step for as long as it takes Adrik to leave. When he exits after giving me a nod, I feel like I can take my first breath since arriving back here.

I put in a little more time with the people I know, not wanting them to get suspicious. Once I'm confident it's all clear, I make my way to the gym E trained in with her recruits. She had her training center set up with dorm rooms on the outside of the gym, but kept all the doors visible to anyone who would be training. I don't think she did it to keep them

close to work, but more to create accountability and to help everyone feel more safe after some of the shit that happened to her here.

I knock on the door, doing what I can to respect their privacy but also feeling awkward as hell since there's no protocol for this. A tall woman with short, curly dark brown hair and dark skin answers the door. I only met her a handful of times, but she remembers me instantly.

“What are you doing back here, Havoc?”

“It's good to see you too, Lizz. Can we talk?”

She eyes me with skepticism. I'm sure Adrik hasn't been kind to any of them since E left, and I know she's wondering just whose side I'm on.

“It's about E.” I don't want to say too much out in the open, but I want her to know she can trust me, just like E does.

She nods and steps aside just enough for me to see a few of the other women who have chosen to stay. Donna, Maritza, and Tammy all sit on the couch in the gym area watching some fighting techniques. I knew E set them up with a program and had helpful videos for when they needed to learn something new, but they seem to be genuinely struggling right now.

They were all well-trained fighters when they arrived. However, if E was here, they would be miles ahead than they seem to be.

“How have you guys been getting by since E and I left?” I have been on nearly back-to-back missions since E was sent to the university, so I haven't been able to check in nearly as much as I would have liked. Lizz scoffs while walking by me.

“You and I both know Adrik thinks less of us than a damn toothpick.”

I nod in agreement. “I'm sorry I haven't been here to help. Has he got you running any missions?”

The eye roll I receive in response is enough for me to make decent assumptions.

“Hey, Havoc,” Lizz says, ducking into the ring. “Why don’t you show us a few moves before you leave us again.”

With a grin, I duck under the ropes. “You sure you can handle me, Lizz? I’d hate to hurt that pride of yours.”

Shaking her head, she smiles back at me. “Bring it on, big guy.”



We spend hours training. I work with everyone who’s still here and get them as close as I can to their expected progress mark according to the instruction journal E left for Lizz. When we’re done, I grab us all bottles of water, and we start some cool-down stretches. I can tell Lizz is itching to say something, but she will wait until everyone has left to shower.

Once we are the only ones left, Lizz doesn’t hold back.

“Do you know where E is?” she whispers, so only I can hear. I’m concerned there’s surveillance in the room so I just give her a slight nod of my head. “Something’s not right here.”

I move into a big stretch, looking around for any cameras.

“There are a few cameras but no sound. Donna did a full search when we got here.”

I keep my head down, leaning into another pose as I respond to avoid the cameras from seeing my lips. One thing Adrik is exceptionally good at is reading lips.

“She’s hiding. Plotting to get back at him.”

“Good. You know, when I accepted this job, I knew some of the men here would be bad. But, Havoc, almost all of them are.”

I already know this. I’ve been encouraging Adrik to implement tighter restrictions on The Shades enlistment for years. He stopped vetting men fully and if they had enough skills, they were allowed in despite the fact that they could be rapists or had gone to prison for mass murder that had no real reasoning behind it. Too many of the men that make up the organization now are psychopaths.

While that's great for their intuitive planning skills and lack of empathy, it's also a disaster for the same reason.

"There are a few good seeds here. Right now, I'm trying to help E. I'm going to give you an untraceable number, and I need you to message me anytime you know anything. Find the good ones here and get them out when I tell you to move."

I believe E has an amazing plan, of that I have zero doubts. But I also know that most of the organization will turn on her once it's completed. We need as many people on our side as we can get.

"Is she okay?"

"She's loved and protected, which is as good as it gets in this world."

Silence stretches out and for a few minutes, I actually worry she's just going to say fuck it. But she surprises me.

"We will fight for her and with her, every time."

It's exactly what I wanted to hear, but I also need to know her motivations to be able to really trust her with this.

"Why?"

Lizz bends over, getting in a cat-cow pose to continue avoiding her lips from the cameras.

"She saved all of us. We all had the experience necessary to be here, but we were all running from something as well. She knew that and brought us here and believed in us. E is one of the few of us that's left worth fighting for."

For the first time since I saw E in that hospital bed, I feel like I can breathe. Everything is coming together, and it's looking like we will have the upper hand for once.

We just have to hope we can keep the veil in front of his eyes in the meantime.



Chapter 11

Now that we are back on Elysium, I'm settling into the new room Alexi gave me in their mini mansion. He had our stuff moved, but I needed to clean and set up my toy chests. I'm just wrapping up when a knock sounds at the door. It's already open, so when I look up to see Arrow in the doorway, I can't help but smile.

"Hey there, stranger."

I get up from the floor, where I was just organizing some of the ropes I have, and reach out for him.

"What are you doing?" he asks as he pulls me into a hug.

"I just finished cleaning them, and now I'm letting them dry before I fold them back up."

“Why do you clean them? They’re just ropes.” He moves to sit on my bed as I wrinkle my nose.

“First, ew. They are ropes used during a time of heightened hormones, which makes us sweat, and it makes that sweat even more potent. Second, they are ropes that are used when bodily fluids are all around. They deserve to be cleaned and respected just like all of my toys.”

He narrows his eyes at me. “How many people have used those?”

I smile, not wanting to give him that information. I like tying people up and I also love tying harnesses on myself. It’s a stress reliever for me. Something about the knots and the pressure makes the weight of the world feel a little less heavy.

“What’s that?” I ask, changing the subject by nodding to the glittery pink present he’s holding.

“It’s for you. I also came to explain a few things. I know we talked a lot last night, but I need you to know my intention was not for you to find out from Boris.”

He takes my hands in his as he speaks. I can see real worry in his eyes. While I was never mad at him, I did feel like he was keeping something vital from me, and I did understand. I would have just preferred to hear it from him.

“I’ve been asking him for a while to tell you about who I am, but he refused. I gave him an ultimatum when you were gone and I was drunk. It wasn’t my best choice, but I’m just glad you know. I don’t want there to be secrets between us.”

My chest burns. I still haven’t told him about the kiss with Havoc, or what I feel like it means yet. I just don’t feel like he’s ready to hear it. It’s not a secret, per se, because we never agreed to be exclusive. I was very clear on that. But I don’t love the idea of keeping it from him.

“I’m not mad Arrow, I’m glad I know now so we can move forward.”

I take his hand in mine. As much as I care for Havoc, I can’t help but wonder if part of it was just me needing someone

there while I figured out who the heck I'm supposed to be in this group dynamic. Who I want to be.

"You want to move forward with me?" His nose touches mine as I push our foreheads together.

"Very much so." He kisses me and I melt into him. His lips are so soft, and the way his tongue caresses mine has me soaked and needy in under a minute.

"Arrow," I breathe, getting on top of him and setting the gift to the side. "I need you."

"Hmm," he hums into my mouth. "I need you too, Kitten."

His hands grab at my waist possessively, and I will never admit out loud how much I love it. The idea of being owned by him and letting him own my pleasure makes my heart flutter.

I push him back and grind myself down on his length. He's so hard under his pants. It feels so good that apparently both of us forget the door is still wide open.

A throat clears, and I look back to find Nessa in the doorway. Where she's getting a perfect view of my bright purple thong under my skirt. I'm not shy, and I won't body shame myself just because this is awkward, so I don't hurry to get down. She's the one staring after all.

"Can I help you, Ness?" I ask, not moving from my spot on top of my man. Arrow tries to move my hips, but I stay as still as a statue.

"I just wanted to see if you were still up to go to the library, but it looks like you're busy."

She doesn't even try to hold back her grin as she folds her arms and leans against the door frame. I totally forgot about our study/planning session. We've both been wanting to help Evie create connections to the students on the island as well as the guys.

For some reason, I get the feeling we are going to need everyone on our side in the future. Plus, allies in this world never hurt. Reluctantly, and with a sigh, I get off of Arrow.

“Sorry, I forgot, but I do want to go. Give us like, five minutes?”

She looks between Arrow and me. “Sure you don’t need at least ten?”

I glare daggers at her. We may have talked about our sex lives while both drunk and in our bubble baths at Christmas, but this is not the time to be bringing that up.

“Five minutes, Ness.”

She smirks then stands back up straight. “Want me to close the door?”

“Goodbye, Ness.” I walk over and push the door closed in her face. I can hear her laughing from the other side, but I try to ignore it.

“Sorry, I really do need to work on some stuff with her.”

Arrow is sitting up now, adjusting himself.

“It’s okay, I just want to see you open this.”

He hands me the gift with a shy look on his face. I sit next to him and tear through the paper like a savage. *I love presents.*

A black box with kitty whiskers and a nose in an iridescent pink reveals itself, and I shiver in anticipation. I love his nickname for me.

Opening the lid, I find a pink chrome two-finger brass knuckles in a familiar cat shape. As I lift it out, I notice it feels heavier than my normal ones. Not by a lot, but enough to let me know these could do some serious damage. The ears are much longer than I’ve seen before and almost resemble an arrow.

I turn them over and notice an engraving inside the handpiece. *My Kitten* is scrawled across the pink metal. I bite my lip, so happy I could scream.

“I love them,” I squeal as I launch myself into his arms. He falls back onto the bed again, holding me tight to him. When I

push up, I crash our lips together. “It’s perfect. You’re perfect.”

I look him in the eyes, making sure he knows I really mean it. But I don’t let the words I really want to say fall from my lips. As much as I know in my heart they’re true, I just can’t tell him until I’ve figured out what I want with Havoc.

“I’m yours,” he says, seeming to know where my thoughts were going, but not ready to say anything out loud yet either.

“Mine,” I whisper before kissing him again. This time it’s slow and passionate. A kiss that says everything we can’t seem to say yet.



Nessa and I get approval to lead an extra class for anyone who may be struggling with specific areas of expertise. Evie and Damien provide assistance in combat. They coach Nessa and me on the weekends so we can help in class as well. Lev leads those needing help with technical skills, and Alexi oversees both tactical motorcycle riding and business classes.

Overall, I can already see the students learning more about the Kings and Evie on top of their personal improvements. It’s helping us all form a bond and feels less like a competition that pits us against one another.

While we still keep our trials to ourselves, I’m finding that just being around the other students and them seeing that the Kings aren’t really monsters is drastically changing the mood on the island.

I also think it was a good idea for Alexi to ban the yacht parties, though I’ll never tell him that. They encouraged too much partying when our focus should be training. He’s still working on how he’s going to offer incentives to those who excel overall, but I know he’ll find the perfect fit. He always does.

“Miss DeLuca?” A husky voice calls from across the gym. “I need to see you in my classroom. Now.”

My cheeks heat, knowing exactly what’s about to happen.

“Yes, sir.” I hurry up off the floor where I was stretching and send a wink to Evie, who’s smirking at me like she knows too.

I mean, she probably does, but we’ve been keeping everything quiet from the rest of the students. I don’t care if my friends know, but I don’t want anyone thinking I’m getting special credit. Which I’m not.

Well, nothing more than lots of orgasms and the occasional kiss between classes. Super normal stuff.

Just as I make it through the doors, a hand grabs my arm and pulls me into the shadows on the side of the building. Soft, sure lips meet mine in a punishing kiss and I moan into his mouth.

“Fuck, I missed those lips.”

He’s in a suit, his white sleeves rolled up to reveal some of the ink on his left side. I’m thoroughly obsessed with this man’s body.

I bat my lashes. “You wanted to see me, sir?”

His eyes light with mischief. We’ve been talking about a teacher/classroom scene, and I can’t wait to get back to his room and fulfill both of our fantasies.

“You didn’t do so well on that last test about our history.”

He’s lying, I got an A. History is one thing I don’t fail at. If you study our past, then you’re less likely to repeat our mistakes in the future.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d think you were distracted during my lessons.” His breath skates across my ear before he sucks it into his mouth and nips it.

“I’m very distracted, sir. I find myself too focused on your mouth to pay attention to the words coming out of it.”

I’m panting, so ready for him to just thrust his cock into me that I nearly give in right here and just whip it out for him.

“I think you need some one-on-one time with the teacher then, to really be able to focus.”

His fingers skim over the waist of my white skirt before trying to slip his hands under. The only problem is, I was just working out, so there are matching white compression shorts in his way.

“First lesson,” he growls as he finds me covered. “You don’t wear anything that stops me from getting access to this pussy. Got it, Kitten?”

He steps back, giving me room to follow up with his little rule. I keep my skirt in place while pulling my shorts down and tossing them at him. I’m not wearing anything underneath now. From the way he holds my shorts to his nose and inhales, it must be clear I’m bare. He had me soaked the second his lips met mine.

“Do you need to be walked to your next lesson, Kitten?”

“Yes, please. I’d hate to get distracted on the way and keep you waiting.”

He carefully takes my shorts and tucks them into his pocket while placing his hand on my back and escorting me to his classroom. Each student we pass has my anticipation skyrocketing. By the time we make it behind his door, my arousal is dripping down my thighs.

“Please take a seat, Miss DeLuca.”

I do as he says, sitting in the chair across from his desk. He stands in front of me while rolling his sleeves up further, revealing more of his muscular forearms. Veins strain against his skin as he flexes them to lean back. My breaths quicken and I can’t help but lick my lips.

“What lesson did you want to teach me today, professor?”

He almost breaks character, a twitch tugs at the corner of his mouth. But then he takes a breath and gets right back into it. I cross my legs and fold my hands in my lap, being the proper student that I am.

Arrow walks around me, taking a strand of my hair in his fingers before gently tucking it behind my ear. When he’s at my back, I feel his hands grip either side of the chair before he leans in.

“You need to learn to pay attention better, Miss DeLuca. Can you please read to me what I’ve written on the board for you?”

The heat of his palm wraps around my breast and my vision goes hazy. *How the fudgedoodle am I supposed to read when he does this?*

“I’m waiting,” he whispers in my ear just as he pinches my nipple.

“I will pay better attention.” My voice is shaky, but my words are cut off when he moves his other hand between my legs. They uncross and part for him as willingly as the Red Sea. I’m already bare, so when his finger brushes my core, he can feel the evidence of just how excited I am over our little scene.

“Fuck, Kitten. Taste what I do to you.”

Arrow puts his finger to my lips and without hesitation, I let my tongue swirl around it before sucking it into my mouth. He pushes the digit all the way back until I gag. Tears spring to life in my eyes, loving when he moves my chin so that I’m looking up at him while he continues to gag me.

“Don’t stop reading or you’ll be punished. Got it?”

Quickly, he frees my mouth, letting me answer but also giving room for me to call the scene. We are both similar in our tastes, but everyone needs space to call a safeword if a scene isn’t what they were expecting. Fortunately for him, this is exactly what I want.

“Yes, sir.”

“Good girl.” He walks around me again and kneels at my front. “Now read again. And if you stop, I stop. Got it?”

His large hands spread my legs as wide as they can go, giving him the perfect view of my glistening core.

“Now, read for me, Miss DeLuca.”

“I will pay better attention to my professor and his needs.”

Arrow's head dips down. Before I start the next sentence, his lips seal around my clit and suck. I moan and rock into him; I don't want him to stop though, so I force my eyes to concentrate on the board and keep going.

"He works hard to create a stimulating environment..." I read, but it's cut off by a moan when his tongue teases me then begins strumming my clit like it's trying to play the freaking guitar. "For... for his stud—"

My head tilts back, and he pulls me to the edge of the seat so he can get deeper. I forget where I am, entirely lost in the feeling of his tongue working its way inside me while his fingers play at the entrance to both holes.

A smack followed by a burning pain along the inside of my thigh brings me back to the present in an instant. He pulls back, and I gasp at the sting vibrating through my leg.

"Read, or your professor will have to punish you further, Kitten."

A devilish grin crosses his features before he moves back to where I want him as I start reading again.

"For his students. His favorite student of all...he works exceptionally hard to impress."

Two fingers sink into me, curling just right. I know there's no way I'm reading the rest. I grab his hair and hold him in place, desperately not wanting him to stop.

His tongue goes back to my clit, and he adds one finger to my ass while continuing to stimulate my g-spot. It's so intense I feel actual tears falling from my eyes, but they aren't of pain or sadness, just pure freaking bliss.

"Don't stop. Please, professor. I'm going to..."

He keeps a steady pace, not moving out of rhythm for even a second and I detonate. My legs shake as I come, coating his face in my arousal. I gasp for air as I come down and his fingers slow as the last of my orgasm ripples through me.

"You're not very good at staying focused, Miss DeLuca. Perhaps, another lesson is in order."

I blink at him as he stands, wiping his face with the back of his hand. He reaches out and pulls me to my feet, but my knees give out almost immediately. Grabbing my waist, he lifts me and spins us around so I'm laying over his desk.

“Are you ready to be punished, Kitten?” he asks as he flips up my skirt.

The afterglow of my orgasm is still present, so with a smile on my face, I look back at him.

“Yes, sir.”



Chapter 12

Staring down at Laney bent over my desk with a dazed look on her face has my cock painfully hard behind my suit pants. My girl is in a pink crop top that's fitted so tight to her breasts I could see her nipples all through classes today. I swear she did it just to taunt me. Then, add to that a white skirt that shows off so much of her legs, making this scene happen was all I could think about for the past four hours.

“Finish reading for me,” I order her as I land a swift smack to her ass, loving that she wears skirts all the time.

Her head is still tilted toward me, so I can see she's getting off on the little bits of pain. I'm not a sadist and don't enjoy offering a lot of pain, but the occasional sting is fun to play with.

She bites her lip as our eyes meet.

“What if I don’t?”

“Then I won’t let you come again.” She might know by now that that’s simply not true. I’m a pleasure Dom after all. I want every single orgasm she can give me until she passes out. Then, maybe even one more.

I reach between her legs and rub gentle, slow circles around her clit. Her body melts into the desk in response, and I give a satisfied hum.

“Do you want to come again, pretty girl?”

“Yes,” she breathes, pushing back into my hand.

I pull my fingers back and smack her ass, jolting her back to the present in an instant. She glares at me, but I only smile at her reddening face.

“Read,” I command, raising my hand to smack again.

Her nostrils flare, but she’s my obedient girl, my eager student. I’m not the least bit surprised when she follows my directions.

As she reads aloud, I trail my fingers down her back before slipping them into her skirt and pulling it down her legs. I kiss down her ass, paying extra special attention to my handprint that stands out beautifully against her olive skin.

She starts shaking in anticipation as I glide my fingers over her legs. They reach all the way up to her center only to hover over it and move to the other side.

Trailing kisses up her thigh to her back, I help her remove her tight-as-hell top. I can see her shoulders visibly relax once it’s gone; I finally understand why removing their bra is the first thing women do when they get home. That shit cannot be comfortable.

I take a minute to massage her shoulders, wanting her to be a puddle of pleasure just for me. Her little moans of encouragement have me aching to release my cock each time I rub that sweet spot. Once I’m done, I unzip my pants and slide them off along with my boxers, then take my time unbuttoning my dress shirt as she stares at me.

“Do you like watching your professor strip for you, Kitten?”

Sitting up, she nods. “Yes, sir.”

She bites her lip. “Now that I’ve read everything, what do you want me to do?”

Sliding my shirt off of my shoulders, I step up to approach her. Pinching her chin between my fingers, I kiss her slowly, soaking in this moment between us. It’s peaceful and calm, everything I want her to feel when she’s with me.

Her hand wraps around my erection straining between us and strokes once, making me almost fall to my knees in ecstasy. But this isn’t about me right now, it’s about her.

This is my favorite part about being a pleasure Dom, seeing her writhe in pleasure that’s almost too much for her to handle is what really pleases me. It’s all about her. I don’t have to fuck her to get off, I just need her unending, powerful orgasms and utter submission to sustain me.

I get off on it. There is nothing more beautiful than seeing a woman completely unhinged and at your mercy, especially when it’s at your command. Even more so when she’s the single object of your affection.

“Lay down on the desk, baby girl. Hands above your head.” I already cleared everything off so when she sits her cute ass down she’ll be comfortable. Her legs are still slightly trembling from the aftershocks of her first orgasm as I lay her back and spread her wide for me.

I pick up my tie from the floor and move to her hands, locking them together above her head and securing them to the desk drawer handle.

Leaning down, I kiss her, tangling our tongues together until she’s squirming and ready for me to make her come again. I open my other desk drawer, complete with everything we could need for our game, and pull out the blindfold.

“How are you feeling, Kitten? Want to keep going?”

“Yes, professor. I want everything you have to give me.” Her back is arched in anticipation. Her tits are on full display,

begging to be touched. I take out the chamomile oil and pour a drop on her belly.

I want every muscle in her body to relax, I don't want her to overthink a single second of her pleasure with me. Using my hands to rub in the oil, I take my time to massage it up her stomach and around her breasts. I knead it into her soft skin, savoring every hum and moan that escapes her lips.

"Arrow," she breathes as her eyes roll back slightly. "I need you. Please."

"Ah, ah, ah. It's professor to you, Miss DeLuca. Or are you ready for this scene to end?"

I raise an eyebrow and her lust-filled gaze meets mine.

"Professor, please give me what I need."

I glide a hand through her hair and massage her scalp before sliding a blindfold over her eyes. "Such a good girl for me. You'll get exactly what you need, and so much more."

Seeing her at my mercy on my desk is too much. I need to take just a little while I give her what she's craving. Positioning myself between her thighs, I use the head of my dick to nudge at her entrance, then rub over her clit. Never fully entering her but enough to tease both of us.

"Professor," she begs after only a minute. "Please."

I nudge her clit with my head again, then start up a torturous rhythm. "You're so wet for me. Did you like being punished for not following the rules?"

She arches her back on a moan. "Yes."

My breaths pick up as I watch her. She's never been more beautiful than she is now. Writhing and begging for what only I can give her.

"I think I want you to come just from this, Kitten."

I pick up the pace, until her hips are thrusting into me, riding my cock for all it's worth. I still don't push all the way into her though. I nudge her shallow g-spot, staying just on the edge and forcing her body to feel every inch of me.

I shudder as her cum leaks out of her, dripping between her ass and flooding the desk.

“More, professor. Please, I need more.”

“You need what I tell your body it needs.” I pull back just slightly to rub on her clit while her body trembles. True to my word, I make her come with only my dick rubbing on her sensitive nub, which gives me an idea.

“I want to see all the ways I can make you come without actually fucking you. Then, I’m going to fuck you so hard you’ll never be able to sit in this classroom again without squirming. How does that sound, Miss DeLuca?”

Her chest is heaving with each breath, but I wait for her answer. I want her consent, and I want to hear her beg.

“Yes,” she pants heavily. “Professor.”

Slowly, I help her legs spread and grab the l-arginine stimulating gel from the drawer. This is a staple for pleasure Doms. It’s what causes blood flow to increase, making every nerve even more sensitive. Using a small amount, I rub gentle circles of it on her already swollen clit to help keep it overstimulated. Then, I add some to her nipples, rolling them between my fingers until she’s moaning for more.

“That’s it, baby, let me make you feel so good it hurts.” I pinch slightly, causing her to gasp. I don’t want to truly cause pain though, so I go back to rolling and massaging them.

Her legs close and rub together, trying to build any sort of friction. Keeping one hand on her breast, I use the other to pull her legs wide open.

“You take what I give you and nothing more.”

I can see sweat building on her brow, her face lined with tension. Now is a good time to stop to check in on her. The idea of multiple orgasms sounds great to most people, but what some women can handle, others can’t, and I don’t want to push her too far.

“You okay, Kitten?” I ask as I lift up her blindfold. Her mascara is smeared, her eyes watery, but she nods. “Talk to

me.”

“It’s good.” Laney takes a few deep breaths and some of the tension leaves her features. “I’m good, it’s just intense.”

“I need you to promise you’ll call it if it’s too much.” I don’t want her doing this just for me. These gels can be intense, which is why I started off with a very small amount, but I’m not willing to push past boundaries even if she’s only just realizing she has them.

Her determined eyes meet mine. “I am not something breakable, Arrow. I know what I want, and I want this. I want you. Please, give me more.”

The strength in her voice is one I don’t hear often, but I can see how much she really means every single word. She wants me; she’s choosing me. So I’m going to give her everything.

I lower her blindfold until it’s back in place. The sensitizing gels should be setting in well by now. That combined with the chamomile oil, she should be nice and relaxed and ready to take more.

I spread her legs, hooking them on either side of the desk, and blow gently on her clit while my fingers lightly trail back up to her breasts. She sucks in a harsh breath.

Her clit is so swollen I can practically see it pulsating. I grab a chair and bring it to sit between her legs. My mouth hovers just over her sensitive nub, letting my breath fan across it as I speak.

“You’re going to give me another, right?”

She lets out a whimper, trying to push her hips closer to me.

“Yes, yes, another. Frick. I want to come again. Just for you.”

She’s nearly sobbing in need, and I’m helpless to deny her. Keeping my breaths on her core, I move my hands up to her nipples.

“Oh my gosh, oh.” She’s screaming for me now. I watch in rapture as her greedy cunt pulses while coming only from me pinching her pretty little nipples.

As she comes down this time, I can't help myself. I let my tongue lick her from top to bottom, gathering every little bit of cum she's given me. She tastes just like her personality. A little sour but also sweet.

Using my fingers, I rim her ass while flicking her overstimulated clit with my tongue.

"Arrow, it's too much. Shiitake, I can't. I can't."

Actual tears are falling, but she doesn't call her safeword. I slow down a bit but don't stop just so she knows I hear her. Her body is still begging for me though. I can feel it.

When she still doesn't call it, I push two fingers into her ass. She *will* come again for me.

"I want three more, Kitten. I want you to count them for me."

"Arrow," she cries. "That's too many."

"You can take it. I know you can." I wiggle my fingers in her ass and she gasps. "Be a good girl and come for me."

I figure now is as good a time as any to teach her body to come under my orders. Forcing orgasms isn't easy. When you're willing to put in the work and conditioning, her body will have no choice but to obey soon enough.

When she doesn't respond or come, I push my fingers deeper and grab the small bullet vibrator. Guess we will start forcing them now.

Clicking it on, I hold it to her clit while moving my fingers in and out of her ass. Her body bucks and fights but eventually, I get what I want. I can feel her muscles begin to tighten.

"There you go, baby. That's what I want. Come for me like the good little student you are."

This time her body listens. Her tight ass clamps down on my fingers when I push them deeper and stroke her inner walls, making the orgasm last twice as long. Her warm cum trickles down to where my fingers are pumping in and out of her while making a puddle in my palm. This gives me even

more lubrication to twist them around, making her squirm until I'm sure I've taken every ounce of what she can give me. For now.

When she comes down, she sounds like she just ran a marathon. Her legs and body are shaking and her breaths stutter. I pull my fingers free and offer her some praise. I still expect two more, but I need her to relax a little bit before I start again so she doesn't go insane.

I clean up my hands with a cloth from the drawer and coat them in a massage oil. This one has peppermint in it to help her body feel cooled and centered.

Starting at the back of her neck, I continue to work my hands down as she begins to relax again. I'm careful to avoid her sensitive areas, just focusing on her shaking muscles.

I release her arms from above her head and let them fall next to her side before massaging them, paying close attention while kneading all the way to her fingertips. I can tell she's reached a solid subspace when her arm no longer tries to hold itself up for me.

"You're so beautiful." I push my fingers into her hair letting the tips push into her scalp. She lets out a satisfied sigh. "You're doing so well for me, Kitten."

I kiss her cheek and trail down her neck. The sweet peppermint of the oil only adds to her intoxicating scent. I continue down her center until I'm back between her thighs. Her shaking is gone, but she's not needy for me. That won't do. I wipe my hands clean before adding some more cool sensitizing gel to the tip of my finger and slowly circle her red swollen clit.

When she moans, I push two fingers into her slowly, watching her pussy as it grips me just right. It's so mesmerizing I don't even realize as she starts to beg for more. It's not until I hear my name that I truly snap out of my daze.

"Arrow, I want you inside of me."

A smirk touches my lips as I sink my fingers in to the knuckle. "I am inside of you."

“I need your cock, please.”

I take some of the gel out to coat my cock, knowing that when I do fuck her, it's going to need to be quick. Her body won't be able to handle much more, but I need her to come on my face first.

“Have patience, Miss DeLuca.”

“Professor,” Laney whines, but it's cut off when my mouth suction around her clit while my fingers stroke her g-spot. “Oh, yes. Yes.”

Her nails dig and scratch into my desk and I hope they leave marks for me to look at later. I ease off the suction on her clit to mimic a pulsing motion while keeping a steady rhythm deep inside her. Laney's hips thrust up, searching for more, so I add pressure to her lower abdomen with my hand as I tell her what I need.

“Come for me, Kitten.” I quickly suck again, flicking my tongue over her nub until her arousal coats my hand. She squirts all over my face and arm as she continues to come, my fingers holding firm on her g-spot until every last drop leaves her. It's never-ending.

When I pull back this time, I'm in awe. I use her slick cum that's dripping down my hand to coat my dick, pumping it a few times and appreciating the intense pleasure the gel brings out along with her arousal.

“That was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.”

I bring her legs together and pull her to the edge of the desk before flipping her over. Her front lands on my now-soaked desk, and her toes hardly touch the floor. But I don't want her doing a damn thing for herself right now. All I want is her falling apart on my cock.

Tearing off her blindfold, I turn her face so she can look back at me. She's in a haze, and the smile that crosses her features reminds me of someone who's exceptionally high. It's perfect.

“You gonna come for me one more time?” She hums in response as she closes her eyes.

“Anything for you, professor.”

“Such a good fucking girl,” I groan, no longer able to deny myself.

I line up the head of my cock with her entrance and grab the small vibrator to place in her hand.

“You keep this right on that clit baby. Don’t take it off until I tell you. Got it?”

Her brows pinch when the buzzing starts and she immediately pulls it away. “It’s too much, professor.”

“Are you telling me no, Miss DeLuca?”

Laney could tell me to fuck off right now, cut the scene, and leave me without release. I’d fall at her feet to give her whatever she wanted, but I think she’s just enjoying the game. She might be apprehensive, I’m sure her clit will be feeling this for the next week, but my girl is not a quitter.

Shaking her head no, she moves the toy between her legs and clicks it back on. The moment she cries out, I push into her, which turns her cry into the moan I was looking for.

“That’s right. You just needed my cock to fill you up, didn’t you?”

Her free hand reaches above her head and leaves marks on the wood of my desk as she claws for purchase. As if she could read my mind.

“Yes, professor. You make me feel so full.”

Laney bites her glistening lip, and I lean over her back to kiss her. It’s a sloppy mess as I pound into her, her cum all over me and the desk causes a slapping sound when my hips meet her ass. I’ve never been more turned on in my life. Grabbing her hips, I push up until I’m leaning back and hitting her as deeply as I can.

“That’s the spot, professor. Don’t stop. I’m so close.”

I feel her squeezing tighter as the tension builds in both of us. Tingles start at the base of my spine and sweat builds on hers. My hand reaches out to tangle into her hair right at the

base of her head and I pull. Her back arches beautifully so I can get even deeper, and she erupts like a volcano.

“Come for me, baby girl,” I growl. “Soak.” *thrust* “My.” *thrust* “Cock.” *thrust*.

Her arousal drips down both our legs as she screams out her orgasm. I let go too, falling with her into a realm of bliss where we are the only ones that exist.

I lean over her, kissing her shoulder and back while trying to catch my breath. We are both a mess of tangled limbs and more cum than I’ve ever seen in one place in my life.

I pull out, careful to go slow with how sensitive I know she is. She winces just briefly, but it’s enough to have my body tensing. I knew this would be intense, so I took a car from the track and made sure it could be right out back.

Grabbing the blanket under my desk, I wrap it around her, then yank on my pants. I leave the rest to be dealt with by Marvin, our janitor. I made him aware of the mess he’d find, and he agreed to take care of it for a generous price. I didn’t have to pay him; it’s his job. But it didn’t feel right to leave that mess without a heads up and something to say thank you with.

I place Laney into the passenger seat. She’s hardly conscious, but I want to get her back to my place and cleaned up before tucking into bed with her.

When we arrive at the house, I come around to pick her up only to find her snoring. It’s adorable. Her hair is a mess, the ends of the perfectly curled blonde sticky with cum and sweat. And yet, she’s as beautiful as the day I first met her.

I lift her out and take her straight to my bathroom where I made sure a bubble bath with rose oil and Epsom salts was waiting. Waking her up enough to sit on the edge of the tub, I hand her some water. When she only stares at it, I open the lid and help her lift it to her lips.

The cool water seems to help her wake up a little bit, but I don’t back up to get undressed until she’s holding it on her own. Once I have my clothes off, I unwrap her from the

blanket and she starts to shiver almost immediately. But the moment I get her into the warm water with me, she fully relaxes again and dozes off in my arms.

I keep her head above the water and carefully wash off the stimulants then massage in new oils. She's going to be very sore and dazed in the morning, so I've stocked up on vitamins, electrolyte drinks, and some protein shakes to help her recover.

I get her out and dry her off before sliding a t-shirt over her and tucking her in next to me. I hand her a protein shake and then a full glass of water once she's finished with the shake.

We get settled and I pull her close, kissing her cheek. That scene was everything I love and so much more since it was with her. The way her body responds to me and my commands is addictive. She's addictive. Getting for her now after everything she just gave me mends a piece of my soul I feel like I lost when I was a child.

I stare down at her. She's already fast asleep so I let the words fall from my lips in a faint whisper, even though they scare me.

“I think I'm falling in love with you, Kitten.”

She hums, not really waking up as she mumbles. “I think I love you guys too.”

My back stiffens and I freeze. ‘You guys’? Realization dawns on me, and I pull her even closer as anger threatens the grasp on my control.

She's mine, not his. Never his.



Later that week, I'm wringing my hands as I pace the floor. Damien just left, and I'm shaking with rage at myself. *I hurt her.* I did the one thing I promised her I'd never do.

I'd like to think it really was an accident, but maybe subconsciously I was trying to punish her for hurting me. My chest aches as I feel it being split in half. I keep messing up.

Every time I try to keep her close or protect her, I only end up pushing her away.

My phone starts ringing but I ignore it. I don't want to have to buy another damn phone because I can't control how I feel right now. When it starts up again, I grit my teeth and answer it, not even looking at the contact.

"What?" I bark, startling myself with just how angry I sound.

"So I take it you're aware of what you did to our girl?"

The sound of his voice alone grates on my nearly frayed nerves.

"She's not *our* girl," I retort.

A sigh comes across the line as if I'm being the unreasonable one by wanting my girl to just be mine.

"That's where you're wrong, brother. The moment you stop trying to force her into your own little box, you'll see it too."

"I'm not forcing her into anything!"

"Oh really? Because what I hear is that you're not able to listen to her when she's trying to tell you how she feels. In fact," his voice raises, "you seem to think it's okay to hurt her whenever you don't get the answers you want."

I don't have anything to say because he's not wrong. That is what I did and I hate myself for it. I sit down on the couch with a sigh, putting my face in my hands.

"I can't handle the idea of you stealing her from me." Maybe if he knows how I feel, I can figure out what to say to her.

"Arrow, I'm not trying to steal her away from you."

I scoff, not believing him for a second.

"Yeah, okay." I'm aware I sound like a child right now, but I can't help it. This man makes me insane.

"Listen, I can see that she needs you. But I think, if you really open your eyes, you'll see she needs me too."

Damien's words ring through my head again. He was right that Evie does seem to really love them all equally. And now that he's pointed it out, he was right about Laney being stronger when she got back. After she spent time with *him*.

"Damien said you both trained together a lot. Is that where this started?"

I'm trying to understand, but I also need to know what happened between them so I can get there.

"Yeah," he pauses for a short time. "To be honest, it was all the moments in between though. She threw up after she saw Evie torture someone and said some things that really had me thinking about who she is."

I lean back on the couch, picturing her struggle and what she would have done if no one had been there for her. Some part of me must already be comprehending their bond because I find myself really wanting to hear what he has to say—without being angry.

"She has this way of being someone I'm equally terrified of and attracted to. Like, I can see her eliminating the enemy with her bow. To then turn around and joke and play games with her friends with a genuine smile on her face. But she's also someone who doesn't get off on hurting people, and in this world, that's incredible."

I smile to myself in silent agreement. He continues to tell me about their time together and his gifts for her. How he calls her his unicorn. It's adorable, and sappy and everything she deserves. So much so that the doubt starts to creep back in. If he gives her everything she needs, then what do I bring? If she can even forgive me, that is.

"I can hear your thoughts from here, Arrow. She needs you too. I can't tell you how crazy it would make me when she would smile at her phone like the person on the other end hung the stars in the sky for her."

That makes me laugh. Knowing we both have our struggles with this calms my racing mind a little.

"What am I supposed to do here, Havoc?"

I want to fix this. While my mind isn't sold on sharing, I can see where it could help.

“How did you come to terms with this?”

He's quiet for long enough that I double-check to see if we got disconnected. “Havoc?”

“I um... fuck. I lost my daughter a little over four years ago and just after that I lost my wife.”

Well, that was the last thing I was expecting to hear. I feel bad for how much I harped on the guy now.

“I'm sorry,” I offer, not knowing what else to say, but also feeling like I should say something.

“It's okay,” he says with a sigh, a shaky breath escaping him. “Anyway, she's the first woman I've met since then that I've felt anything for. I knew from the minute I met her that you both had something. And I didn't want to interfere with that, but my feelings for her just became too hard to ignore.”

I can understand that. She's not someone who's easily forgotten.

“So, I figured if the only way I could have her was by sharing, I'd find a way to make it work. Plus, being able to have two people to protect her instead of one has to give us better odds. Women in this world don't usually make it very long.”

I think back to the death of my adopted mother and my birth parents. Then remember how there were very few women in my life growing up in general. Havoc's right, she needs to be protected.

“I don't know if I'm there yet.”

“She doesn't expect you to be all in on day one, Arrow. Just think about it and find a way to meet her in the middle. I'll be there in thirty days and we can work stuff out. You don't have to make all of the decisions right now.”

I blow out a long breath. “Alright.”

“Oh, and Arrow.”

“Yeah?”

“Hurt her again, and I’ll put a bullet in your brain. This is your one and only warning.”

His tone is nothing like the man I was just talking to. It’s fierce, one I would expect from a Shades assassin. And one I can respect knowing it’s out of protection for our girl.

“I understand and wouldn’t want it any other way.”

We hang up, and I proceed to send Laney a text to apologize. I don’t know how I’m going to get my head right, but I know I need to make some changes here to be better for her.



After a shower, I decide to head down to the tracks. Ever since a fight broke out the other day, which ended in a crash, I don’t like Nessa being without backup.

She’s teaching some of the sharpshooters up in the treehouses today so I have to hunt her down. When I finally make it to the right one, I stand in the back as she teaches three students, including her former roommate Kia.

“When hitting a moving target, it’s important to not only anticipate speed, but how the wind direction affects the speed as well. If you only calculate for one and not the other, your shot could go wide or you could miss altogether.”

I keep a watchful eye as she corrects stances and gives tips about how to look through the scope long-term without giving yourself a headache. She’s pretty brilliant. Just the person I need to talk to.

“Hey,” Nessa greets me as her class leaves. “What are you doing here? I told you I don’t need backup.”

I shrug. “I can’t come to check on a friend without a reason?”

She narrows her eyes before rolling them.

“What’s on your mind?” Nessa puts her bag down, and I move over to one of the windows they were using for target practice with the cars. It serves a dual purpose giving them a target while the drivers learn to anticipate shooter’s movements.

“Let me guess,” she says after I don’t speak. “You want me to play mediator between you and Laney after you royally fucked up?”

Nessa punches my arm hard enough to actually hurt.

“Ow!” I rub the spot.

“We both know you deserve so much worse.”

I don’t deny her. I do deserve worse.

“Do you think she can forgive me?” Nessa might not be Laney’s best friend, but they have gotten close, and I need to know if I still stand a chance.

“Arrow, you poor, dumb boy. She’s already forgiven you. It’s her trust you’re going to have to earn back.”

“How do I do that?” I have a few ideas, but I’m truly worried that the more I want it, the less she’s going to want to be with me.

“Do you see how much she changed while she was away?” She leans against the window in front of me.

“I do now.”

“She got stronger, Arrow. Not just because Havoc was training her, but because he believed in her. Do you know what it’s like for the women in this lifestyle? We are taught to use our bodies instead of our fists to fight wars. And soon we begin to believe that’s all we are good for. To be used up and sent away.”

I nod, knowing where she’s going with this. “But I’m not going anywhere.”

“That’s not the part that worries her, Arrow.”

I throw my hands up in the air, feeling like everyone around me is speaking in riddles. I need someone to tell me a plan

with A, B, and C in order so I can fix it. Not to give me a riddle and hope that I can find the answer.

“She’s not afraid you are going to leave. She’s afraid that she will never be strong enough to stand by your side instead of behind you.”

Nessa’s hand goes to my shoulder, and the puzzle starts to feel like it has fewer pieces.

“Show her you believe in her strength, and you’ll have a partner for life. Maybe even two.”

Picking up her bag she goes to climb down the tree but stops just before her head disappears.

“This is your last chance, Arrow. If you can’t fix this, our entire family will turn on you. Don’t fuck it up.”

I roll my eyes even though she can’t see me. If Laney only knew the strength of the family behind her, she would never question who she was again.

But am I the reason she questions that at all?

My phone dings, distracting me from my thoughts.

Alexi: Since you fucked up your one job while you were here over break and took my girl from my bed because you could not control your anger, I have decided you get to do beach clean-up duty while the archers reset the course this week.

Arrow: I don’t work for you, kid.

Alexi: That is where you are wrong. I am a King here, so Dean of the university or not, you will do as I say.

I take a deep breath as I climb down the tree when an idea comes to mind. I need to find a way to apologize to my girl and prove that I’m willing to work on this. A plan slowly forms as I reply to Alexi.

Arrow: How quickly can they have the course completed?

Alexi: How quickly can you clean up the beaches?

Challenge accepted.



Chapter 13

Arrow: Can you meet me out on the north beach at 1700?

I read the text over and over again as my nerves bounce around like a pinball machine on crack. *Does he want to end things? Is this it for us?* I have to hold back the tears by pushing my long nails into the palm of my hand as I walk to meet him.

We have hardly spoken in two weeks and classes with him have been a rare form of torture. All I can see when I walk into that room is him screwing me on his desk. By the time class ends, I'm wet, uncomfortable, and in need of new panties—every freaking time. It's infuriating.

I make it down to the beach to find arrows and bows set up along the sand with targets almost hidden in the distance.

Small obstacles seem to be in front of a few of them while others are out in the open. I turn around to see Arrow jogging down to me.

“Sorry, I had to grab us some water.”

“What is this?” I ask curiously as I eye him.

His sweatpants are low on his waist and he isn't wearing a shirt. Warm weather has come back to the island, and I can't help but stare at the sweat glistening on his muscular chest.

“It's an obstacle course, silly. What do you think it is?” His face scrunches up in confusion and mine must mirror his because he takes my hands and moves me to a bench.

“Listen, Kitten. I've been working hard on my anger management issues while also trying to become the man you need me to be.”

My heart squeezes, not able to fully see where this is going yet, but so full of hope I could jump up and down.

“I realize now that you're not someone to put behind me, no matter how much I want to protect you. So, I set up a special date for us if you're willing to let me try again. I can promise you I will never hurt you again. Just please. Please let me make it up to you and show you that I can be there for you. Just like Havoc can?”

I want to see what he has in store, but I also want to make something clear first.

“It's not a competition with him, Arrow. You both bring me different things. I need both of you.”

His eyes meet mine with sincerity. “I don't want it to be a competition, baby girl. I just want you to know I see you too.”

My fingers brush his cheek, and I lean in until our foreheads are touching. I've missed him.

“Thank you, Arrow. I...”

“Actually, that's another thing. I want you to know I see you, but I want you to see me too. And I think that starts with you knowing my name, my real one, just for us.”

I pull back in shock. Members of The Society never give out their names. Like literally, *never*.

“Are you sure?” I ask, needing him to be certain. “I don’t need to know. You could never be ready to tell me that and I would understand.”

He just smiles back at me. “I’m ready, Kitten. When it’s just us, I want you to call me by my real name. Call me Beau.”

I actually laugh out loud. There’s literally no holding it back. I know he’s thinking the same thing I am because he laughs along with me.

“Your name is Beau? Like the same as bow? Bow and arrow?” Tears spring to my eyes as I keep laughing and he nods, cracking up along with me.

“Let’s just say they didn’t think all that hard about my nickname, and those that know thought it was pretty damn funny.”

I wipe at my tears and pull him in for a kiss.

“I love it, Beau.”

The sun setting on the waves and the gorgeous flash of his teeth cements this moment into my brain as a core memory. I finally have my guys. While we may have a few things left to still work out, there are no more secrets. When I throw my arms around him, he picks me up and twirls me around before putting me down.

“Hop on.” Arrow gestures to his back.

I do as he says and laugh while he takes off running down to the insane obstacle course he had set up. Placing me on my feet, he spins and kisses me, dipping me so far back that my hair brushes the sand.

“Are you ready for a little game?” he asks and I nod.

“I haven’t done this course, and I gave strict instructions that I didn’t want to know much about it to make sure we had an even playing field. So, we start here and grab our bow and ten arrows. There are exactly ten shots that need to be made so if you mess up, then you skip it.”

He hands me my weapon and helps me get the arrows situated on my back before doing the same for himself.

“Each shot made in the red at the center is worth two points, yellow is worth one, blue is zero, but a miss is minus one. Whoever finishes first gets a plus three added to their card and we’ll tally them up at the end.”

I glance at the start and see the first target through the trees. It’s a tight squeeze, but I know I can make it.

“Do we get a warm-up shot?” I ask and he gestures behind us.

At first I don’t see anything, but when I move around I find a target painted up on the cliffs.

“Ladies first.” He steps back, giving me room to grab for an arrow. I notch it into place. Taking a steadying breath, I draw back.

A breeze caresses my skin as I close my eyes for a second, then I exhale and let the arrow fly. Before I can fully inhale my next breath, the silver head embeds itself into the red center, and I turn around with a wide smile.

“Your turn, professor.” I wink at him as a grin stretches his beautiful lips. I watch him go through the same motions, his arrow landing right next to mine with not even enough space for dental floss to wiggle through.

When he flashes me those pearly whites, I know I’m in trouble.

“One, two, three, go,” I say as quickly as I can before darting in front of him to the first obstacle. His laughter follows behind me as he enters his side of the course, and I focus on my next target.

Flags alert us for when we should be looking out for targets. The first three are easy reds for me. Four ends up going wide because of a gust of wind, causing it to land in the yellow. At five, I’m rushing so quickly I miss it altogether. I take a calming breath before continuing, getting my head back in the game.

Six through nine all hit the red when footsteps sound just on the other side of the trees. Arrow must approach ten at the same time as me because I can hear the drawback of his bow. My anxiety rises, but I remember what Havoc taught me about meditating.

I take a second not to rush, picturing only black. I let it bleed into and over my racing thoughts until they go still. Only then do I open my eyes and take aim, hitting it dead in the center.

“Yes!”

I run to the exit, my chest heaving with excitement. I don't see Arrow anywhere. I find myself actually jumping for joy and laughing. As soon as he runs through his side of the course, I charge him, tossing my weapon to the ground and launching myself into his arms. I don't even care who won, I feel so invigorated.

Pulling back, I kiss him with the force of a typhoon hitting land. His arms tighten around me and I breathe him in. He's all-consuming, surrounding me with a wave of contentment I didn't even know was possible with his sage and sandalwood scent. I let him break the kiss, and he stares at me. His blue eyes seem to see every insecurity inside my mind only to push them to the side.

“You're a force, Kitten. Never forget that.”

Lacing my fingers together behind his neck, I smile at him.

“With you by my side, I'll never be able to.”

The corner of his lip lifts as he sets me back on my feet.

“How many points did you get?” he asks.

“Sixteen, plus three for being first. So nineteen. You?”

His brows pinch. “You got sixteen without the bonus?”

“Yeah. Did you get a perfect twenty? If so, there is no way I'm going to believe you didn't know this course. Those middle two were hidden really well and to shoot through leaves is all a guessing game, so if you got a perfect twe...”

He cuts me off with a kiss that makes me freeze. If he thinks I'm going to forget he cheated then he's dumber than the sand beneath my feet.

“What was that for?”

“This is the most complex course on the island, and I had the targets reset to be even more difficult. The average score someone who is considered a master archer would get on this course is sixteen. I got twelve.”

My jaw drops open. Like, so far open that I swear sand hits my chin. *That's impossible. I know I'm good but I'm not that good!*

Arrow steps forward, lifting my chin with his finger.

“Like I said before, you're a force of nature, Kitten. Never fucking forget that.”

I'm on cloud nine as I walk hand in hand with a man who is slowly stealing pieces of my heart. Between Arrow's gestures and the sweet messages I get from Havoc every morning, I'm afraid that soon my heart won't be my own. It will only belong to them. The two men who consume my life.



Chapter 14

Arriving on the island had my nerves frayed like exposed wires. Laney and I grew closer via texts and calls while I was away, but I wasn't sure she would still want me once I got here.

Fast forward to today, I'm running with Arrow, chasing down our girl after her silent invitation to her shower. I think it's safe to say she's still into me.

"Would you really suck my cock?" Arrow asks.

I have a feeling this man is about to be very possessive over our girl as well as very weirded out by this throuple dynamic. I come to a stop and face him, looking around to make sure it's just us so he doesn't get defensive.

“I want to be very clear that I will do whatever our girl wants as long as you give your consent. I know this is different, but I’ve had the occasional hookup with other men enough to know that this dynamic could be amazing if you just get out of your head.”

His eyes go wide and dart around before he leans in and whispers,

“You’ve been with men?”

I can’t help but laugh. “Does that bother you?”

I watch his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows, and his eyes not-so-subtly slide down to my dick.

“No.”

I palm my already growing erection and his eyes dart back to mine.

“It’s okay to be intimidated,” I joke, trying to help ease some of the tension before we do this. “Steel here isn’t shy about how good his ride is.”

Arrow scoffs. “Why do you have a name for your dick, dude? That’s weird.”

I tilt my head. “Is it though? I would argue that giving him a name means we’re well acquainted.”

Rolling his eyes, he glances toward Laney’s building.

“Do you consent to this, Arrow?”

His face turns red as he looks down. “Yes.”

“Do you want me to touch your dick?” I smirk.

“I don’t know if I can do this. I’m too in my head. I…”

Before he can keep going, I grab his neck and pull him in for a kiss. Technically he never told me no, and he doesn’t pull away. But I don’t want to keep our girl waiting for long, so I pull back.

“Stop overthinking, Arrow. Do what feels good.”

I take his hand, ignoring the shocked expression on his face, and pull him back on track. As soon as he starts to follow, I let

his hand go so we can really break out into a run.

He pulls ahead, flashing me a smirk as he goes to open the door in front of me. I pick up my pace enough for us to forcefully shove each other through the small entryway. Scrambling to Laney's room, we practically fall inside.

Arrow slams the door behind us just as I get a clear view of Laney naked in her shower. She's staring right at us with a huge grin on her face.

"Glad you boys decided to join me. It was getting lonely in here."

I prowl to the shower, rip off my shirt, and stalk towards her with determination and purpose. That is, until a hand stops me before I get there. A flash of irritation runs through me and a snarl rips from my lips until Arrow whispers only for us to hear.

"You need to see what our girl has under her bed."

That stops me. Curiosity gets the best of me, and I reluctantly turn away from the shower to where Arrow is kneeling by her bed. He pulls out a drawer and flips the lid, revealing an arrangement of toys so vast that a red room doesn't even hold a candle to it.

Then, he pulls open her bedside drawer to reveal lubricants and oils as well as drip candles. Just when I think there can't possibly be more, he stands and opens what looks like a full-length mirror to reveal a set of floggers, whips, and a shit ton of ropes with all different textures and colors.

"Ho-ly shit," I breathe.

"Right?" He looks just as captivated as I am.

Any ideas I had of Laney being more on the innocent side are literally thrown out the damn window as I take in her collection. It seems like stimulation means a lot to her so I grab one of the white floggers with long leather-like straps. It should have a slight bite to it. Something catches my eye and I pick up the pink studded whip along with a pair of iridescent chrome handcuffs. Pain and sensation play is my specialty.

“Safe word?” I ask Arrow as I set my supplies on the bed. If he knows all of this is here, I’m assuming they are fairly well acquainted with scenes and the dynamics.

“Cupcake,” he says with a smirk and I mirror him. Fuck, this girl is a wonder. “Warning word is sprinkles.”

I nod in approval, glad they have this figured out already so we can jump right in. I’m afraid if we took the time to discuss it all, Arrow would chicken out.

“Hard limits?” I ask.

“Feces play, piss play and age play. I don’t get off on giving pain, especially after...” he trails off, looking at the floor.

After he hurt her. I move to him and put my hand on his shoulder.

“We’re moving past that. Does she have any hard limits?”

“Same as mine along with blood play, anything dealing with slaves. Anything extreme she wants a conversation about beforehand.”

“Got it. Mine are pretty similar, but I don’t like gags around my head, and I don’t want any painful penis play.”

He nods and I look over Laney’s toys again. She seems to be giving us space while she washes up, so I take my time.

“Let’s talk about our limits with each other. Do you care if I touch you?”

I’m careful to give him space to answer so he can think clearly. I can still feel his kiss burning into my lips, and I’m trying not to focus on it in case that was just a one-time thing.

“I think, um.” He pauses. “Let’s just take it slow, okay? I don’t know what I want after you kissed me, and I’m man enough to admit that I liked it. But I don’t want to fuck you or anything.”

I laugh. “That’s because you’re a bottom,” I tell him as I get closer. His honesty was a huge turn-on. I put my hand around his throat and lean in close enough that our breaths mingle. “I’d be the one fucking you.”

His eyes bulge. “I’m definitely *not* a bottom.”

I look him up and down. “Maybe not with her, you’re not. But with me, you’d be a bottom.”

Arrow shoves me back and breaks our contact, his face as red as a damn tomato.

“Yeah. Okay. Whatever you say, Havoc.”

I smile as he removes his shirt. “So what’s our plan here?”

“I’m going to join her in the shower. I’m a pleasure Dom, so I want at least one of her orgasms all to myself. After that, I’ll bring her to you and sit back. Bring me into the scene how you want, but you deserve her pleasure as well.”

“I’ve never seen a pleasure Dom in action. Care if I watch?”

He removes his pants and boxers, tossing them aside to reveal a fully erect, delicious-looking dick. Just as good as I remember it. It’s been a long ass time since a man has caught my attention in the way Arrow seems to.

“Looks like you’re already watching.”

I stare at his cock as he walks into the bathroom and steps into the shower with Laney.

“You boys figure stuff out?” she asks him.

“The only thing we are figuring out, Kitten.” He spins her, putting her tits up against the glass facing me. “Is how many times we can make you come between the two of us.”

Her eyes roll back in pleasure as he rubs his dick along her ass. She lets out a moan of pleasure just as her gaze locks on mine. Everything in me wants to whip out my length and stroke it while I watch them, but I’m saving the big reveal for when I have both of their attention on me. So for now, I’ll watch.

Arrow’s arm comes around her front and spreads her smooth pussy open, as if he’s putting her on display just for me. I lick my lips thinking about what she would taste like.

He’s leaning into her ear, whispering something to her, but I can’t make out the words. She nods, and he hooks her leg over

his arm and pushes into her in one swift motion. She groans, trying to dig her fingers into the glass as he fucks her.

My eyes are glued to all the ways he moves, pushing deep and pulling back out to the tip. Using gravity to punctuate his thrusts, he lifts her up only to let her fall back into him. It's mesmerizing, seeing the way the two of them melt together.

It takes the will of the gods to stay up against the wall, refusing to move a muscle while I watch him take what I so desperately want. I can admit Arrow looks good, but my unicorn is even brighter than a damn rainbow right now.

Her wet hair is sticking to her face, tits bouncing up and down, and her smooth skin on display for our viewing pleasure. I can only imagine how soft she must feel under his touch as he tweaks her nipples and roams her body with his hands.

He nips and sucks at her neck, leaving marks I sure as fuck plan to mark over, all while his gaze travels to meet mine. He's taunting me.

Two can play this game. The first time I see our girl come, I want it to be with my cock buried deep inside of her, not his. So I turn away and examine the rest of Laney's toys.

I grab some silky light pink rope out of the cabinet and a silver butt plug with a pink heart jewel on it. Then, I grab the other tools and lay them all out on her nightstand before closing everything up.

Not wanting to make a mess of the bed, I strip the comforter from it so she can cuddle up after a quick change of the sheets. Now we play the waiting game.

I'm a patient man, but when I hear her come for Arrow, I swear I count the seconds until he brings her in to me. He comes out with a towel wrapped around his waist while he holds her all wrapped up in a robe that seems to double as a towel.

I take her from him and kiss her while sitting down with her in my lap. "You sure you want us both, my unicorn?"

She hums and then her bright blue eyes meet mine.

“I’ve never been more certain about anything in my life.”

Her long nails trail over the stubble coating my face, scratching just enough to feel good.

“I want you, Havoc. All of you.”

This time when her lips meet mine, I can feel just how sure she is that she wants this. Arrow, keeping true to his word, takes a seat across from the bed as I take my time slipping Laney’s robe off.

Her hair is still wet, so I settle her between my legs, turning her back to me as I grab the brush from her nightstand.

“What are you doing?” she asks.

“Making sure this doesn’t get too tangled.” I work my fingers into her scalp, massaging and helping her relax before I brush all of her hair back and braid it. I take the ponytail that’s wrapped around the handle of the brush and set the braid for her, then I turn her in my arms to kiss her again.

One thing I loved to do for Ellie was braid her hair. Vi always kept hers super short, but Ellie loved her ‘princess’ hair as she would call it. I think that was one of the hardest parts about her getting leukemia. When she lost all of her hair, it was like it severed my connection with her, and she no longer found comfort with me.

I shake off those thoughts and focus on the girl in front of me, the life in front of me. For some reason with Laney, I don’t feel like the memories hurt as much. I can appreciate them, and then set them aside without that pain consuming my every thought.

Looking at my girl’s beautiful blue eyes, I stroke her cheek with my fingers, more thankful for her in my life than she will ever be able to comprehend. She’s fully naked now, and when she climbs up my body to straddle me, her tits brush my chest. I keep pulling her up until her dripping cunt is just over my face and she’s looking down at me, biting that sweet lip.

I’m dying to taste her, so when I grab her hips and pull her down on me, I let out a satisfied growl when she sits like a good girl.

“Oh, Havoc. Oh yes, that’s so good.” Her cries are muffled slightly by her thighs, but I hear them nonetheless. I take my time circling her clit before sucking it into my mouth and flicking it with my tongue. She cries out every time, encouraging me to do it again and again until I can feel her so close to the edge that I have to pull back.

“Don’t you come yet, baby girl. I want you to look me in the eyes while this pretty pussy grips my cock for all it’s worth. Got it?”

She lifts up and backs off of me while I sit up with her in my lap.

“You’ve been teasing me with your touches and sexy messages for months now. I want this to last and make up for every time I didn’t just take you in the middle of training.”

“Oh,” she blushes. “So you thought about that too?”

I tuck a stray hair behind her ear. “I thought about that all the damn time, baby.”

She rolls her lips together and I can’t help it. I take her chin in my fingers and pull her mouth to mine. She’s so soft and warm. Every move she makes feels like it was meant for me, like her body was created to be with mine. Breaking our kiss, she gets to her feet by the bed.

“My turn,” she says.

A perplexed look crosses my face.

“Take off your pants, Havoc. I’ve been dying for a taste too. Do you have any idea how many times I had to bite my tongue to keep myself from doing more with you while we wrestled on those mats? I swear I have a permanent scar from it.”

Arrow clears his throat in the corner.

“Oh and you, sir, have no room to talk. The number of times I’ve had to come back here and change after one of your classes because my panties were soaked was too many to count.”

I adore her little attitude, and I also love that we both seem to affect her as much as she affects us. Men don’t get to hear

that much.

Standing in front of her, I bring her attention back to me. Arrow has fucked her multiple times. Right now, it's my turn. I unbutton the top of my jeans then unzip them.

She hooks her fingers into my boxers and pants, and I let her pull them down for me, making sure her gaze meets my piercings at the exact same time as Arrow.

“Oh. My.” Laney starts, but Arrow finishes for her.

“Fuck.”

“Yup. What he said.” Laney nods frantically.

I grin at them, loving their reaction. Laney reaches out and brushes her fingers over the glistening balls as Arrow leans forward in his seat.

“I see why you call it Steel now.” He tries to sound irritated, but the smirk he gives me kind of takes away any of the heat.

“Do they feel good?” Laney asks as she rubs her fingers over each of them.

“They feel even better when you're touching them.”

Laney glances at Arrow, who looks way too curious.

“Well, come check them out.” I taunt him. “Maybe one day you'll be brave enough for a few.”

“Pain doesn't make you brave,” he retorts, but he comes closer anyway.

“This kind does.” I wrap my hand around Laney's and help her give Steel a firm stroke. We both gasp as the rods move and roll under our grip.

“Can I lick them?” Laney asks.

It's the dumbest question I've ever heard because what man on this planet would say no to having his pierced cock licked? Not this one, that's for sure.

“Baby, you can do whatever the fuck you want with them as long as it doesn't involve electricity.”

She smirks. “What about vibrations?”

I don't think I've tried that, so I shrug.

"That actually sounds like it could be fun."

Laney moves to grab something from under the bed and my eyes move back to Arrow, who's staring.

"What made you get them?"

"I lost a bet, but I'm glad I did because they feel amazing. For both parties."

He eyes me skeptically.

"You want to feel them, don't you?"

His brows pinch but he doesn't shy away. I have a strong feeling this is his first time seeing another man's cock up close and personal, much less a pierced one. Slowly his hand lifts, and his fingers brush my length.

I groan as he strokes me, hitting every single rod just right.

"Maybe you two should kiss," Laney's sultry voice pops in.

I laugh as I look at her. Her gaze is fixed on Arrow's hand, and the heat in her eyes tells me just how much she likes the thought of that.

"We already have." Her eyes widen with surprise and Arrow drops his hand to glare at me.

"He was just testing the waters," he tells her.

She bites her lip. "And how did that go?"

She's swaying slightly as she talks, pretending to be shy but clearly very into the idea of us kissing. *Good to know.*

"Why don't you show her?"

Arrow shakes his head and moves back to his chair while Laney continues to stare. I can't take the tension or build-up anymore. I need her now.

"Baby girl," I say, getting her attention. "Why don't you start out on your knees for me and tell me how good these feel sliding in that hot mouth of yours?"

She nods, practically falling in front of me before I can even blink. When she looks up at me, she darts out her tongue to swirl around the tip. I nearly explode right there.

Gaining her submission on the mats was a turn-on enough, but this; her gorgeous tits on display and her ass poking out just right has me winding my fist around her braid.

“Think you can take them all in that sassy mouth of yours?” I challenge.

“Guess we’re going to find out.” She slips the head in and gives it a suck before slowly slipping her plump lips over each barbell. Rolling her tongue every time she passes one shifts them in a way that feels euphoric.

She gags when she takes me to the back of her throat but works through it, pulling back slightly just to push me in again. When she swallows around the head, my knees actually give out and I fall to the bed. She moves with me, smirking around my cock at the reaction she’s earning.

“You’re even better than I imagined all those days we were in the gym,” I tell her as I stroke her hair while she bobs up and down on my dick like it’s the most delicious thing she’s ever tasted.

My fingers tangle in her hair and when she flips on the vibrator, I think I actually die from the pleasure. She starts at my balls, right in the center, before working up until every single piercing is shaking and I’m gasping for air.

“Ho-ly Fuckkkkkkk,” I breathe, and my hips jerk of their own accord.

I don’t know if I can last like this. *Oh shit, oh shit. Nope.* Using my grip to pull her off before I come down her throat. I crash her lips to mine while she clicks off the vibrator and tosses it on the bed.

This time when our mouths meet, there’s no soft or sweet. It’s frantic and messy. Chaos and need twist into a tornado of emotions neither of us are prepared to process. Our teeth clash as if we can’t get enough, I don’t think I’ll ever get enough of her.

I kiss down her neck, making a point to mark over every single one of the hickies from Arrow while I look him in the eye.

Challenge accepted, mate.

Then I get to work sucking on her nipples and playing with them between my teeth. She whines in pleasure each time I bite down ever so slightly. Arrow might not get off on giving pain, but I sure as fuck do. Which is why I lean back and flip her over, pushing her head down into the mattress.

“Want to play a game with me, my unicorn? I think it could be magical.” I make sure to turn her head to see everything I’ve laid out on her nightstand.

She smiles and bites her bottom lip. “How did I know you’d be the one to bring the pain?”

I shrug. “Love hurts.”

Not realizing what I said until I said it, I suck in a breath. But I don’t take it back. Love hurts like a fucking bitch, and I have a strong feeling that loving this woman just might feel like a fall from a cliff. Deadly but exhilarating.

Worth it. Laney nods at me in understanding and I grab the handcuffs.

“Arrow told me your safe word. Use it if you need to, okay?”

“I will.” Her voice is strong and sure as I lock her wrists to the post in the headboard.

I get the rope next and tie each ankle to the corner of the bed, but not tight enough that I can’t lift her ass up. I grab the butt plug next as well as some lube from the drawer. The plug is heavy. I want my girl to feel so full when I take her that she’s confident she can take me and Arrow together next time. *Or maybe even this time. Who knows.*

Coating the plug in lube, I get between her legs and spread her ass wide for me. Using two fingers, I massage her tight hole, but she doesn’t relax right away. Grabbing the vibrator she tossed to the side, I turn it on and hold it to her clit.

Instantly, her muscles relax and she moans into the mattress.

“Do you like that, baby girl?” I push into her ass and it grips me like a vice. “Shit, you’re going to kill me.”

Arrow chuckles behind us. “Just wait till you’re inside her, *brother*.”

I know he meant it as a tease, but his sultry voice is even more of a turn-on. And I sure as fuck had no idea I could be turned on anymore right now.

I push my fingers all the way in while feeling precum leak from my tip at the same time. The way her ass swallows me up has me groaning.

I remove my fingers and she whimpers. “Don’t worry baby, I’m nowhere near done with you.” I bring the lubed-up toy to her entrance and slowly advance it as I rub circles with the vibrator, keeping her nice and loose for me.

Once it’s fully seated, I lean back and watch her rub her greedy pussy into the toy, frantically chasing an orgasm only for me to pull it away and leave her wanting.

“This is how I felt every time you left me in that gym. Every time you chose to walk away from what you felt between us.” I get down and circle the bed to grab the flogger.

“Are you ready for me to punish you for trying to pretend that what we had wasn’t real? For refusing to let me hold you during movie night. For teasing me relentlessly with your sassy texts.”

Her glassy gaze meets mine as she breathes.

“Do your worst, Havoc. Let me show you I can take it.”

Goosebumps travel down my spine at her words. *This woman was made for me*. I look back at Arrow, wanting to check in with him too.

“You good to see this?”

He shifts uncomfortably before looking at her. “As long as I get to help kiss it better.”

I chuckle. “Don’t worry, *bro*. I have ideas on how we can both make it better for her.”

With a wink, I move to her back with the flogger, letting the long ends tickle her skin until she’s squirming. Then, I pull back and land a soft hit right in the middle of her spine.

She arches into it with a moan, squeezing her ass. I move down with the next hit, landing a little harder on her perky cheeks.

“More,” she begs. I give her another and another, working the flogger until pink stripes line her back and ass entirely.

I toss the flogger on the floor and go to her. Sweat is coating her face, making her glisten. It’s so filthy hot I have to lean over and lick her cheek.

“Your sweat tastes like sex, baby.”

She bats her lashes at me, causing me to bite my knuckle at the sheer need that’s consuming her.

“How am I already so addicted to you and I haven’t even fucked you yet?”

“Maybe you should do something about that then, old man.”

My nostrils flare at her taunt. She’s not a full-on brat by any means, but I grab the whip at the sound of her attitude.

“Not until you’ve taken it all.” I transition onto the bed between her legs. “Push that reddened ass in the air for me and spread those legs.”

I can see Arrow tense in my peripheral, so I look back at him and wink. She wants this, he just needs to see it to understand.

“You good?” He gives a curt nod, so I turn my attention back to our girl.

“You’re going to regret calling me old, my unicorn.” I rub the whip between her legs, then use the tip to rub over her swollen clit. It’s a beautiful sight as she tries to ride the little bit of friction I give her, right before I pull back.

“Dang it, Havoc. Give it to me already.”

I chuckle as she whines for more. Watching her beg is even better than I imagined.

“I think you deserve a punishment for calling me old, my sweet girl.”

“Then give it to me so I can finally feel you inside me.”

Her begging and desperation to please is almost enough to make up for her comment about me being an old man. But I have a strong feeling she wants to see what I can dish out. Since I’ve nearly perfected the art of pain and torture, it’s easy to see she can take more, so I use the whip to bring a firm smack to her clit.

She jumps, not expecting the impact, but I can visibly see her grow even wetter. She is quite literally dripping on the bed.

“Is she a squirter?” I ask Arrow, bringing him in a bit so that he doesn’t fall into a bad headspace while I test Laney’s limits.

I know I made the right decision when he seems to snap out of a daze. He lifts one lip in a smirk.

“If you know how to make her, she can be.”

I slap Laney’s clit again with the whip, and she lets out a cry of ecstasy.

“Why don’t you get over here and show me how, then use her cum to jack off while I fuck her?”

His eyes dart between Laney and me. After a minute, he moves over to the bed. Laney’s hair is still in the braid I did for her, but her bangs have fallen into her face. He moves them to the side and kisses her forehead.

“You ready to show him just what I can do to you, Kitten?” he whispers in her ear, loud enough for us both to hear.

“Yes, please. I need to come.”

I land one more strike to her clit before Arrow intervenes. He shifts onto his knees next to her while I stay between her legs and his hand cups her core.

“Can you see how much she likes the pain?” I ask him. He pulls his fingers back to find them glistening. “Might not even

need to make her squirt. You could jack off right now with everything she's already given me."

He rubs his fingers together.

"Don't go flattering yourself there. I think she's got so much more to give us."

"Then let's see it."

Arrow rises to the challenge, fingering our girl until she's writhing and begging to come. I can see he wants to give it to her, but I want her to earn it just a little more.

Taking his arm and slowing his pace, I get down from the bed.

"I don't want to ruin her sheets, let me grab a towel. She's not allowed to come until I say so."

Arrow may be a pleasure Dom, but I'm the Dom who doms the Doms. He wants to resist my order, and I love seeing his bratty side come out to play. Laney might not be a full brat, but I have a strong feeling Arrow could be.

"Besides, I thought you wanted to show me just how talented you were."

"I would hurry to get those towels if I were you."

I smile, knowing he's going to obey no matter how much he wants to refuse. Even a Dom can't resist the pull of being a sub when they know they've met their match.

I take my time grabbing towels, even if my cock is aching to sink deep into that sweet pussy of hers.

When I return, Arrow has sweat on his brow and Laney is nearly sobbing while begging for more. Laying out the towels, I move slowly even as Arrow glares at me. *Yup, he's a full-on brat. I'm calling it right here.*

"You ready to come, baby girl?" I grab her braid and pull it back until she's looking me in the eyes.

"Yes, please. Please."

I smile down at her, then look over to Arrow.

“Make a mess,” I order him then throw him a wink when he tries to scowl. Instead of watching her face, I watch what Arrow does to her. He pushes her down into the bed and positions the vibrator directly on her clit then hooks his finger in, stroking her g-spot before rubbing a thumb over the pink stud in her ass to make it move just slightly.

“Come for me, Kitten. Show off for him just like you did in the shower.” His wrist flexes. “Tell him just how good it is.”

Within a second of his intense attention, she’s screaming her release and flooding the bed—coating Arrow’s hand in enough lube to jack off for days.

“Ho-ly shit, that was beautiful,” I say, praising the mythical...you guessed it- unicorn before me. I unhook her cuffs, then move to untie her ankles while Arrow starts to pump himself using her cum just like I asked. *Turns out the brat can listen.*

Removing the soaked towels from the bed, I turn Laney over. Climbing on top of her, I take in every curve of her body, every defined muscle, every dimple and freckle. She’s as perfect as an angel but as innocent as Satan.

“Ready to see what these piercings can do?”

“Yes. Give it to me, Havoc.” She grabs my face and pulls me to her as I line my cock up with her entrance. Arrow is still on the bed next to us. But in this moment, all I see and all I feel is her.

I push in slowly, letting her experience each rod as it slips inside. Her pussy grips around me every time one of the barbells eases in, heightening the pleasure for me even more as her walls pull on each piercing. She bites my lip, my ear, and my shoulder, making me shudder as I feed her every last inch of me.

The pain of her nips mixed with the pleasure of her tight cunt has stars already exploding behind my eyes. I know right then that I will never get enough of her.

Once I’m fully seated, I take a breath. She’s so slick and tight that I lose myself completely.

“Havoc?” she breathes.

“Yes, my little magical creature?”

“Move.”

Her nails dig into my neck, and I swear I harden even more inside of her. She groans, feeling the shift too.

I decide that’s enough edging and waiting for now. I’ve played the long game. I’ve been patient and tested her limits. Now it’s time for me to fuck her into a coma. I pump in and out of her at a barbaric pace, turning feral for the woman in my arms.

Her claws come out in full force, and I understand now why Arrow calls her Kitten. These babies feel sharper than knives as they dig into my flesh. I love every single fucking second of it.

Rolling my hips, I find her sweet spot, knowing I can’t hold back much longer. When she gasps into my mouth between frantic kisses, I anchor myself there, giving her everything her body is begging me for.

“Havoc I’m, oh gods I’m coming. I’m come...” I cut her off, sealing our lips together one last time before pulling back to finally watch her face as she comes.

Her eyes roll back and her lashes flutter while she screams my name. I can feel the plug inside her, making her feel so full as the bars on my dick slide along her entrance.

I’m overtaken with awe and wonder as she comes. Then I see Arrow, floating on the edge himself. I push up while continuing to fuck her.

“Come on her chest while I come inside her.”

She’s already confided in me that she’s safe from getting pregnant, so I have no problem burying my seed deep into her greedy little cunt.

Arrow’s breath stutters as Laney’s pussy grips me even tighter. He paints her chest, and the sight of her covered in his cum with a fully blissed-out expression, pushes me over the edge along with them.

Eventually, my brain floats back to the present universe where we're all panting. Laney's eyes are nearly closed with exhaustion, and Arrow looks more relaxed than I've ever seen him. I don't know what the future holds for the three of us, but if it's anything like what I feel right now, I vow to myself it's worth fighting for.

We all clean up, and Arrow and I take turns massaging aloe into Laney's marks. None of them should last longer than a day, but aftercare in all forms is appreciated. I rub some arnica gel into her hickeys too. As much as I want her to wear my marks, I also don't want them to be tender for her.

When we're done, she kisses us then demands that we all stay together. It's a weird feeling as we all settle in, our limbs overlapping in sated contentment. It's almost like I've finally come home.



Chapter 15

As I lay there with my arm draped over two naked bodies, I try to think about what just happened. Not only did I just experience my first threesome, but I also felt a strange sort of pull to Havoc.

I've never been one for pain play, but as he used that flogger on her back, I fell into a trance just thinking about every one of those leather tassels caressing my back in the same way they were Laney's.

When he started using the whip, I wanted it used on me. It took me a second to snap back to the scene when he pulled me in because I was so caught up in my thoughts about how it would feel for that sweet bite of pain to strike across my dick.

I let out a sigh, not understanding what's going on in my head. I don't think I'm attracted to him, maybe just the things

he was doing. That has to be it. I'm straight. I've always been straight. I'm not allowed to just change that because of one little moment.

Pulling my arm back, I run my fingers through Laney's hair and look over her features in the moonlight. The golden strands of her hair sparkle, and her face shows the most contented peace I've ever seen from her. Havoc is snuggled into her neck, the rough stubble of his trimmed beard pushing into her soft flesh. But it seems to comfort her in a way I don't know if I ever could.

Maybe there is something to this sharing thing after all. If I go along with this, then maybe I can explore the pain thing. I could even ask Laney to do it so I don't feel so confused. The moment I touched his dick, I felt like I couldn't see straight. It had nothing to do with the idea of how painful those piercings were.

Shaking my head, I sit up. I need to clear my thoughts, but the idea of leaving this bed is too much right now. I don't want to be away from Laney, and I definitely don't want to leave them both here alone.

My thoughts must be louder than I imagined because, after a minute of running circles in my head, Havoc props himself up on the other side of Laney.

"You okay?" he asks in a gruff voice. I inwardly push away the fact that it sounds sexy on him. Oddly enough, I feel like he actually wants to know, so I give him an honest answer.

"Not really."

"Was me hurting her like that too much?"

I shake my head. "It actually made sense at the time. Obviously, she likes these things or she wouldn't own them, I just don't have experience or a want to use them on her."

I just want you to use them on me. Stop it. I'm just confused, that's all.

"Sooooo, what is it then?"

I run my hands through my hair.

“I don’t know. Just everything I guess. I’ve never been with a man like this before, and I don’t know what to do.”

“There is no right or wrong here, Arrow. Do what feels good, whatever you want. If it’s too much, we have a safeword and vice versa. If I touch you or our swords cross and you need to call it to create some space, that’s okay.”

“Swords?”

Havoc looks at me blandly. “Our dicks, Arrow.”

He laughs under his breath and I try to picture that happening. It doesn’t bother me to think about. In fact, my first thought is what it would feel like if they did cross and Havoc wrapped his large hand around them both to stroke us while Laney laid there tied to the bed under our bodies.

Would we get off together and coat her in our cum? Or feed it to her only for her to give it back to us? That thought process alone should have me even more worried, but he doesn’t allow me to be in my head for too long.

“So, you’re good with this then?”

I look at Laney’s sleeping form and how she’s tucked into him. They fit together perfectly, and I can’t help but wonder if there really is room for me in this too.

“Let’s just see how it goes.” I don’t want to be dishonest because I’m not one hundred percent good, but maybe after some time I could be.

“Alright. Well, tell me about yourself.” I’m taken aback by his straightforwardness.

“Uh, what do you want to know?”

“Everything. What’s your favorite hobby?”

I think on that for a minute. “I love competitive archery, but I also really like getting outside to play European football. Something about kicking the ball around feels therapeutic.”

“No way,” Havoc whisper yells. “Me too, man. I love getting out there just to kick the ball with someone. Don’t get

me wrong, punching the bag is a great outlet, but when I'm on the field and running, it helps clear my head for real."

I smile, knowing the feeling exactly. "It's almost like time stops, right? Like you're able to organize the chaos in your brain when your body is working hard but only focused on that one goal."

"Oh, one thousand percent man."

"So, what are your hobbies?"

Havoc looks around as if there were someone in Laney's room in the middle of the night that could possibly overhear this conversation. I find myself smiling as I watch his theatrics.

"You cannot tell anyone this, okay?"

"Okay?"

"No," he whispers as he leans in close, "you have to pinky swear, man. This is top secret shit."

I reach out with my pinky, and he takes it with his with the seriousness of a blood contract.

"I like to bake."

I bark out a laugh, but he puts a finger to his lips while gesturing to our girl, who is dead to the world at the moment. We spend hours talking, only falling asleep once the sun seems to be making its presence known on the horizon. It's going to be a rough Monday, but it was worth it.

Getting to know Havoc made me realize he's not a bad guy, and that I can trust him to keep our girl safe if I'm not around.

I'm beginning to understand what Laney saw in us, all of us together, and I'm coming to realize just how amazing that could be.



We quickly fall into a routine together. Laney's room becomes our home and all our stuff is moved between her and Havoc's spaces. Havoc and I use his bathroom to shower and

get ready so that we don't accidentally wake Laney up too early. That girl is a terror if you mess with her sleep.

We have family dinner together every night, and it quickly becomes my favorite part of the day. Well, other than my classes with Laney. I confided in Havoc about not being able to walk her to class and that it bothered me, so he's started walking with us every morning so I can have that time with them both without it not looking like I'm showing too much favoritism to Laney.

He drops her off at class and then heads off to teach his own, only to come back and sit with me during office hours and bring me a coffee. The guy must pay attention too because the only coffee I drink is a perfectly made flat white from one of two machines on the island, and he always has one ready for me.

Since we now share an office, sometimes we will sit and talk, getting to know each other. Other times, we have students coming to us for advice and we help them together. It's created a sort of camaraderie between us just in the past two weeks.

Laney is studying today and probably will be during dinner, so Havoc and I grab her something from the dining hall and drop it off. She opens the door long enough to grab food and give us both a kiss before she darts back to studying. This girl is serious when it comes to learning and grades and it only endears me to her more. Her intelligence is sexy as fuck.

"Want to come back to my house and have dinner? It isn't much, but I have a few beers in the fridge. There's also a couch I can assure you we won't be at risk of finding Evie naked on."

Havoc laughs. "I'm pretty sure E was in there with Laney studying."

"Right, so then we're just at risk of walking in on Damien and Lev then."

We both snort as I lead him toward my house.

"Damien is pretty kinky. I bet I could learn a lot from watching him," Havoc says just before we get to my door.

“Really? How do you know that?”

“I talk to him about it. I was struggling with a few knots the other day when we were trying to bring down the flags for the storm and he was way too good. Turns out he’s a full rigger.”

“Damn,” I say as I put the key in the lock and open the door for him. “That actually checks.”

“Right?” He nudges me on our way to the kitchen. “At first I was surprised and then I was like, actually...”

He shrugs and I know exactly what he means.

“So what else did he tell you?” I’m curious if we can get any three-way tips without actually asking for them. Havoc reads my mind and winks at me. *That damn wink.*

“Curious about how they all do it?”

I roll my eyes. “You know I am. Don’t make me say it.” As much as we give each other crap, I know he’s a safe space for me to talk about this stuff.

“He told me a few things about being with Lev and how he makes that work with E, but that’s about it. E is like a sister to me, so knowing any more details was just too gross.”

“Interesting.” I grab some beers and Havoc gets our food out of the containers and onto plates. We both sit down to dig in, but the need to ask him more is too great.

“So, you’re bi then?”

Havoc shrugs. “I’m just me.”

“But like, what does that mean?”

He’s mentioned he’s been with men before, and we will occasionally touch each other when having sex with Laney, but it’s nothing like Lev and Damien. I want to know what he’s thinking, what he’s into. The more we’re all together, the more I find myself liking him too. And it’s scary as fuck.

If a girl doesn’t like you back then it’s easy to just walk away. But what do you do if your girlfriend’s boyfriend doesn’t like you back? Or worse, you tell him you like him and make everything awkward.

I'm spiraling, stuck inside my own mind with all of the possibilities. I can't like him. This isn't a thing...to figure out your bi at thirty-something years old.

Havoc must notice my panic and the moment he takes my hand, the racing thoughts stop.

"Hey, look, it's okay. Sexuality to me is fluid. I don't have to put a label on it. If I like someone, I go for it. That's all I meant."

"What if..." I try to find the right words.

Am I trying to ask him if he likes me? Is that too high school? Oh my gosh, I feel like I'm back in high school right now. I swallow the lump in my throat.

"What if you don't know what you like?"

"I think that's pretty fucking normal, man. You never know until you try it."

He lets go of my hand and digs into his food. *That can't be right though. You have to know before you try or you just look dumb.*

"What made you try it?" Maybe if I can understand what he's into, I can find a way to do that and figure out if it's my thing.

"Oh, that's easy. There was this guy when I first started training as a Shade, he was a real piece of work. He would pick on me and push me around. One night, he told me I needed to step up my training and when he pinned me by my throat, I smiled at him and said 'harder'. He kissed me then, and it turned out he was so hard on me because he had a thing for me."

"So, then you two what? Dated?"

Havoc swallows and my eyes catch on his throat. My dick grows hard in my suit pants without my permission, making this conversation even more uncomfortable.

"We fucked; we didn't date. Nado wasn't the kind of guy to settle down when we met. We used it as a way to get our anger

out. Anyway, he's now retired and married to another guy we trained with. I think they live in Canada."

"I thought Shades never retired?"

He talks with his mouth full as he responds. Normally, that would piss me off, but with him, it's just him. And I kind of like how normal it feels when we talk like this.

"It's more complicated than that. We have to fight for the honor to leave."

"And if you lose that fight?"

"Then you die." He says it like it's the most obvious thing in the world.

"So how did you find yourself attracted to other guys?"

As much as I enjoy combat, I don't think Havoc is someone I really want to fight just to find out if I have a thing for him. Besides, I'm not going to be the one to make the first move, even if there is something between us. I don't know what I'm doing, or what I'm even allowed to do.

"I don't really know. After being with Nado, things just sort of changed for me. Gender isn't something that matters, it's how that person makes me feel."

"How do I make you feel?"

He looks up from his plate and winks at me.

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

Yes. I really fucking would.



Chapter 16

I've never really had a home to look forward to as a kid. I grew up in a home where having kids was something you did, but when you messed up you were out. I was out at seventeen, then found The Shades at nineteen after becoming a fairly well-known underground fighter. That was when Adrik and I found each other. He was twenty-six and engaged to be married when we were initiated into the assassins league.

To say we were high on life: the drugs, the women, the adrenaline—that would have been an understatement. We partied hard and crashed even harder. We killed and celebrated as if any day could be our last. Because it very well could have been. It wasn't until I turned twenty-five that things started to change. Adrik's fiancée left him, I found Vi, and we just ended up growing up and growing apart. I was always his second, but what that meant changed over time.

Once I married Vi and we had Ellie a year later, home became something that felt mandatory. Don't get me wrong, I loved them with every fiber of my being, but everything with Vi happened so fast. And Ellie's diagnosis was a huge surprise for us both. When things started to get bad, I lost all sense of what a home should be.

But today, while I worked overtime with a group of students only to struggle through my entire workout afterward, I found myself craving something I never knew I was missing until now. I wanted to go to a place I felt lifted up, where I felt love and support. And all I could think about was my rainbow girl and a very broody dean.

I walk into Laney's room after a long day, where I didn't get to spend any time with her or Arrow, and everything feels like it falls into place in my chest.

Arrow and I have grown close, and it feels like there could be something there. But he's shy when it comes to the 'sexual attraction to men' thing, so I'm waiting on him to make the first move. I thought the other night when we had dinner at his house, he was going to do something, but maybe I'm imagining things.

Laney gets down from the bed and jumps into my arms. She's comfort embodied, and I melt into her.

"Hey there, Unicorn," I say as I kiss her. "I missed you today."

"I missed you too," she whispers, still holding tight to me.

"I'm taking her for a shower," I inform Arrow. He's sitting at the desk in the corner.

"Have fun, I have a shit ton of emails to catch up on now that the trials are approaching."

Wrapping my hands around her thighs, I carry my slice of magic into the bathroom with me. She's all too eager to help strip me down and I love every second of it.

"Your boyfriend not giving you what you need, baby girl?"

She stands on her tiptoes to kiss me.

“Oh he did, I just need you as well.”

I reach into the shower and turn on the water, waiting a minute for it to get hot. “What exactly did he do for you?”

Laney’s cheeks turn pink even though the steam hasn’t emerged from the water.

“We used the new sex swing I ordered.”

“Is that why he was at the desk in the corner? That fucker was hiding it under there from me, wasn’t he?”

She laughs and nods her head. Walking to the bathroom door, I yank it open, catching him with the swing as he tries to put it back into the packaging.

“We decided I get to use that first or we use it together,” I huff at him in irritation.

He brings his hands up in surrender. “Don’t look at me. It was all her idea. Punish her.”

I growl, knowing my girl’s little tricks. She loves to pit us against each other because she loves our banter.

“Maybe I’ll punish you both.”

“Okay.”

I pause. *Did I just hear him right?*

“What did you just say?”

“I said, *okay*, big man. I’m not afraid of you.”

I take a deep breath. *He did not just say that. Nope. no way. I’m dreaming again. Imagining all situations where I get them both tied up and on their knees for me while I flog them.*

“Sounds like a challenge,” Laney taunts, rubbing her now naked body on me. I have to take another breath because there is no way this is real. When I don’t wake up and the world doesn’t end, I know exactly how I plan for our evening to go.

“Shower, now. Both of you.”

I actually really need to get clean after today. And if they’ve been fucking, I want him to clean her up for me. While Arrow begins to strip, I grab Laney before she can step behind the

glass. Cupping her core, I circle two fingers around her entrance.

“Did he bury his cum deep inside you?”

Biting her lip, she nods.

“How long ago was this?”

Her eyes cast down. “Maybe twenty minutes.”

I can feel his cum on my fingers as I toy with her. She gets wetter for me in an instant and her eyes close in pleasure.

“Damn. You’re such a needy little one, aren’t you? He just fucked you before I got home and you’re already ready for more.”

“I’m always needy for you,” she moans. “Look at you.”

I smirk. “I’d rather look at you while I get cleaned up.” Stepping into the shower, I position her on the bench in front of me before I back myself into the hot spray.

When Arrow joins us, I have an idea of just how I want them to get clean. Laney let me in on one of her kinks last week, and I think we should explore it.

“Spread your legs for him, baby girl.” She does as I ask, immediately.

“Clean her up for me,” I say to Arrow. “I want every drop of your cum cleaned out of her and in your mouth.”

Arrow drops to his knees. *Whoever said you can’t dom a Dom is an idiot.* Soft Doms and hard Doms are two very different breeds that love to play with power dynamics. And when it comes to these two, they love giving me all the power because they know I’ll only use it to make them feel good.

I get to work washing myself thoroughly while watching Laney moan for him. He’s meticulous in doing exactly as I asked.

I palm my hard dick and stroke it, using the soap as lube while I rub my thumb over my piercings until I can’t take it anymore. I rinse off and walk over to Arrow. Gripping his hair, I pull him away from Laney.

“Your orgasms are mine, baby girl.”

I help Arrow to his feet.

“Feed me your cum,” I order, then crash our mouths together. His lips part for me, and his tongue obeys like a good little pet.

Once I’ve got it in my mouth, I hover over our girl. She knows what I’m going to do and her eyes light up. Without me even having to ask, she opens wide and sticks her tongue out. I let a trail of his cum leave my mouth and land in hers.

When I’ve given her everything, she swallows.

“Such a good girl for me,” I say as I lean down and kiss her. “And a good boy.”

I push Arrow to sit beside her on the bench. Fuck taking it slow. If he wants me to stop this, then he’s going to have to use our safeword.

“Good pets get rewards.”

I kneel in front of him and take his cock in my hand, pumping him slowly. Laney watches with hooded eyes. Leaning in, I wrap my mouth around his thick head. He doesn’t tense or show any sign he’s not into it, so I keep going all the way until he hits the back of my throat before pulling back.

I let go of his dick then smack it. I’ve noticed his interest in pain play recently. While he might not want to give it, I think he wants to try receiving it. The water and my spit coating him creates a sound that reverberates around us. Arrows eyes go wide.

“But you weren’t good earlier, were you?”

I land another smack, and he groans as he clenches his fists. *Ho-ly fuck-ing shitballz. I knew he would be into this!*

“No,” he pants heavily, “I wasn’t.” His dick twitches as if it’s begging for more, and I so desperately want to give it to him.

Stroking his cock, I twist my hand around as I reach the tip to reward him for his honesty. The man is shaking, but there's another little culprit to this, and I have a strong feeling ninety percent of it was her idea. I watch her as I stand.

“You were a bad girl today, weren't you?”

She nods frantically.

“Did you convince him to do something he told you was a bad idea?”

She bites that damn lip again, so I thread my fingers in her hair and tilt her head back until I have all the access I need to suck it into my mouth and bite.

She whimpers but responds when I pull back.

“Yes, it was my idea.”

Rubbing my thumb gently over her lip, I reward her.

“There's my good girl, telling me the truth.” I eye them both. “Get each other cleaned up, It's time for your punishment.”

I step out of the shower and dry off before going to the room. They're just getting out behind me, so I know it won't be long. I grab two of the longer ropes she has. One is a cotton and silk blend, the other a rougher wool. I strip the bed and toss them on there before adding two butt plugs and the flogger.

I have a strong feeling Arrow is open to being my puppy pain slut. Especially since he just let me slap his dick. *And liked it.* When he and Laney finally enter the room, I'm leaning on the bed waiting with just my towel around my waist.

“I figured since you both were so set on playing without me, then I need to remind you of everything only *I* can give you.”

They both glance at the bed, and I swear Laney nearly does a happy dance. Arrow looks concerned, but he's not going to back out. He wants this, he just doesn't want to admit it or have to ask for it.

“On your knees, both of you. Hands behind your back.”

They both oblige, although Arrow is more hesitant as he eyes the second butt plug on the bed. I remove a bottle of lube from the bedside drawer and lift an eyebrow at him.

“You still feeling up for my punishments, pet?”

He glances from my hand to the bed and finally gets on his knees.

“If she can take it, so can I.”

“Brave boy,” I tease as I circle around him.

I picked out the silk ropes for him. Bondage is something you work up with intensity and textures. So, starting soft is always better. I bring his forearms together behind his back and begin tying him up.

Ever since Damien told me about being a rigger, I was intrigued. I knew basic knots for handcuffs or slipknots for bed posts, but the things he’s taught me have been serious game-changers. I wind the rope around him in intricate knots until his forearms are covered. Sweat drips down his back, so I kiss his neck to help him relax. Then, I move to Laney.

“Sit in front of him and put your arms around his back and your head in his lap.”

She folds into him beautifully. I get to work with the rougher rope, tying it around her wrists and hooking a loop between her fingers. I know she loves the sensations, but I don’t want to tie her so tight to him that they can’t move.

Arrow’s dick is painfully hard right by Laney’s face, and they have both been listening so well it’s like they were starting to settle into a subspace. Laney’s eyes are closed, her breathing even. Arrow looks down at her with love in his eyes. It’s a real sight to behold.

“Suck his cock, little unicorn, I need him nice and distracted for this next part.” I grab the smaller of the butt plugs from the bed while Arrow shoots daggers at me. I smirk as I coat it with lube.

“You can call this at any time,” I tell him seriously. He doesn’t say anything, and it only reaffirms that he’s a brat to me. He likes to be pushed and challenged but refuses for it to be his idea.

The anger in his gaze gives way to lust as Laney bobs up and down on his length, sucking like a pro. Once some of the tension is gone, I move behind him again.

“Spread your knees and give us room to make you feel good.”

He adjusts to make space as Laney continues to work him over. I slide my lubed fingers between his ass and rim it carefully, getting him relaxed and used to the pressure.

The way he starts pushing into me has me biting my tongue. I don’t want to scare him away from this, so I choose my moves wisely. Knowing he wasn’t expecting this and likely has no idea what prep is, I don’t want to push him too far and cause him to feel embarrassed, so I replace my fingers with the toy much sooner than I would have liked and slowly push it into him.

When it’s halfway in, he starts to panic so I kiss his neck.

“It’s okay, I know you can take it. You can take it for me, can’t you?”

He nods as I move up to his ear and whisper, “Good boy.”

His head falls back on my shoulder as I kiss a trail down his neck. The toy slides in easily when I nip at his earlobe, and I have to fight back a groan. I massage my hands up his back, wanting to touch just a little bit more of him.

“Such a good pup for me,” I say as I move to stand. “So good at taking your punishments.”

He growls, but it’s cut off by a moan caused by Laney being very skilled at what she’s doing to him. I get the next plug and sit behind her.

It’s one of her larger ones, but I want her prepped to fuck us both at the same time. And I think she wants that too. I rim her

ass with lube and slide two fingers in easily. Arrows moans grow louder, but neither of them are allowed to let go yet.

“Neither of you come until I allow it. Got it?”

Laney hums a yes around Arrow’s dick and he nods with a hiss. I remove my towel before bending down and getting our girl ready.

Once I have the plug secured nicely in her perfect ass, I turn on the vibrations. Her body shudders, and she pops off of Arrow’s cock to let out a moan that causes my dick to weep with precum. I lean over her back, getting right in her ear.

“Next time, we’re both going to take you together. Do you want to be full of us?”

She nods, whimpering.

“You ready for your punishment?”

“Yes, sir.”

I stand to grab the flogger. When I land the first hit to Laney’s back, she arches into it. I love how her body asks for more from me, how she craves the burn. She’s so responsive, and it makes my dick twitch. I land a few more before moving to her ass, then I let some of the strips land between her legs.

She starts shaking with pleasure, so I decide to give her a break and move to Arrow. His hands are behind his back, but I can still land a few hits between his shoulders and on his chest. I want to try a few to his dick after that groan in the shower, but I set that aside to remember for another time so I don’t have to untie and reposition them.

“You ready?”

He nods, looking equally eager and apprehensive. It’s so fucking hot. They’re both covered in sweat at this point, but when I land the first hit to Arrow’s back, the beads of perspiration drip down his face.

I watch him carefully. I don’t want him doing this to prove a point and for me to end up taking it too far. His eyes open and lock on mine, telling me everything I need to know. He wants this.

I land a hit to his chest and he shudders, but I don't think it's from pain. I watch him carefully and the moment he opens his eyes, they beg me for more. I strike his pecs that stand out beautifully for me with his hands bound behind him and he lets out a groan.

I smile as I move to his back, painting them both in a myriad of stripes that range from pink to bright red. When I'm finished, they look like a sculpture. A work of art that belongs only in the finest of museums.

Tossing the flogger on the bed, I move back and position myself between Laney's legs. Pushing her ass up, I'm free to slide right into her in one swift motion.

Her walls pull me in, clenching so tight I nearly see stars. My piercings rub along her back walls, creating a new sensation for the both of us as she clamps around me.

"Fuck, baby girl. This punishment won't last much longer if that's how you're going to play. Suck his dick for him, I need him ready."

She does as I ask, but the pained expression he meets me with is one begging for release. I pump into Laney, making her groan and mumble all sorts of sounds while choking. It's the most beautiful symphony.

I can feel my orgasm building, so I press the button to increase the vibrator in her ass. Arrow comes without permission, spilling deep down her throat. It's hot as fuck, but not what I wanted.

"You don't stop, baby girl. Keep sucking his dick until I let you come."

It won't be long, but I want to see him squirm for her. Arrow whimpers as she sucks on the head, polishing it with her tongue, and I reward her by leaning over and rubbing her clit. When her pussy grips me this time, I can't hold back.

"Come with me, baby. Both of you." I smack her tender ass. "But you save his cum for me."

Laney's whole body shudders as she detonates and Arrow groans as he thrusts his hips up, spilling deep in her mouth. I

lean over her and tilt her head so our lips can meet. When she feeds me Arrow's cum, I swear I thicken inside her again. Her sweetness mixed with the saltiness of him is like a combination of all the things I love.

I'm slow to pull out of her, but once I do I make quick work of untying them and grabbing the arnica gel. They remove their own plugs while I dampen the towels I had ready. I help clean them up and lay them on the bed together, tucking them in before I take care of myself.

Once I've washed my hands, I head back to the bed and lay between them, taking turns to rub the gel into their wrists and up Arrow's arms as well as down both of their backs. They melt into the mattress, but I remind them to drink a bottle of water before we all fall asleep together. This time with me in the middle.

Laney pulls her body to mine, fitting perfectly under my arm while Arrow allows his body to lean into mine. He makes no mention of anything between us, but I hope he's feeling this pull as much as I am. If not, I don't know what I'll do. I want them both because together, they feel like home.



Chapter 17

I feel like there is a big ‘but’ coming from the universe. Everything is going so well, and I know better than to assume it will last. Arrow and Havoc feel like the pieces of my heart I never knew I needed.

“So, things are going well?” Evie asks.

We are hanging out in her room from which she has banned the guys from entering for the evening. Neither of us have said it out loud, but I think both our lady bits need the break.

“Is better than ‘well’ a thing? I don’t know. I don’t want to jinx it.”

Evie laughs. “After all you guys have been through, neither of them are allowed to fuck this up without answering to me.”

I blush, loving that I have a friend so willing to defend my heart and honor.

“Things are going really well, what about you?” I ask.

“These men keep me on my toes, that’s for sure.”

“Is it crazy that less than a year ago, we were plotting how we were going to get you away from them and now you’re practically engaged?”

She winces. “I don’t know if the proposal thing was legit. I think it was just something said in the heat of the moment.”

I look at her, dumbfounded. “Um, ma’am. Have you seen the way those boys look at you? I’m actually surprised they haven’t convinced Lev to tattoo ‘property of the kings’ on your forehead while you’re sleeping.”

She rolls her eyes. “Those boys know better. Alexi knows I’d rather flay my skin off than walk around like that. They wouldn’t dare.”

“Girl, teach me your ways, I need to make these men fear me just a little bit.”

“What the hell are you talking about? Those men are terrified of losing you. I’ve trained with Havoc for a long time. He is not about the sharing game, yet he dove in head first with you without question.”

“Really?” I mean, she’s right. He was on board before Arrow or even I was with the dynamic.

“He loves you, Laney. More than I’ve seen him love most.”

“He loves you too.” I see the way he looks at her and how much he wants to do right by her. The love word has yet to fall from his lips to me, but I know it’s coming. I feel the same way about him. In fact, maybe I won’t make him say it first. Maybe I’ll tell them both exactly how I feel.

“Yeah, but he loves you differently,” Evie says, settling back on some pillows. “He looks at you like he used to look at Ellie.”

She looks up at the ceiling with a sad look on her face. I know that Ellie passed away and that it was hard for him and Evie both to talk about, but that's about the extent of what I know.

“So, I remind him of his kid? That's kind of weird.”

“No, not like that. I think he always loved Vi, but he was never really in love with her. And I think she was okay with that. She just wanted someone to be there, and she trusted he would do that for her.”

She shifts nervously on the bed. We don't make it a habit to gossip, so I know she's telling me this for a reason.

“But I remember this one day I was helping Vi cook dinner and Havoc got home a little early. I watched him silently enter the house to sneak up on Ellie. When she noticed him, her face lit up like the sun, but his face... Laney. It was like no bad things could touch him when he had her in his arms. The weight of what we did melted from him, and he smiled like I have never seen him smile before, not until you.”

My heart twists in my chest. Knowing he found that happiness only for it to be stripped away cuts deep. It's the kind of hurt you feel when you see someone you love hurting, but you know there's nothing you can do. It's the worst kind of pain.

“Do you think he's really done with having kids?” I ask her. He knows I'm sterile and what I grew up doing. I just hope I'm not taking a piece of joy from his life that he might need more than he realizes.

“I know he's done. He talked about getting a vasectomy once he got some tests back, showing that it's possible for his future kids to have cancer. I don't know if he followed through with it but after everything with Ellie, I'm positive he never wants to risk that again.”

That makes sense and actually makes me feel so much better.

“Thanks, Evie.” I take her hand in mine and she squeezes tight.

We talk half the night away and fall asleep in her giant double-king bed. She informed me she banished the boys to their old rooms for the night. I appreciate the room and silence. I love being the middle spoon, but it gets hot as hell sometimes.

Talking to Evie makes me realize just how much better our lives are now that we have each other, and I'm determined to find a way to keep us together. No matter what.



Havoc corners me the next day, the day before we leave for Russia. To say the air has been tense is an understatement.

“Hey, baby girl. Think we could chat for a bit?”

His tone is stuck between serious and playful, but if I know him, that's just his way of trying to make light of something important to him.

“You can always talk to me, Havoc.”

I take his hand in mine and walk to the gym. I was planning on letting all this nervous frustration out on the treadmill. When we get inside, I set down my bag and turn to him.

“What's up?” I ask. He gestures to the mats and we sit down to start our warm-up stretches.

“I wanted to talk to you about Arrow.”

“Okayyyy.” I lean into a stretch while keeping eye contact.

“I um...” I feel like this is it.

This is the ‘but’ I've been waiting for. He doesn't want to do this anymore. I'm too much. Arrow is too much. He must see me getting emotional because he stops stretching and moves to my side.

“It's not bad, I just...” I refuse to let the tears fall as he strokes a finger down my cheek. “I think I might have feelings for him too.”

Weight drops from my shoulders like sandbags. “Really?”

“I think so. I’ve been trying to see if he would make a move, but he hasn’t yet. So, I guess I just wanted to ask you if this is something you’re okay with? If I talk to him about it and tell him about how I feel?”

My head bobs in an excited nod. “Havoc, I love this for you, for both of you. I feel like even though he’s nervous, he’s into it. He cares about you. I’ve seen the way you both look after each other. I know you walk all the way back to the house every day to make a coffee for Arrow just the way he likes it. And I see the way he will tidy things up for you before you get back, making sure you’re comfortable as soon as you get home.”

He leans back on his hands, seeming relieved.

“I feel like we’re both just dancing around the topic, and I just can’t figure out what’s holding him back.”

“You’ll figure it out.” I grin at him, then crawl into his lap to straddle him. “You helped him see how much I needed the both of you, now you just have to help him see that he needs you too.”

I wrap my hands around the back of his neck, using my nails to scratch lightly at the base. His eyes fall closed and I absorb his words into my soul.

“I love you,” we both say at the same time.

His eyes open and I smile down at him.

“I have loved you since you hugged me in that torture shed,” I confess.

“I think I’ve loved you since you trusted me enough to check the knife on my ankle.”

I kiss him and when he kisses me back, I feel his words wrap around my heart and settle some of the turmoil that’s been stirring within me. As long as I have him, no one can hurt me. I know it.

Settling on top of him, I grind down. Not only is my body begging to let this pent-up energy out, but I’m craving a taste of chaos—my havoc.

While we try to have some alone time, it usually ends up being the three of us hanging out. But, right now, all I want to matter is him and me. I need him to see that I love him for who he is and everything he does for me. I need him to know that I see *him*.



Chapter 18

She loves him. He loves her.

I was heading to the gym, knowing Laney might be there to workout some nerves so she could sleep. A habit she's picked up from Evie and Havoc. When Havoc didn't come back right away, I figured they were together. What I didn't imagine was them sitting on the mats in the gym confessing their love for one another.

I was careful when I shut the door to leave, giving them their privacy as they started to remove each other's clothes. Tears burn the back of my eyes but I don't know why.

Is it because I feel left out or because I didn't get to say it first? Or something else?

I try to breathe but can't seem to find an anchor. Rounding a building I brace myself with one arm and try to understand what's happening. *They love each other, but does that mean there's still room for me?*

With the way they were looking at one another, I can't convince myself I have a place with them anymore. I was planning on telling Havoc how I felt before we left. I was going to be honest with them both.

But seeing them like that, with each other. *They don't need me. They don't want me like they want each other.*

Vomit burns at the back of my throat as I fall to my knees. I can feel them both slipping through my fingers as sure as sand. *I was never enough. I'll never be enough.*

When the world around me finally comes back into view, I know that I need a plan. I still have some clothes at my place, so I decide to stay there for the night. I've already set aside my bags for the trip, Alexi will make sure they are loaded to the plane.

I stand up on shaky legs and make my way back to my house by the teachers' buildings.

Havoc: Hey, can we talk?

I know a good bit of time has passed, but I choose to ignore the message as I step into my shower, hoping the water will drown out my racing thoughts. *Spoiler alert, it doesn't.*

By the time I step out, I have two missed calls and four missed messages.

Havoc: Where are you?

Kitten: Are you coming back soon?

Kitten: I'm starting to worry. Just let me know you're okay.

Havoc: If you don't want to talk to me that's fine, but don't ignore her.

I try to breathe as I type but find it harder and harder as I get the words out.

Arrow: I'm staying at my place tonight. The two of you deserve your own time together. Don't worry about me, I just need to take a step back.

Immediately, Laney responds.

Kitten: You're part of this, Arrow. What happened? Why are you pushing us away?

I don't want to answer her, so I decide to turn off my phone, but just before I do, a message from Havoc comes through.

Havoc: Remember what I said about hurting her. Do it again, I dare you.

Then, the phone goes black.

I climb into my bed knowing I won't get a wink of sleep. We have this one last mission. If I can hold it together until then, help Havoc keep her safe through that, then I can let them go. I can walk away. I have to.

They both deserve to be happy. They deserve each other.



I asked Alexi if I could board early and stay up front in the cockpit. He agreed without asking any questions. I need some space to figure out how to go about this mission and keep the people I care about safe while also separating myself from them.

I feel like I've done a decent job of that until about an hour out when Havoc walks in.

"What are you doing?" I ask him, standing to talk to him behind the pilot.

"Look, if you need your space, I understand. But I also need you to understand that you owe her an explanation. And just because you need space, doesn't mean we do."

He hands me a coffee, a perfectly steamed flat white. I stare at it.

"I don't know what has you so bothered right now or if it's the stress about what's going to happen, but our girl is sitting

out there thinking she did something wrong. I can't have her in that headspace right now. I need you to fix it. Even if it's just for her."

His hands linger around mine as I hold the cup, and I wait for a sign that I'm doing something wrong here. If he really wants me in this, I need him to prove it right now. I need a sign.

The tension builds as his fingers move slowly around mine and the cup. His mouth parts and my gaze fixates on his lips, needing them to just come a little closer so that I can say fuck it to my plan of letting them go and keep them as mine instead.

"Arrow," Havoc breathes, just enough for me to hear. I don't respond though. A second passes. Then another.

When my eyes finally meet his, I don't know what I see anymore.

He drops his hand and walks out, leaving me to remember why I'm walking away. It will hurt less if I do it, but I can't have Laney hurt and distracted right now.

I square my shoulders, fortify my emotional wall, and go out to the main cabin. Havoc is rubbing Laney's back, but I scoop her in my arms and lay her between us. She sinks into me, making my chest ache even more, but I can't let her see that.

Instead, I play with her hair while her head is in my lap and try not to think about walking away from the first thing that's brought me true happiness since my adopted mother.



Chapter 19

When we arrive in Russia, I can feel it. Arrow is planning on leaving. I don't know what changed for him, but I can see Havoc is truly upset. We spent the entire night last night in each other's arms trying to figure out what we could have done wrong or what could be causing this.

The only thing we could come up with was that he was scared. I guess it's good he did this now because Havoc and I were both planning to tell him we loved him last night. If he's already scared, then that probably would have sent him over the edge. But, I want him to know how I feel before we go into this mission.

Just in case anything happens, I need him to know how I feel. It's completely selfish. I want Arrow to know so that I can see his face when he finds out. I want him to know

because some small part of me hopes that if I say it, everything will be resolved and he will want to stay.

So, I decide to put it in our goodbye letters in case something happens to us and keep my mouth shut. I wrote one for Arrow and Havoc each so they both have proof that what we had was real even if I don't make it.

I'm confident I will though. Adrik has taken enough from us. We have been plotting and planning with our lives on the line while the ones we love are at risk. He has to be stopped. I can't even go to see my parents while I'm here because it's too risky until we take him down.

I walk them both to my room at the estate, and Havoc sets his bags down. He immediately makes himself comfortable on the bed. Arrow looks hesitant as he steps inside, not putting anything down.

"I'll just get my own room."

Havoc and I both look at him. "Look, Arrow, will you please tell us what's going on?" Havoc begs.

He shakes his head. "We're good, I just need some space before this."

Lie.

"Then I'll take my old room and you can stay here with Laney, that way the two of you can have your own space."

I can see it's killing Havoc to let go of what he wanted with Arrow. It breaks my heart for him. Damn it, between the two of them, I won't be surprised if I leave this place with heart arrhythmias.

"I can just take your old room."

Havoc looks at me and I shrug. I don't have the energy to fight about this. If Arrow is going to do this, there's no stopping him. I'm not going to get on my knees and beg for him to stay no matter how much I want to. Instead, I shrug and leave them to discuss it while I take my stuff to the closet.

I close the door behind me. Once I'm far enough in, so neither of them can hear me, I let the piece of my heart Arrow

once held shatter at my feet. I can feel Havoc's will wrapped around it, doing everything it can to keep us tied as one, but it's no use.

Sitting on the closet floor, I break down, my body folding in on itself. Silent tears run down my face like the river Styx washing away all the life I had left. As strong as I try to be, there are parts of me that are still as delicate as a flower. A very stressed out, needy, and incredibly horny flower, but delicate nonetheless.

I hardly breathe for fear of them hearing me. I'm not a damsel in distress, and although I may be crinkling like crackers, I refuse to ever need a man to save me from a broken heart. I also don't want my tears to be the thing that changes his mind. I've spent enough time manipulating men in my life, these two are the ones I never want to have to do that with. If Arrow wants to be with me, he has to fight too. And clearly, he's done fighting.

I close my eyes and let the sadness sink into my bones. Then, I take deep calming breaths to get rid of it once again. My heart may be in pieces, but I'll get back up again on my own. I always do. At least this time, I know that when I get back up, I'll still have my titan of chaos by my side. I don't need him to save me, but I have a feeling he's going to anyway.



Chapter 20

She's been crying. I saw her face, no matter how hard she tried to hold it together. Arrow left for my room, and I can't for the life of me figure out what the fuck is happening right now. He's suddenly just done with this—with us.

When Laney finally emerges from the closet, her face is red and her eyes are puffy. She tries to pretend everything is okay. *My sweet girl*. She wants to be the toughest cookie in the room all the time.

Laney walks right to the bathroom, even though I can see what she really needs is a hug. I follow her because this isn't going to be us. She splashes water on her face, and I wrap my arms around her middle.

"Please, don't." Her voice is so hoarse, it only breaks my heart further.

“Don’t what?” I whisper in her ear, pushing my face into the crook of her neck to breathe her in. Even surrounded by sadness, she’s the sweetest thing in the room.

“Don’t try to comfort me. Don’t try to tell me it’s all going to be okay. Don’t look at me like I’m something broken and not a weapon to be rivaled.”

I pull back and look at her in the mirror.

“Baby, you’re the most dangerous weapon of all. No one expects a unicorn to breathe fire. I’m not comforting you because I think you’re weak. And I’m sure as fuck not the man to tell you that everything will be okay when I have no idea what tomorrow brings.”

I move her hair to the side so I can kiss her cheek.

“But I will be here when you’re sad and hurting because I love you. You’re strong on your own, my unicorn, but we will always be stronger together. Even in our pain.”

A tear falls down her cheek, and I catch it with my finger before licking it off. Her eyes flash in an instant, from sorrow to desire. This is how I know we’re made for each other.

It’s not the happy moments that define who we are together, but the times we face trials and despair only to come out more united in the end. I plan to show her that even without Arrow, we can be enough. Even if it hurts.

My hand cups her face as I spin her around and lift her onto the counter. Laney’s lips meet mine in a kiss that says everything we are feeling.

“I know you’re hurting too, Havoc. Let me help make it better?”

I nod as I continue to kiss her.

“I might like him, but you love him,” I say into her mouth. “Let’s make each other feel better. Then, we can figure out a way to bring him back to us.”

More tears leave her eyes only to fall down between our lips so we can taste our pain just as keenly as we feel it. It makes it more real, more powerful.

I break our kiss to lick the droplets from her cheeks. Her sharp exhale tells me she feels it too. The pain and the power mixing together.

“I love you, my unicorn. Always.”

“I love you too, Tobias.”

The way she says my name, as if it's her soul's lifeline, her tether to this earth, has tears falling from my eyes too. I can't tell you the moment I fell in love with Vi, she was just there one day and seemed to put a bandaid over the pain. While I cared for her, I know that I never felt something this strong. Laney's not a bandaid, she's the one who takes the time to sew up the wound, as skilled as a surgeon, so I forget it was ever there at all.

With Laney, I've never felt anything except love. Even when I wasn't sure what it was. I trail my lips down her neck, marking her, claiming her. She may be missing a piece of her heart, but I'll make the piece that's mine feel so full it overflows.

Her moans fill the air, echoing off the bathroom walls like an orchestra of pleasure. Continuing down her chest, I lift her shirt and rip it off. I throw it across the room while she pulls my head back and arches into me.

Slipping my fingers below her skirt, I move aside her thong to thrust them inside her. She doesn't need soft right now, she needs me. She needs *chaos*.

I start up at a fast and brutal pace while she undulates her body against mine. I bite her stomach, her sides, her hips, then push down her bra to suck on her nipples as my fingers find her g-spot.

She's wound so tight I know she's going to come hard and fast, and then be ready for another in an instant. I release my dick from my jeans, but I don't give it to her yet. I want her to soak my hand first.

“You gonna give it to me?” I stroke her walls, curling my fingers to hit her sweet spot just right and coaxing her to the edge.

She nods frantically, but I want her words. I want it all. Everything.

“Tell me.”

“I’m gonna come for you,” she pants. “I’m going to give you all of me.”

I bend down between her legs and rip off her skirt and panties before pushing three fingers deep.

“That’s right, give me your body,” *thrust*, “your heart,” *thrust*, “your whole damn soul.”

Her head falls back, so I put my mouth to good use. As much as she loves my dirty words, I think she prefers my mouth on her clit just a little more.

Lapping at the nub, I bring it between my teeth as I suck. I don’t bite down yet, just add slight pressure until her legs start to shake. Then, she begs.

“Please, oh gods, Tobias don’t stop, don’t stoppp...”

I told her she would beg pretty for me, I just never imagined I’d be the one on my knees.

I bite down slightly while using my free hand to stroke my dick. She orgasms so hard around my fingers that her cum drips out. Not squirting, but damn near close.

I collect all of it in my mouth, using my tongue over every sensitive spot as she tries to jerk away. I stop stroking my cock to grab her ass and hold her close. If she wants me to make her feel better, it has to hurt just a little bit.

“Havoc,” she pleads.

Only once I’ve collected every drop of her release do I stop. Standing up, I grab her chin, and she opens for me. I spit her cum on her tongue while her eyes are locked with mine.

“Don’t swallow,” I order. Obediently, she keeps her tongue out and nods.

Picking her up from the counter, I carry her to the bed and sit her on the edge.

“I want you to coat my dick with your essence, baby girl. Get it nice and ready for me to fuck you with.”

Her gaze drops to my cock, and her fingers brush over the piercings causing me to shudder. Then, her mouth is on my length, coating every inch with our spit and her cum. I bite my lips while my knees threaten to buckle. No girl has ever made me feel like this before. I think she knows it too because she gets up just enough to switch our positions, putting me on the bed while she’s on her knees between my legs.

“That’s it, rainbow girl. Show me who you are.”

Her eyes flash with even more heat. I love when she obeys, but fuck me with a unicorn horn, when she takes control, I have to actively fight my orgasm.

Her tongue dances around every bar, playing with me in such a tantalizing way. I don’t know if I should be frustrated that she’s toying with me or if I should allow it to keep happening because it feels so *damn* good.

When she suctions her lips and pulls me to the back of her throat, I have to clench my fists. “Fuck.”

My head falls back, my elbows no longer capable of keeping me in place. I fall back to the bed in a daze of ecstasy.

She pops off and stands, looking down at me.

“Think you’re ready for me to fuck you?”

I bite my lip while my nostrils flare. She told me why she never swears. I think that while she’s been away from her family, it’s been sort of like a tether for her to keep up so that she feels close to her family. But damn when she lets that one little word fly, my dick literally jumps in anticipation.

She giggles. “Well, I think I have my answer.”

She crawls on top of me until her center hovers just over my length. I watch as she sinks down onto me. She puts on a show of it, clenching each time a piercing slips in. By the time she’s fully seated, I swear I black out from the pleasure.

“You ready for me to show you who I am, Tobias?”

Her question makes me pause.

“What do you mean?”

I guess right now isn't the time to have a conversation because I can hardly choke out the words without groaning in pleasure, but she smiles down at me knowingly.

“You know how you're a Dom that thrives on giving pain and Arrow is a pleasure Dom?”

I nod, having very intimate knowledge of both of those facts.

“Well, I'm not only a masochistic sub. I'm a switch. And I think it's time I show you just how much I own you.”

I literally did not know it was possible to get any harder, but I swear to you every ounce of blood leaves my brain and goes straight to my cock.

“Yes, that. Yes. Shit, baby girl.”

She laughs, causing her cunt to tighten even more, and I growl while trying to thrust up into her.

“Ah, ah, ah, none of that. You'll be a good boy and take exactly what I give you.”

Why do I melt at those words? What is happening to me?

Laney sits up, grabbing her nipples and playing with them as she rides my dick. Holy fuck, this is so hot.

I reach up to touch, but she slaps my hand away.

“Hands behind your head. Don't move them.”

I smirk at her in a challenge. She slams down onto me before wrapping her hand around my throat.

“Be a good boy and do as I say or this,” she lifts slightly only to slide back down, making my eyes roll to the back of my head, “stops.”

I clench my fists but relent when she stops moving. I need her to move like I need air in my lungs. So, I decide to play the role of her good little boy if it means orgasms.

“That’s much better.” Her body resumes its pace, fucking me with abandon.

“Doesn’t it feel so good when you listen?”

Her smile shows me just how much she loves her position, and I’m starting to love it too. *Wait, did she just out Dom me?*

I ignore the thought for now because her fingers rake through my hair and nails scratch my scalp. It makes me lose all sense of self. Laney leans her body over mine, her nipples lightly grazing my chest as she whispers, “I’ll make it so good for you if you listen.”

Her lips find my ear, then my neck. Marking me while her hips roll. I don’t think I’ve ever truly entered a subspace until this moment. Her gentle touches combined with the pleasure she brings makes me feel like I’m in a dream, one I never want to wake up from.

Her heat leaves me all too soon, and I watch as she digs into her toy bag. When her hand emerges, a wicked grin splits her face, reminding me so much of my own that I’m actually a little bit scared. A black toy sits in her hand along with a bottle of lube.

As she approaches, she holds out a vibrating prostate massager with a cock ring attached.

“Are you going to listen to me? Will you be *my* good boy?”

Her sultry voice and air of confidence is a huge turn-on because she’s no longer pretending she’s strong or in control. She just is.

“Yes, ma’am.”

She bites her lip as she adds lube to the toy.

“Scoot back on the bed.”

I do as she commands, positioning myself in the middle while she crawls between my legs.

“Bend your knees and spread your legs, big boy.”

My body obeys without me even giving it a second thought and a thrill runs through me. I trust her to make this good. I’ve

been with men before so this isn't anything too new, but her doing it to me is.

She slides the ring over my dick, careful not to catch on any piercings and only elevating my trust in her. She keeps going until the ring is fully settled under my cock and balls, then positions the massager at my entrance.

I'm trying to relax but can't seem to fully let go of the control. Laney's lubed finger rubs over that spot between my dick and ass, and I surrender to her.

She continues to rub and then slides her hand up to stroke my cock. It's painfully hard, nearly purple from the amount of blood rushing to it. So when her fingers wrap around the overly sensitive area, I hardly feel it as the toy slips in.

But when she starts the vibrations, the game changes. If I thought her playing with that small vibrator on my piercings felt good, this is a whole new level. Like, I'm talking master class level—full-on pro.

I groan as my eyes roll back into my head. She continues to stroke me, taking me higher and higher until I can't take it anymore.

“Stop, stop, stop.” I'm careful not to call our safeword because I don't want the scene to end, I just need her to know I'm close, and if she keeps going, I won't be able to stop myself from coming.

“Just a little longer,” she begs. “I love watching your cock weep for me while this toy is deep in your ass.”

I didn't even notice the cum dripping from the tip as she teases it, but as I look down I see she really has made a mess of me.

I hold on for a few more seconds before pleading with my eyes. She takes pity on me and positions herself on top again.

My dick twitches as I watch her use my release to coat her nipples, then she licks her fingers.

“Almost as salty as you,” she taunts. I'm unable to make a sarcastic remark because before I can even open my mouth,

her pussy envelops me.

“Such a good boy. Not talking back. Maybe you are trainable after all.”

She’s mocking me, playing my game, and I couldn’t care less. *Yup, I’ve officially lost it.*

Laney rolls her hips, stimulating her g-spot while moving her fingers down to play with her clit. Thankfully, she’s as turned on as I am because I can see her orgasm approaching just as quickly as mine. As much as I want her to have the upper hand right now, I have to remind her who I am too.

So, just before she lets go, I flip us. Her head bounces on the bed and I crash our lips together while burying myself deep inside her hot, tight cunt. I pound into her, making sure she’s reminded of who the boss really is here, and I don’t let go until she’s screaming my name.

Jets of cum shoot out of me harder than ever before as her walls squeeze me with the grip of an anaconda. This girl is going to be dripping my release for days at this point. I fucking love it. I’ve never been more glad she’s as sterile as I am.

Laney moans into my mouth as I fuck her through her orgasm and prolong mine in the process.

When I pull back, her nails scratch along my closely trimmed beard.

“Such a good boy.”

“My perfect magical creature.”



Chapter 21

Staying in Havoc's room was a bad idea. Everything smells like him. The bed. The bathroom. Everything. And all I can keep thinking is how fucked I am. We are about to be distracted on this mission because of me, and I'm stuck in a room that constantly reminds me of half of what I'm missing.

I tried to go back to them, but when I heard them fucking through the door, it only solidified that they are okay without me. Even if I'm a mess without them.

A knock sounds at the door and my heart foolishly does a flip, aching for it to be one of them. When I open it to find Havoc, a lump forms in my throat. The way his green eyes sparkle actually makes my chest ache because they make me think of her. Of them.

“What?” I croak out.

Havoc stares at me for a second before pushing his way into the room.

“Don’t ‘what’ me, you stupid bastard.”

He stalks toward me. I know backing away from a predator is a bad move, but I can’t think right now. My body instinctively moves without permission. My head is too jumbled up.

All too soon, his hand is around my throat, squeezing. He cuts off my air supply while slamming me back into the wall.

“I don’t know if I want to kiss you or punch you in the throat,” he seethes in my face.

It makes me as angry as it turns me on, and he knows it. I don’t even get the chance to protest before his lips find mine. I’m helpless as I stand there and let him take from me.

That’s what he does. He takes. All while proving a point. A point I don’t want to be reminded of because I’m *not* bi, and I don’t know how I can be with two people who love each other but not me.

When he pulls back, I know I have to find a way to fix this so we aren’t all distracted. I can play this game for a few more days. I can go on caring for them even if it breaks me.

“I’m sorry,” I breathe. His forehead touches mine as he exhales.

“Don’t apologize to me, go apologize to her.”

Havoc’s hand finally leaves my throat. I refuse to focus on how much I want him to keep it there and really put me in my place. He steps back, but the haunted look in his eyes remains. I’m confused by it because Laney should be enough for him. She should be everything. So why when I leave to go find her, does it feel like Havoc is pulling at my heart too?

I get to Laney’s room to see her sitting on the bed in a pink nighty reading a book. It’s cute as fuck, and I have to keep reminding myself not to get too attached.

Who am I kidding, I’ll never be unattached to this intelligent, stunning woman. Just when I think she hasn’t

noticed me staring, she looks up from the pages with an arched brow.

“Oh, has the big boy finally decided to come and talk about his feelings instead of running away from them?”

I shift in the doorway, but she just pats the bed beside her. I don't think there's any way I'm getting out of this without staying in here with them.

Honestly, I'm thankful though because if I had to spend a night in a room that smelled only of Havoc, I think I would end up confusing myself even more.

I mean, he kissed me, but I'm not bi. I never have been. Isn't that something you have to decide at a young age or when you start to find your sexuality? I feel like I would be a fraud if he was the only exception to that rule.

I sit by Laney and my shoulders fall.

“I don't know what to do here, Kitten.”

She takes my hand in hers. “Talk to me. What's happening?”

“Everything just feels messed up inside.”

“Messed up how?” She shifts closer to me and I let her. She has always been a source of comfort for me. The only one I really want to touch. *Except for maybe Havoc*. But I push that thought aside.

“Can we just focus on what we need to do here and maybe talk about everything after? I think it's just the pressure of what's coming up?”

It's a lie. While I'm worried about all of our safety, it's not why I'm pulling away. Laney's brows pinch like she can sense something is off, so I lean in and kiss her.

She kisses me back, but something feels different. She still feels like she's a part of me but not like before. Now with Havoc's taste still on my lips and hers moving with mine, everything feels all too right, and I don't know what to do with that.

So, I pull back and plan to fake it—fake that I'm not being torn apart inside. As I draw her into me, Havoc comes in. Without a word, we all fall asleep in a mess of tangled limbs and I have to keep my heart in check.

I love them, but they don't love me.



Chapter 22

It's mission day. While I'm ready to finally take down this butthead of a man who tried to take my family from me and succeeded in taking my best friend's family, I'm also so confused.

Arrow has been so quiet these past few days, and I'm hoping it really is just the mission ahead. Maybe he gets like this before big tasks and I've just never seen that side of him before. I have no idea.

Havoc and I decided we would wait until after today to talk to Arrow about how we are both feeling and tell him that we love him. But I'm sitting in the car on our way to the airport and can't help but question if that was a good idea or not.

Arrow and I are similar in the way that we bury our emotions. So while he's sitting here holding my hand, I can

feel that he's a million miles away. We arrive at the airport and after a quick debrief from Alexi over comms, we move to our positions.

Havoc hugs me as he leaves, then plants a kiss on my cheek and whispers, "I love you, unicorn. Go kick some ass."

I blush under his praise, and he squeezes Arrow's shoulder. "Keep her safe, brother. I don't think either of us could live without her."

Arrow nods, finally coming back to the present. "I'll protect her with my life."

When Havoc leaves, I take Arrow's hand while we walk to the stairs.

"You doing okay?" I ask him. Something feels even more off today, and it's not just the mission. He won't really look at me and he definitely won't look at Havoc.

"I don't really know."

"Arrow." I turn him toward me on the stairs. I don't want him going into this fight as distracted as he is. It's like there's a glaze over his eyes. I kiss him and he kisses me back, but it almost feels like goodbye.

"Talk to me." Maybe I can help him get his head in the game.

"I... I don't think I can do this anymore. I don't know if I can just share you."

I'm about to full-on freak out at him when gunfire erupts outside. No one is supposed to be here yet. His eyes lock on mine, and we know the gravity of the situation in an instant.

We just walked into an ambush.



Chapter 23

“Sniper on the roof.” Our comms connect, and I cover my girl. She screams as we hear a pop in the distance, but my only thought is protecting Laney.

Pain erupts across my back and shoulder but my first instinct when we land is to check her. I try to move my shoulder as the comms fade in and out, but Laney grabs me and flips us. *At least she’s okay.*

“Why?” she screams in my face. “Why in the ever-loving bug on a stick would you do that?”

She’s frantic as she tears off her jacket and holds it to my chest. I can’t tell how bad it is. But by the look in her eyes and the sheer amount of pain I’m in, I’d say it’s definitely in the top three worst hits I’ve ever received.

I cough, my body jostling as I feel blood trickle into my lungs. But I have to tell her, she has to know. They both do.

“I...” blood seeps from my mouth with each breath, but I refuse to leave this world without saying these words. “I love you. Both of you.”

“No!” she yells as she tears her jacket, creating a ball with part of it while tightening the rest over my shoulder and arm. It’s one of the most complicated places to try and relieve bleeding with consistent pressure, and I just know I’ve got about ten minutes left.

“Don’t you dare tell me that right now! Not after everything! You don’t get to say that and then die on me! Not when I have so much I still need to say to you.”

She pulls the two ends of the knot tighter, making me gasp in pain, but I continue to cough up blood. Havoc’s face comes into view a moment later.

“What the fuck happened?”

“He got shot, you miserable sack of potatoes,” she yells at him, and my lips actually lift in a smile. “Take him to the ambulance! Now!”

Havoc doesn’t hesitate to throw me over his shoulder and in an instant, we are moving. I think I black out during my little joy ride because when I open my eyes again, I’m being laid on a stretcher.

I try to tell him how I feel. I wrote them both a note in case anything were to happen, but I want him to hear it from me.

“I need you too.” My eyes threaten to close but I fight for the last words. “Both of you.”

Words are being shouted around me, but they don’t register. Everything sounds distorted and far away. What does register though, is his lips on my forehead. I focus on that spot as I’m rushed to the hospital.

The warmth of his lips are what keep me pushing, fighting for my life because when I wake up, I know it will be to two people who love me. Even if they didn’t say the words, I could

see it on Laney's face and hear it in her panicked voice. I could feel it in Havoc's kiss.

They love me, and they are worth fighting for.



Chapter 24

I try not to think about Ellie or Vi as I pace the hospital room where my girl lays. Arrow is two doors down and just came out of surgery, and they believe Laney will wake up soon. She had a deep laceration to her shoulder; we can only guess it was from her falling in the supply closet.

My body threatens to go into fight or flight mode as flashes of Ellie being sick in bed or Vi being rushed on a gurney slowly tug on my sanity. The tubing on Laney's face reminds me of the day they put Ellie on oxygen, and I slowly feel like my breath is being stripped from my lungs.

I failed her. I failed Arrow. And I failed E. I don't know what to do now.

Alexi, Lev, and Damien all went to try to find Adrik, but I know him. There is no way they will be able to catch up to

him. The only plus is that we took down about half of his team tonight.

But he took down half of ours too.

Adrik may be the leader of The Shades, but I have a strong feeling his vengeance will have nothing on the wrath our found family can bring. He might have seen us coming this time, but we won't stop until we have E back and his heart is torn from his chest.

Boris is in the family waiting room, a full set up of every computer he could need surrounding him as he does what he can to help in the search for E. All while trying to hunt down the real culprit of today's events.

Damien told us someone else was at play, but we don't know who yet, which only adds to my nerves. We always figured there was another guy, but focusing on the target we knew was easier than hunting down one who could hide in plain sight easily enough to implode our entire operation apparently.

I have to fix this. I look at Laney again and my mind glitches.

She's going to be okay; I know she is. But it was still my fault she was put in harm's way. If I had only seen Adrik's true intentions when E was younger, none of this would be happening. All of them would be living their lives in a much happier universe.

Which is why I have to fix it.

While Laney sleeps off the drugs, I pace between her and Arrow's room, needing to see him too. It's a strange feeling when I see him. I don't think about Vi or Ellie, but I think about myself and what I said. He threw himself in front of Laney for me. I know he did.

And while he needs her just as much as I do, I could see him already pulling away. Why? I have no fucking clue. But maybe this was his way to go out with a big hurrah.

Bastard. Trying to upstage me in death. *Not gonna happen, bro.*

I look at him, tubing and wires everywhere, and try not to get sick. Then, I pace again. Maybe, if I can lure Adrik out to me, I can take him out. I could be his focus and lead him away from everyone here. I could keep them all safe, and when I have the upper hand, I'll take him out and save E.

Laney would get her best friend back, and she would have Arrow to watch over her. I just can't be the reason she's in danger, and as long as she's mine, I will be.

I'm a Shades assassin, I have enemies on enemies. Neither of them will ever be safe with me.

A soft voice catches my attention. "Havoc? Arrow?"

I rush into her room and nearly fall at her side. Tears stream down my face without permission as I cling to her, and her hands clench around me. I don't know how I'm going to say goodbye to her, but I have to.

It's better this way anyway. With me out of the picture, she and Arrow will pick up right where they left off, and I can keep them safe from the sidelines.

Laney holds me close as I let out all of the fear and adrenaline that had been powering me for the past four hours while I waited here. I'm careful not to put any pressure on the shoulder with the injury as I squeeze her to me.

"I'm okay," she says in a hushed voice.

Suddenly, I feel like an asshole, sitting here crying while she needs me. I grab the water on her bedside table. They had said she would be thirsty when she woke up, so I got her every drink they had available downstairs plus three cups of water with all different kinds of ice in case she wanted cold or room temperature.

She gratefully takes the one full of ice from my hands and greedily drinks it dry. When she's done, she hugs me.

"How's Arrow?" Her question is hesitant and I know why. She's not sure if she wants the answer. I sit back and meet her gaze.

“He’s out of surgery and doing well. They think he will be awake soon.”

Her body relaxes into the bed and I squeeze her hand, feeling her relief along with her. I scoot up on the bed, holding her close to work up the courage to tell her what I need to do.

“Why is your heart racing?” she asks, lifting her head from my chest.

When I look down at her, she must see what’s coming because a wall of steel is locked into place between us in a second.

“You too?”

“Me too, what?” I ask, tilting my head.

“You’re going to leave too, aren’t you?”

My chest burns, but I don’t tell her no. I won’t lie.

“Arrow isn’t going anywhere, Unicorn. He’s going to be yours and you’re going to be his. It will be how it was supposed to be.”

Anger flashes in her eyes before she lands a punch to my jaw. Except, she’s right-handed, and it jostles her hurt shoulder making her cry out in pain as she keeps trying to hit me.

“Fuck you, Havoc. Fuck YOU!”

I wrap my arms around her, stopping her from hurting herself as she falls apart.

“You said we would be stronger together even in our pain. So why would you leave me now?”

A tear falls from my eye without my permission as I allow myself to breathe her in one last time.

“I’m doing this for you, baby girl,” I whisper.

She winces and pushes me away and I let her while I continue to move out of her proximity.

“Go to hell, Havoc! You’re doing this for you and we both know it. Don’t try to blame me when you’re the one who’s scared!”

I shake my head, but it's better this way. If she knows I'm leaving to try and keep her safe, it will only hurt more. But anger, anger will help her get over me much faster.

I try to swallow over the lump in my throat as I leave her room and head to Arrow's. I planned to leave a note telling him to love her and appreciate her and that I'm doing this all to keep her safe, but when I round the corner, he's sitting up with his eyes open.

"Hey," he says sleepily.

"Hey," I say, trying not to let him know anything's wrong. I don't want him to freak out after such a big surgery. I move to his bed and comb my fingers through his hair, causing his eyes to fall closed for a second. He looks at peace, then he opens them.

"What's wrong? Is Laney okay?"

"She's good, she's good," I say quickly when he tries to sit up. I keep him in place so he doesn't tear his stitches.

"Then why do you look like that?"

"Like what?"

"Like you're here to deliver some sort of bad news?"

I laugh, it's funny how much he's gotten to know me these past few months. All those days in the office together or dinners while Laney studied really brought us close. Too close.

"I um..." *How do I say this to him?*

Laney's shadow falls on me and I know I need to get this over with. I can't walk away from her twice. I don't even know if I can walk away from him with how he's looking at me.

"I think I need to go."

"Go?" His face scrunches up, and he starts to pale.

"I think it's better if I leave."

I turn around to try and walk out the door, but Laney blocks me. When her eyes fall to Arrow, they go wide. I turn back to

see his eyes flutter as if he just passed out.

Monitors start beeping, everything alarming at once as people rush into the room. Laney and I push ourselves to the back.

Everything happens so fast. One minute we were talking, he was smiling at me in a way I'd never seen him smile before, and now...

Two nurses initiate CPR, starting chest compressions and Laney falls to her knees. I scoop her up in my arms just as Boris rounds the corner, coming out of Nessa's room.

“What’s happening?”

I shake my head, and Laney's hand shakes as it covers her mouth as she silently cries into my chest. Boris comes to my side and brings his phone to his ear.

“Arrow. Now.”

We stand there, just outside the room as Doc rushes in. His panicked eyes as he takes in the monitors are what make my chest cleave open. I set Laney on her feet next to me, all too scared I might pass out and drop her.

Doc looks back at Boris and shakes his head. I don't know what to do anymore, all I know is the sound I hear. When I pictured the world coming to an end, I always imagined an explosion. A crash or a bang that would signify the beginning of the end.

But that's not how it happened. There was no detonation. My world ending was the splitting of half of my heart while the other half fell to her knees in an earth-shattering scream.



Epilogue

The doctors were able to get Arrow's heart to come back, but he's now in a coma. Doc says it's up to him if and when he will wake up. Laney has banned me from his room and hasn't left his side in three days.

The nurses are concerned for her. Doc is even more worried, and I feel like I failed everyone on all fronts. I couldn't leave to deal with Adrik until I knew Arrow was okay, and now I just can't find it in me to leave.

Laney blames me for all of it. She thinks the news of me leaving set him into a panic that caused his blood pressure to spike too suddenly. Doc assured me that's not how the body works, but part of me wonders if she's a little bit right.

Regardless, Boris and I have been back at the house, trying to figure out our next steps since the world allegedly has to

move on. I'm now hyper-focused on how we are going to get E back.

Alexi walks into the office, flanked by Damien and Lev. They aren't doing so hot. Not that any of us are much above functioning.

"What's your idea?" Alexis asks, taking a seat beside me.

"I have a contact at the compound, the woman E was training. I've sent her a message on a discreet line, but it's not one that is easily checked. Typically, E teaches a three-six-five rule about communication, which means we only check our emergency lines every three days, then every six, then every five. Then, we switch up the pattern. I haven't heard back, but I'm hopeful she will be checking in soon."

Alexi nods at me, then looks to Boris.

"Have you found Rostya?"

Boris shakes his head. He found footage proving Rostya had been the spy all along and has been combing through every bit of information he can find about his whereabouts.

All of us keep coming up blank. But I know Adrik. He's underground and that's why E's bracelet isn't working. We only have four places he could be holding her in that case, but they are all covered in guards and also contain fail-safes on the building. If someone comes in uninvited, the whole building will explode.

That one was my idea, unfortunately. We held a lot of high-profile criminals and any information about us getting out wasn't an option. So, if anyone tries to leave, the entire place explodes.

The only plus side to this having been my idea is that I know in general how these systems work and how to go about taking them down. But we only get one chance. If we start at the wrong location, Adrik will find a way to make sure I can't hunt them down again. Which means he could kill her to keep us off his back.

That's not worth it. But, explaining that to three very hot-headed men was not an easy thing, which is why I'm sitting

here sporting bruises from all of the men in this room.

No one told me just how hot-headed these mafia leaders could get. I mean, they apologized, but that doesn't make the injury disappear. Boris continues to explain where he's looked and what our next steps could be, but everyone is shutting down. I can feel it in the air.

If we don't do something now, none of us are going to make it very long.

A knock sounds at the door, and we all turn to see a tall woman with curly red hair and a bright red dress on.

“Hello, I'm Dr. K. Alexi asked me to be here.”

Acknowledgement

Oh my goodness I have so many people to thank for this one. My amazing team rallied behind me to make Laney's story the best it could be and I could not be more in love with how it turned out.

Becky, Amanda, and Crystal, you guys killed it. You all three have such an amazing talent when it comes to editing and I never see myself writing a book without you behind me. I love you guys and how hard you worked to make Laney's story special. Can you believe we got this out in just four weeks?

Sarah and Brittany, you girls are amazing! Thank you for the hype and encouragement and the emoji reactions! Seriously you both helped me push through when I didn't think I would make this deadline.

Hannah! Girl! You made this cover SO perfect. It is everything I could have asked for and I am constantly in awe of your talent and so lucky to have you on my team.

ARC readers, you guys are the real MVPs here! Thank you for diving into this journey with me and trusting me to bring you a great story. I hope I did Laney justice in your minds and I can't wait to bring you more because obviously, I have to fix what just happened. Try not to hate me too much.

To all my readers, thank you! Being an indie author can be so hard but all of you make it worth it. I hope these characters

bring you hope and love and light even in the dark times. I cherish all of you!

Now, who's ready to hear what we have coming next? Brutal Boys of the Mafia 3, **Mafia Queen**, will be coming your way in DECEMBER! AND Laney's final story will be coming to you shortly after! Don't worry, these characters will all get POV's in book 3, but I'll save the juicy stuff for 3.5... Can anyone guess the name?

Playlist

Curiosity- Bryce Savage

Cutting It Close- Rain City Drive

Cravin' - Stileto, Kendyle Paige

Devil- Phix

Roses Red- Jeris Johnson

sTraNgeRs- Bring Me The Horizon

Broken Promise- Jon Dretto

After All- Kai Watchi, Fytch

Over My Head- Kai Watchi, Die Frampton

Drift- I See Stars