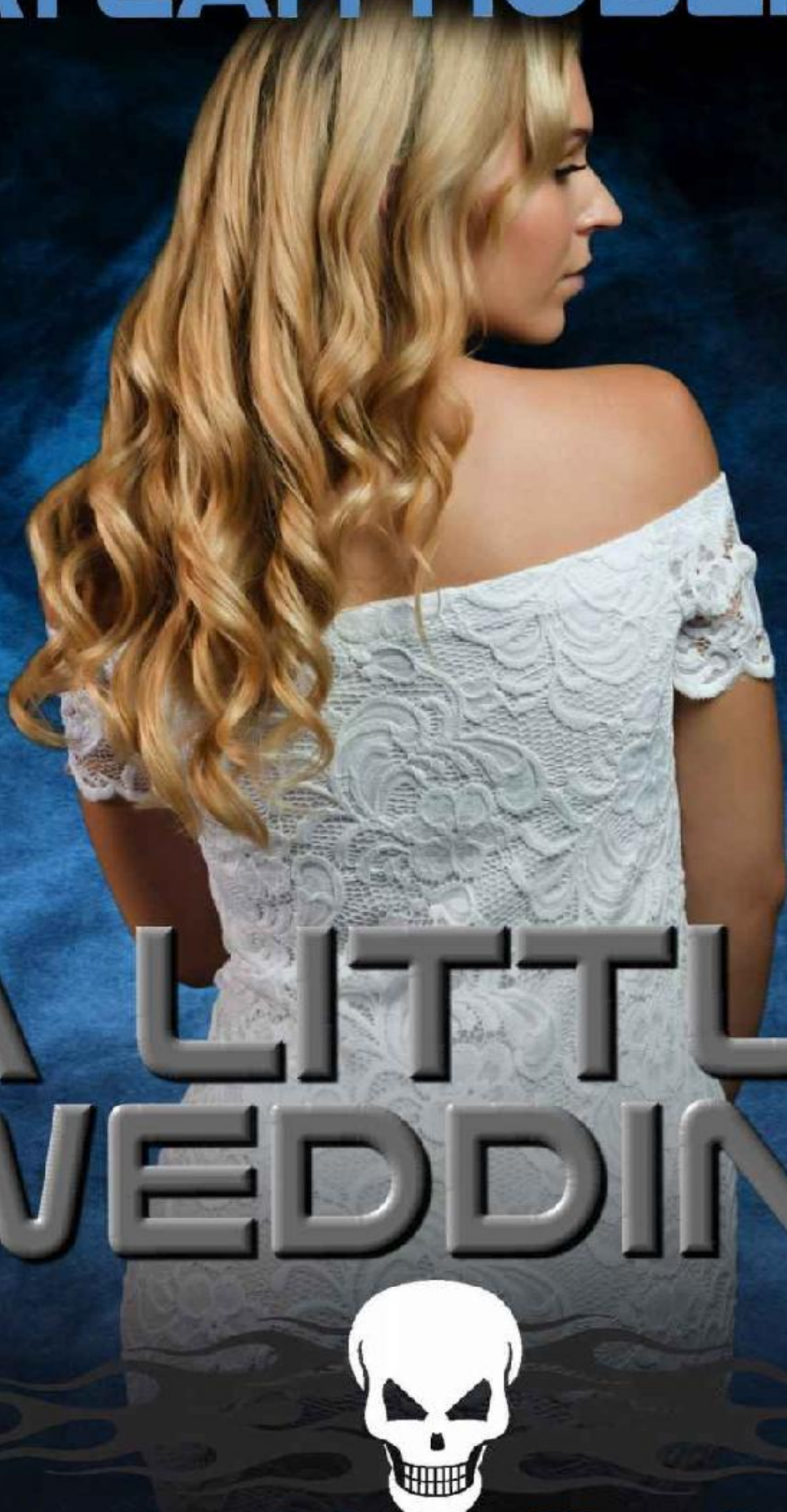


USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

LAYLAH ROBERTS



**A LITTLE
WEDDING**



MC Daddies Book 8.5

A LITTLE WEDDING

LAYLAH ROBERTS

Laylah Roberts.

A Little Wedding.

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Daddy Dominic

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Hero Daddy
Protector Daddy
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Her Daddy's Jewel
Fierce Daddy

Savage Daddy

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Daddy Fox

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Rectify

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Haley Chronicles

Ally and Jake

T *hree weeks until the wedding ...*

WAS THAT THE FOX?

Sunny froze, peering out into the semi-dark nightclub. She closed her eyes, then opened them again.

And all she could see was a guy in his fifties with a bald spot and a ponytail swaying in place while a woman half his age ground her ass against him.

She sighed. She had to stop doing this. She was seeing him everywhere, and it was killing her.

“Sunny! You okay?”

She glanced over with a smile as Millie gave her a concerned look. Most of her friends were all out on the dance floor at The Edge, dancing and having a good time.

Except her.

Which was pretty sad when this was her hen’s night.

Three weeks to her wedding.

It was hard to believe. She was getting her happy-ever-after with the sexiest man on the planet.

And he loved her.

Sunny knew that she wasn't particularly special. The only thing interesting about her was the fact that she had a Fairy Godfather.

A Foxy Fairy Godfather.

Who everyone believed had turned against them.

But she refused to believe that. She was keeping the faith.

Darn it, Sunny. This is your hen's night. Stop thinking about the Fox.

So, she gave Millie a thumbs up. "I'm great!"

The guys hadn't wanted them to go out on their own, which is why they'd compromised and come to The Edge, which was owned by Drew Markovich.

Oh, and they'd also had to agree to several of Markovich's men coming along to guard them. Right now, those men were fanned around them on the dance floor, stopping anyone else from coming close.

Millie gave her a skeptical look. She'd known Sunny too long to fully believe her.

"Want to go upstairs for a drink?" Jewel asked.

Sunny nodded. She could use a break. And a pink cocktail. Jewel gestured at the others to let them know where they were going. Tabby, Emme, and Dahlia stayed on the dance floor while Millie, Betsy, and Livvy followed them up to the VIP area.

Yep, knowing the owner meant they were VIPs.

Two of the guards broke off to move with them. Once they reached the VIP area, they grabbed drinks from the bartender. They even had their own private bartender.

"I feel so special," Sunny said. "I mean, I've never been a VIP in my life."

"You're always a VIP," Betsy told her loyally.

Sunny sipped on the bright pink cocktail. Hmm, maybe she should slow down. She wasn't really a drinker. But these were

delicious. And they were pink.

How could she resist?

“You sure you’re all right, Sunny?” Millie asked again. “You’ve been kind of quiet.”

Sunny winced. “Sorry. I’m having a great time, really.”

They all stared at her. These were her closest friends. If she could tell anyone ...

She sighed. “There’s just a lot to think about, you know? All the wedding details. We’re only three weeks out and I haven’t even heard from my parents.” She stared at her drink, then gulped the rest down.

“They’re not coming?” Jewel asked with a scowl. “Those assholes.”

Sunny shrugged. “It’s not like we’re close. They’re travelling around, living their best life.”

Without her.

“Guess I’ll walk down the aisle by myself.”

“What did Duke say?” Jewel asked.

“He’s angry that they haven’t replied to my messages. But as he said, it’s kind of expected. And he’s right. Not sure why I’m so hurt. I guess there’s just been a lot lately ... you know, I might get another drink.” She jumped up, ignoring the way her head swum and grabbed another cocktail before going to the balcony to look at the dancers below.

It was easy to spot her friends since they were in a bubble.

She noticed Dahlia gesturing something while her bodyguard shook his head.

“Wonder what that’s about?” Livvy said, coming up beside her.

Then Emme and Tabby linked their hands together in front of them.

“I think Dahlia wants to run and jump into their arms,” Sunny said with a giggle.

“Oh, Lord.” Livvy laughed and shook her head. “And I thought my brothers were trouble.”

“I think Dahlia and Emme together are trouble with a capital T.”

Livvy leaned into her, looking around. “Have you heard from him?”

“From who?” Sunny gave her a curious look.

“The Fox.”

“Livvy,” she said warningly. “It’s best not to talk about him.”

“I know some of the others believe that he betrayed Markovich. Others are on the fence. But I don’t believe he’d do that, and I know you don’t either.”

Sunny sucked in a breath. “You don’t?”

“Nope. But whatever is going on with him, there’s not a thing any of us can do. And while I don’t really know him, I’m pretty sure he wouldn’t want you to worry over him, right?”

No, he wouldn’t. He’d think that was a ridiculous waste of time.

Sunny nodded. “You’re right.”

“This is your hen’s night. Your wedding. You shouldn’t let anyone, not absent parents or ... or ...”

“An assassin fairy godfather?” she suggested.

“Right. Don’t let them take away from what should be a really happy time.”

“When did you get so wise?”

“Girl, I’ve always been wise.” Livvy bumped into her. “Looks like Dahlia’s given up.”

“Probably just as well. I’m sure her bodyguard doesn’t want to explain how she got hurt on his watch,” Sunny replied.

“Wanna go dance again?”

Sunny sucked down her drink. “Uh-huh.”

“Uh, you might want to go easy on those. They’re strong ... oh, heck no.” Livvy leaned over so far that Sunny grabbed at her, worried that she was going to fall. “What are they doing here?”

“Who?” Sunny asked, trying to see where she was looking.

Then her mouth dropped open.

Those dirty, rotten liars.

A strobe light had started moving through the large room below them. And every thirty seconds or so, it lit up a dark corner.

A dark corner where a bunch of men sat, watching the dance floor.

“Are all of them here?” Sunny asked with a frown.

“Not sure. I saw Reyes and Jason. Those liars. We should go tell Jewel so she can kick their asses.”

“No, wait. They’re not going to leave.” Sunny grabbed hold of Livvy. “And I think we were crazy to believe they wouldn’t be here. Let’s just pretend we never saw them and go have some fun.”



A FEW HOURS LATER, Sunny stumbled as they headed to the limo that Millie had hired for the night.

“Whoa,” Jewel said, wrapping an arm around her. “Girl, you are going to regret those cocktails in a few hours.”

“I had the best time!” Sunny cried as they reached the limo. “You guys are the bestest. The best of the best. You’re the unicorns of the animal kingdom. I loves you all.”

Dahlia giggled. “Is she always like this when she’s drunk?”

“I’m not sure I’ve ever seen her even drink,” Betsy said.

“We’ve got to head home,” Emme said with a pout. “Have fun on the ride home, girls!” She linked her arm through Dahlia’s as they headed to their car, a few guards moving with them.

One of the other guards opened the limo door, helping them all in before he climbed in the front with the driver, giving them some privacy in the back.

“Our men are lying liars, though,” Sunny told them, staring up at the ceiling of the limo.

Hmm. Was that a sunroof? That gave her an idea ...

“What do you mean?” Tabby asked.

“They were there,” Livvy explained.

“What?” Jewel stared over at Livvy. “Who was there?”

“Most of the guys, I think,” Livvy replied. “Well, I didn’t see Markovich, Spike, or Sav. Sav is at home looking after the boys, though.”

“Reverend Pat and Mr. and Mrs. Spain are staying,” Millie said. “Spike will be with them.”

“I want to put my head out the window,” Sunny told them suddenly.

Betsy sat up straight. “What? Do you need to puke?”

“Here, puke in this!” Millie held out her dinosaur bag.

Sunny welled up, tears dripping down her face.

“What is it? What’s wrong?” Jewel asked.

“Millie’s willing to let me puke in her dinosaur bag! You guys are just the bestest.”

“Wait, so you’re not going to throw up?” Betsy asked.

Sunny sniffled. “Nope. Well, not yet, anyway. I want to lean out the hole in the roof.” She pointed up.

They all glanced up and Jewel laughed. “The sunroof?”

“Yep. Hold me?”

Jewel opened the sunroof and then held onto Sunny's waist as she stood. Sunny raised her arms above her head with a whoop as the air whipped around her.

"I'm getting married! Everyone, I'm getting married!"

There weren't many people around. Probably a good thing, considering she was going to be really embarrassed when she remembered this in the morning.

But right now, it was fun.

They took her and Livvy home first, since they lived next door to each other. She was giggling like a lunatic as Betsy and Jewel helped her up the path. A security light switched on, and Hatter let out a whining noise of excitement from inside the house.

"Hatter, stay," Duke ordered as he opened the door.

A shiver of pleasure ran through her. She loved his deep, commanding voice.

She stumbled into the house. "Dukey! I'm home."

"Dukey?" Jewel choked on her laughter.

"Good God," Duke said, grabbing her around the waist as the house tipped.

"What's going on? Is it an earthquake?"

"How drunk is she? How bad are the two of you?" Duke asked.

"She found these cocktails she really liked," Betsy told him.

"She's completely off her face," Jewel added bluntly. "We tried to sober her up a bit with a burger. But I bet that's going to come straight back up."

Duke sighed.

"Daddy, have you got hot pants?" she asked, giving him a stern look. "Because that's what happens to sneaky sneaks."

"Actually, I think that's what happens to liars," Jewel said unhelpfully.

“Dukey?” she asked.

“Yes?”

“Can you make the house stop moving? It’s being very annoying. It’s all topsy-turvy. Oh wait, am I like Alice? I am, aren’t I? Oh no!” she cried as she slid to the floor. “I’ve become small. It was the burger? It shrunk me?”

“Little Rebel, you’re not in Wonderland and you’re not shrinking. Nothing is topsy-turvy.”

She sighed. “Well, that’s a huge disappointment.”

Betsy started giggling.

“We’ll leave the two of you,” Jewel said. “Have a nice night, *Dukey*.”

Duke mumbled something as he picked Sunny up. Something about Jason not spanking her ass enough.

“Why would Jason spank my ass?” Sunny asked as he carried her along the passage and into the bathroom to brush her teeth. “I don’t want a spanking, and not for him. The only person who can spank me is you, Dukey.”

“Darn straight. I was talking about Jason spanking Jewel’s ass. And my name isn’t Dukey. Jewel is never going to let me live that down.” He handed her the toothbrush.

She brushed her teeth quickly, giggling every time she looked at herself in the mirror. She didn’t know why, she just did. He wet a face cloth and wiped her face clean before picking her back up.

“I love Jewel. And Betsy and Millie. And everyone else,” she cried, flinging her arms up as Duke sat her on the bed. “But most of all, Dukey, I love you.”

She tapped her finger on his nose as she said that. Just to emphasise her point.

“I love you, Sunny.”

She sighed. Then she sniffled. “Do you really?”

“Of course, I do. Why are you upset?” he asked gently as he stripped her down to her panties.

“I don’t know. I’m being silly.”

He sat next to her, pushing her hair off her face. “You’re tired and you’ve had a few cocktails.”

“More than a few,” she replied solemnly.

“Tomorrow, we’re going to have a talk.” He got up and grabbed one of her unicorn nightgowns.

“Oh, no!” she wailed as he helped her get into the nightie. “Does talk mean a spanking? I don’t want a spanking, Daddy.”

He eyed her. “Have you done something to deserve a spanking?”

She frowned, thinking hard. “Not that I can remember. I did stand out of the sunroof tonight.”

“What sunroof?”

“Of the limo. As it was driving.”

“What? And no one thought to stop you? That’s dangerous.”

“But it was fun. And I’m a rebel! A rebel without a cause. A badass motherfucker.” She put her hand over her mouth as he gave her a warning look. “I mean, a badass Daddy’s girl. Yep, that’s what I meant.”

“Remind me to talk to you about that tomorrow,” he said as she yawned, her eyelids growing heavy.

“Sure thing, Daddy. I’ll be sure to do that. Totally.”

“Don’t go to sleep yet,” he warned. “I’m going to go get you some painkillers and water.” He returned quickly, helping her swallow the pills and gulp down some water before he tucked her into bed.

“Daddy, you’re the best.”

“I know.”

“Love you.”

“Love you too, my girl.”

Yep, everything was wonderful.

Everything was not wonderful.

Sunny bent over the toilet, vomiting. Actually, by now, she was just dry retching since there was nothing left in her tummy.

“I’m dying,” she wailed.

Duke was crouched next to her. He was holding her hair back with one hand while using his other hand to rub her back.

“You’re not dying, Little Rebel.”

“Uh-huh, I am. I’m dying. And right before my wedding. That’s ... that’s just so sad.”

“Baby, you’re just hungover.”

“I don’t like being hungover.” She wanted to crawl into a ball and just hit rewind so she could go back twelve hours and not drink five cocktails and then eat a huge hamburger on the way home.

It had all seemed like such a good idea at the time. Like hanging out the sunroof of a limo. Yeah, she better not tell Duke about that. Although she had this strange feeling that she might have already ...

Whoops.

Stupid alcohol. She didn’t understand why people drank.

“There’s a bear in my head banging on drums. Make him stop.”

“A bear playing drums?”

“No, Daddy. Banging on drums. He’s being very inconsiderate.”

“Why a bear?”

She would have glared at him if she thought it was safe to turn her head. “Obviously because bears are very clumsy and they kind of thump around. There’s no way they could master the drums.”

She thought that was obvious.

“Baby, that’s the weirdest argument I’ve ever heard.”

“Then don’t get me started on the snakes in my tummy. Make it stop? Please?”

“I’ll try, Little Rebel,” he soothed. “Come on, it seems you’ve stopped vomiting. Let’s get you in the shower.”

“Can’t shower.”

“I’ll help you.”

“No, I’ve got to pee first.”

“All right. I’ll get you something to wear.” He helped her up, then reached under her nightie and drew down her panties.

“I don’t remember getting ready for bed last night.” She rubbed at her head as he settled her on the toilet.

“You asked me if I had hot pants and you thought that you were in Wonderland.”

“Oh.” Right. Like that all made sense.

“Don’t move off the toilet until I’m back.”

Pfft. She could go to the toilet on her own. She wasn’t ill, just seriously regretting her choices last night.

It had been a lot of fun, though. After she stopped obsessing over the Fox.

After peeing, which was a huge relief, she cleaned up and moved to the vanity. A scream escaped her as she caught sight of herself in the mirror.

Duke rushed into the bathroom, alarm on his face. “What? What is it? What’s wrong? Did you hurt yourself?”

“Look at me!”

Okay, she kind of wished she hadn’t screamed. Her head really hurt now. But jeez Louise. Who wouldn’t scream with the fright she’d just been given?

“What do you mean?”

“I look terrible. I look like Chucky’s bride.”

Duke kind of slumped against the vanity, his hand on his chest. Then he straightened, giving her a stern look. “Baby girl, I thought something was really wrong.”

“Something is wrong. I’m the stuff of nightmares.”

“Sunny, stop talking about yourself like that,” he warned.

“I’m not putting myself down, if it’s the truth.”

“It is not the truth. And I don’t like hearing you talk like that.”

Suddenly, Duke picked her up, turning and setting her down on the vanity top. She let out a small cry.

“Daddy! My tummy is not up for being thrown around.”

“I didn’t throw you around. But I did give you an order before. What was it?” He took the cloth and finished washing her face for her.

His voice was calm, but she could sense that she was in trouble.

It was her special power. Being able to tell when she was about to get her butt spanked.

“Ahh, I don’t think it was an order. I mean, an order is something that you give your subordinates, not your soon-to-be wife.”

His whole face lightened at her words. “Wife. I like that word, Mrs. Canton.”

“Do you, Mr. Canton?” she murmured back.

Darn. She wished she felt sexier. But right now, she felt gross. Dirty, smelly, and yuck.

Not conducive to any sort of sexy time.

“You were given an order. What was it?”

She sighed as he put some toothpaste on her toothbrush. “Not to get off the toilet until you returned. But I was fine. And it’s just as well I got up, or I’d still look like the bride of Frankenstein.”

“You don’t belong to Chucky or Frankenstein. You’re my bride. My Little girl. What happens when you’re naughty and don’t listen?”

She pouted. “You can’t spank me. I feel like crap.”

“I’m not going to spank you, Little Rebel,” he reassured her.

Oh, good. Because she really didn’t think her head or her stomach could take that.

“But you are going to let me take care of you today. We’re going to have a Daddy-Little Rebel day.”

While that sounded amazing, there were several things she had to do today for the wedding.

“Duke, I wish I could. But I’ve got a list of things to do—”

“No. Now, open your mouth.”

She opened her mouth to argue. But, of course, he took advantage and put the toothbrush in her mouth.

He carefully brushed her teeth while she blushed. She really hoped he couldn’t smell her breath.

Gross.

Really not attractive this morning, Sunny.

She spat and rinsed. Then he leaned his hands against the countertop on either side of her, staring down at her with a stern expression.

“You’re stressed.”

What?

She frowned. “No, I’m not.”

“Little Rebel, don’t lie to me. I might not spank you today when you’re already miserable, but we’ve got the rest of our lives and I have a good memory.”

Sugar. He did.

“I’m not that stressed.”

“Yes, you are. Don’t think I haven’t noticed you running around, trying to do a hundred things at once and not asking for any help.”

She flushed. Uh-oh.

She’d thought he hadn’t noticed how much she had on her plate.

More fool you. Duke notices everything about you.

She both loved and hated that.

His care and attention still shocked her. The girl that had been basically left to raise herself. Whose ex had treated her like she was less than him. Who’d picked away at her until her self-esteem was in the toilet.

Yeah, that part of her was still surprised by how he saw her. Took care of her. Wanted her.

Of course, that also meant that there wasn’t much she could get away with.

Her bottom clenched at the thought of him putting her over his knee. But as much as she didn’t want her butt spanked today, she also knew that she benefited from his care. His rules and discipline.

“There are other people you can ask to help you, Little Rebel. Including me.”

“I know,” she whispered. “But I just ... I want everything to be perfect. When I was a little girl, everything was always chaotic, you know? My parents moved around a lot. They’d have parties that would go for days and forget I existed. They

aren't bad people, just absent. And it made me ... it made me crave normality. Or what I thought was normal. I learned quickly how to take care of myself. Make my lunch. Get myself dressed. Go to school. Maybe that's why I fell for Greg. He seemed normal."

"Greg was an asshole."

"Yeah. But I wanted something stable. The white picket fence. The dog. The gorgeous man. And now I've got all of that. I just ... I don't want to let you down, Duke. You mean everything to me, and I want this to be perfect."

"Little Rebel, you could never let me down. You're my fucking world. I'd be lost without you. And you know I'd be happy eloping to Vegas."

"I know. That's my point. I'm the one that wanted this wedding. So, I should do the work for it."

Understanding filled his face. "You don't want to ask for my help because you think I don't want this?"

She shrugged. "I guess? You're doing it for me. You do so much for me. You're paying for—"

"I'm going to stop you right there," he growled at her. "What is mine is yours and you damn well know that. I'm about to forget about your sore head and tender tummy and turn you over my knee, anyway."

Right. Whoops.

Mentioning the money wasn't her smartest idea.

Stupid hangover. It was making it hard for her to think.

"I know. Sorry." She winced. "I'm saying that a lot, aren't I?"

"You sure are, brat. Here's the deal. Today you're going to relax and Daddy will take care of you. You're running yourself ragged trying to do it all, and I won't have it any longer. Tomorrow, you're writing a list of everything that needs to be done and then you will delegate some tasks. You don't have to give it all to me. Your friends have been pestering me about

helping. Just don't give me anything to do with flowers or decorations."

"I thought you wanted to help?" she teased.

"Yeah, but with more manly stuff. Like running errands."

She bit her lip. She hadn't realised that running errands was considered manly.

"Ask for help, Little Rebel. For all our sakes, yeah?"

"Okay. I'll start delegating. I'll put Millie in charge of the glitter for the thank you cards and table decorations."

Duke narrowed his gaze. "Millie, really? Can you get dinosaur glitter?"

"If you can, I'm sure she'll find it." She grinned at the thought.

"Today, Daddy is in charge. Tomorrow, we delegate some jobs, so it's not all on you, yeah?"

"All right, Daddy. Most of the tasks left, I need to do myself. But I'll delegate what I can," she added hastily. "Promise."

"You better, baby girl. Or our wedding night is going to be very interesting."

They weren't going on a honeymoon. It just wasn't in the budget right now. Not that she cared, she just wanted to be with Duke.

"Let's get you clean. How is your tummy, Little Rebel?"

"It's starting to feel a bit better, Daddy. But my head hurts."

"Poor baby. I'll get you some painkillers once you're out of the shower."

After stripping them both off, Duke carried her into the shower. He gently washed her, including her hair, then dried her off before bundling her up in a dry towel and carrying her into the bedroom.

He had a pair of her favorite unicorn pajamas ready on the bed. Yay. She'd spend all of her time in her pajamas if she could get away with it. After laying her on her back on the bed, he grabbed a pair of panties out of a drawer.

"Are those my Saturday panties?" she asked.

"Course they are, Little Rebel."

Good. She couldn't be wearing her Tuesday panties on a Saturday. She wasn't that much of a rebel.

Actually, she wasn't a rebel at all.

After getting her into her panties and pajama bottoms, he had her sit up so he could put her top on. Then he sat behind her and brushed her hair.

"Time for your cartoons."

This was her favorite part about the weekends. Sitting around in her pajamas and watching cartoons with Duke. Sometimes she'd do some coloring or play with her toys. She realized they hadn't done this the last few weekends because she'd been too busy.

Maybe he was right. She had been stressing out. She needed this.

"Here are your unicorn slippers." He slid them on her feet. "And Moody." He handed her toy monkey over to her and she hugged him tight.

"Moody, did you behave yourself last night?" she asked.

"Moody was good," Duke told her, taking her hand and leading her down to the living room. She couldn't wait to snuggle up on the couch. She couldn't see herself doing much today other than lying around and feeling sorry for herself.

"Sparkle Pony, on the other hand, was not," Duke added as they walked into the living room.

Hatter immediately jumped out of his basket and bounced over to her. She took a moment to pat him before Duke drew her over to the couch.

He had her lie down before he settled a big fluffy blanket over her legs and a pillow under her head.

He was the best. She really didn't deserve him.

"What did Sparkle Pony do, Daddy?"

"He was up half the night partying," Duke told her.

"Some unicorns just have no respect," she replied with a sigh.

"No, they don't. Wait there." He switched the television on to her normal channel and she soon lost herself in one of her favorite shows.

When he returned, he had a bottle of Gatorade as well as some painkillers.

"No way, Daddy. I'm not drinking that yucky stuff. You know I don't like it."

"You need to get some electrolytes back into you. You're dehydrated and I can tell it's giving you a headache. Now, either you drink it like this or I can put it in your sippy cup, those are your choices."

"Some choices. Doesn't matter what you put it in, Daddy. It's still going to taste icky."

"Little Rebel, do you need to spend some time in the corner?" he warned.

Her mouth dropped open. "But you said you wouldn't punish me today."

"I said I wouldn't spank you while you were feeling so miserable. That would just be cruel. But that doesn't mean you've got a 'get out of punishment free' card."

Sugar. She really wanted one of those cards.

"Corner time is mean. I don't like corner time."

"That's why it's a punishment."

She grumbled, but she really didn't want to spend time in the corner, so she took the bottle of Gatorade from him. At least it was the berry flavor. That was her least-hated flavor.

She swallowed down the painkillers he also handed her.

“I’m going to take Hatter out and start some breakfast. I want half of that gone by the time I get back, understand me?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

Once he was gone, she looked to Moody. “You want to drink this for me, Moody?”

The monkey just gave her a look like he thought she’d gone bananas.

That’s what she’d thought. She toyed with the idea of tipping some of it out in the bathroom, but she wasn’t that much of a brat. And she’d feel too guilty and probably tell Duke as soon as he returned.

So best just to suck it up and drink the stuff. She took a few sips, then set the bottle down with a grimace.

Ick. It didn’t taste any better than she remembered.

The last time Duke made her drink this stuff was because she’d sat too long in a hot car and had gotten dehydrated.

Hugging Moody tight, she snuggled in under the blanket. Her stomach was still rolling, but at least she’d stopped vomiting.

This was it.

She was never drinking again.



DUKE JUST KNEW she was going to disobey him.

Sighing, he walked back into the living room and took in the bottle of Gatorade. It looked like she’d had around three sips.

“Little Rebel, what were you supposed to do while I was gone?” he asked, stepping in front of the television.

“Daddy, you make a terrible window.”

“Not trying to be a window.” Walking toward her, he picked up the remote and turned the television off.

“Hey, Daddy! My cartoon wasn’t finished.”

“And neither is your Gatorade.” He grabbed the bottle and held it up, wiggling it.

A guilty look filled her face. “I was just going to take another sip.”

“You were meant to take several sips, weren’t you? I’m going to put this in your sippy cup while you spend some time sitting in the corner.” He picked up a cushion from the sofa and put it on the floor in the corner of the room.

She sniffled. “Daddy, aren’t I suffering enough?”

“I’m sorry you’re not feeling well. But you need to turn your listening ears on. Daddy is trying to help you. Drinking the Gatorade will make you feel better.” He held out a hand to her, helping her off the couch and over to the cushion. Before she could sit, he cupped her chin in his hand. “Are you feeling that bad, Little Rebel? If you are, you can tell me and instead you can go back to bed for a few more hours.”

“I’m fine, Daddy. I’ll sit in the corner,” she said hastily.



SUNNY SIGHED and stared at the wall forlornly. This wasn’t fun. But she knew it wasn’t meant to be. What was she supposed to be thinking about?

Right. Listening to Daddy.

But sometimes he didn’t always listen to her. What about their agreement that the girls could go out without them if they took guards? And instead, he and the others had turned up at The Edge last night.

Huh. That was right.

On the other hand, she knew it was just because he loved her and wanted to protect her. And he was only trying to help

her with that darn Gatorade.

Sugar.

“Come here, baby girl.” He helped her stand up, then turned her to face him.

She threw her arms around his waist and squeezed him.

“Hey, what’s this about? You all right?”

“Yeah, Daddy. I just really appreciate you. I’m sorry I’m such hard work at the moment.”

“That’s ten spanks.”

“Ten?” she squeaked. “Daddy, no!”

“Yep. I’ll wait until tomorrow to punish you. But you were warned not to speak any nonsense about yourself. Tomorrow, your butt is going to pay.”

Darn it.

“What about your butt, Daddy?”

“What about my butt?”

“Is it feeling kind of warm?” she asked slyly.

“Why would it feel warm?”

“From your pants being on fire. I saw you and the guys last night at the club.”

“Ahh, did you?”

“Yep. What did you all do? Race home once we left The Edge, so you’d get here first?”

“Something like that. Although you girls took so long that I ended up calling the limo driver to see where you were.”

“We needed a burger.”

“It wasn’t that I didn’t trust you, baby girl. But I hate the idea of anything happening to you. The others all feel the same. I’m overprotective, but you already knew that.”

“I did,” she said with a sigh. “Truth is, I wouldn’t have you any other way.”

Greg wouldn't have cared if she'd gone out all night as long as it didn't inconvenience him. Heck, he likely wouldn't have noticed whether she was late home or not.

She'd never have that issue with Duke.

"Come sit down with me, baby girl."

He led her to the couch and sat, then drew her onto his knee. She snuggled into his hold as he picked her sippy cup up off the coffee table. He held it to her mouth. With a sigh, she drank some down.

When he drew the cup back, some liquid dribbled down her chin. She reached up to wipe her chin, but he got there first, brushing it away. His eyes were filled with warmth as he stared down at her.

"I can't wait to marry you, Little Rebel."

"Me neither, Daddy."

It was a dream come true.

“Good morning, baby girl.” Duke rolled onto his side, facing his soon-to-be-wife.

Just three more weeks and she was completely his.

Fuck, he was a lucky bastard. He didn't know what he'd done to deserve Sunny, but he was going to marry this girl and never let her go.

“Good morning, Daddy,” she replied in a husky voice.

“How are you feeling? Better?”

She nodded shyly. “I am. I'm sorry you had to take care of me.”

“Baby girl, you're already owed a spanking. If I were you, I wouldn't be saying anything that might add to your punishment.”

“What? Why am I getting spanked? I've been a good girl.”

“Yesterday you were apologizing for being a lot of work. Which is actually very similar to what you just said.”

“No, it wasn't. Well, sort of.”

“You listen to me,” he said firmly. “You're not a hassle, and I love looking after you. It's my favorite thing to do. Lately, I haven't been doing it enough.”

“You always take care of me, Daddy. Don't talk badly about yourself or I'll have to spank you.”

“You want to spank me?” He gave her a surprised look.

“No, not really.” She gave him a sad look. “Are you really going to spank me, Daddy?”

“I am. You’re going over my knee, and then you’ll spend some time in the corner to reflect on how you are not a bother and how Daddy loves to take care of his girl.”

“I don’t need to be in the corner to reflect on that.”

“Hmm, that’s true. Maybe I want you in the corner so I can stare at your red ass.”

“Daddy!”

He grinned. “But all of that is going to come after.”

“After what?” she asked.

“After I fuck my girl.” He leaned in to kiss her. Fuck. So good. He slid his hand under her pajama top to cup her breast.

“Duke,” she moaned.

Kneeling, he helped her sit so he could take her pajama top off.

“Lie down on your back and wrap your hands around the rungs of the headboard,” he commanded.

She lay back as he stripped off her pajama bottoms and panties. He stared down at her, taking her in.

Fuck. Him.

So beautiful.

“You’re going to follow my orders,” he told her. “Keep your hands behind your head and widen your legs. Show me that pretty pussy.”

“Oh, Lord,” she muttered, but her legs slowly parted.

It felt so long since he’d taken the time to just stare at her. She was gorgeous. Curvy and sweet.

“My beautiful girl,” he murmured. “You don’t know what you do to me.”

She glanced pointedly at where his dick was pressing against his boxer shorts. Climbing from the bed, he stripped

off. He'd be lying if he said he didn't enjoy her sharp intake of breath, the way her gaze ate him up hungrily.

He moved around to the end of the bed. Then he grabbed her ankles and gently slid her down so her butt was at the edge.

"Keep those hands behind your head," he commanded. "That's my good girl." He placed her feet flat on the mattress, spreading her legs wide.

Just perfect.

Stepping between her parted legs, he leaned over her, resting his hands on either side of her head.

He kissed her.

Hard and hot.

Fuck. He was already so close to coming that it was embarrassing. Her body felt so right against his. Soft and delicious.

He moved his mouth down her neck, and lower, until he reached her breasts. He didn't know how long he spent sucking on her nipples, licking them, then biting gently. But by the time he drew back, she was breathing heavily, her body arching up against him.

"Please, please, please," she begged.

"What is it, baby girl?" He kissed her tummy.

He couldn't wait any longer to taste her.

"I need ... I need ..."

"Tell me what you need."

"To come! I need your mouth on my pussy. Please."

"Hmm. I'm not sure you're desperate enough."

"I am! I really am."

He kneeled between her legs. "Let's just see, shall we?" He drew the lips of her pussy apart and pretended to study her. He could see how wet she was.

His poor girl.

“You do seem to be very wet.”

“I am!”

“Do you need me to tongue your clit?” He ran his thumb over the swollen bud.

“Yes!” she cried, arching up.

“Is that all?”

“Nooo.”

“What else do you need?”

“Your fingers,” she said breathlessly.

“Yes? Where would you like my fingers?”

“In my pussy.”

“Like this?” He slid two fingers into her passage. Fuck, he’d never grow tired of this. Of her moans of pleasure. Of listening to her plead for him. Of touching her like this.

“Yes. Yes. But move them. Please move them.”

“You want me to fuck your pussy with my fingers?”

“Yes! Son-of-a-peach, yes!”

He gave her ass a slap with his free hand. Just because he wanted to. She clenched down around his fingers.

Fuck. Yes.

He needed to feel her do that to his dick. But not yet. Not before he had his fun with her. Slowly, he drove his fingers in and out of her passage, moving his mouth to her pussy so he could flick her clit.

“Oh. Ohhh. Duke, yes.”

He sucked on her clit. Her breathing grew faster. He could tell she was getting close, and he slowed down, pulled back.

“Nooo,” she moaned.

“Shh,” he told her, kissing her inner thigh.

“Duke! Please! I need to come.”

“Not yet.” He moved his mouth back to her pussy, though, driving her higher and higher before stopping.

“Please, please, please,” she sobbed.

“Nearly, baby girl. You’re so damn beautiful and you taste amazing.”

“Please!”

He circled her clit with his tongue, then flicked at it with long, firm strokes of his tongue until he felt her tighten around his fingers, her scream filling the room as she came.

He pulled his fingers free. Placing them in his mouth, he sucked them clean as he stood.

“Yep, delicious.”

She watched him through heavy-lidded eyes.

“So beautiful.” He moved her into the middle of the bed, then climbed over her to kiss her again.

“Please, can I taste you?” she asked.

“You want my dick in your mouth, baby girl?”

“Yes. Yes, please.”

Satisfaction filled him. “All right, but I’m going to finger fuck you while you suck my dick. Keep your hands where they are.” He ended up with his knees on either side of her head, feeding her his cock while he played with her pussy with one hand. His other hand rested on the mattress by her hip.

Fuck him.

That felt so damn good. He slid his dick in and out of her mouth. She sucked on him, running her tongue along his length.

It took all of his control not to come down her throat. But he held back. Using his fingers in her pussy, he drove her up and over the edge again. While she was still shaking and moaning, he slid himself out of her mouth, then turned and

settled himself between her legs before he drove his dick deep inside her.

He could still feel her pulsating from her orgasm. He had to pause and take a deep breath.

Fuck.

So. Good.

He gritted his teeth.

Do not come. Do not come.

Finally, he managed to calm down enough that he thought he could move without embarrassing himself. He drew back, then drove himself forward.

Sunny wrapped her legs around his hips. Fuck. That pushed him even further inside her. It was almost too much.

He needed a moment to breathe. Sliding out of her, he grabbed her hips and turned her onto her hands and knees.

“Put your chest on the bed, baby girl. That’s it. Fuck, this ass.” He ran his hand over her firm ass. He spread her cheeks, pressing his thumb against her back hole.

She moaned.

Damn.

Letting go of her ass, he took hold of his dick and slid himself back into her pussy.

Christ. He’d been hoping to calm down slightly. But his balls were aching, his orgasm building in the small of his back.

Holding on to her hips, he drove himself in and out of her. She felt so fucking good around his cock that he couldn’t hold back. Pushing deep one last time, he groaned as he came.

Sliding free of her, he lay on his back next to her. He tugged her to him so she was cradled against his chest. Staring up at the ceiling, he tried to calm his breathing.

“Whoa,” Sunny said, wrapping her arm around his waist. “That was one heck of a way to start off a Sunday morning.”

He grinned. “Wait until I have my second wind and get us into that shower.”

“Did you get a prescription for a little blue pill and you didn’t tell me?”

“You brat!” He rolled her onto her back and started tickling her.

“No! Mercy! Stop, Daddy or I’ll pee.”

Stopping, he kissed her gently. “Let’s get showered. After breakfast, your ass has a date with my hand.”

She groaned. “I hate to tell you, but I think my ass is going to stand your hand up.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“Yeah, the thing is, it’s just not that into your hand. Sorry.”

“This time, there’s no mercy.”

He tickled her until tears rolled down her face, then he picked her up and carried her into the shower to show her exactly what happens to a brat who teased her Daddy.



“DADDY, I really don’t think this is necessary.” Sunny pouted at Duke.

Unfortunately, he seemed to have some sort of immunity to her pouts.

“Do you think pouting will change my mind?” he asked her.

“No, Daddy,” she replied.

“That’s because I don’t ever want to hear any nonsense from you about being a hassle. Understand me, Little Rebel?”

“I understand, Daddy.”

“Then come here.”

Duke patted his lap where he sat on the sofa in the living room. With a huff, Sunny walked over to him. She was wearing a pair of soft shorts paired with a T-shirt that had an image of the Mad Hatter on it. Her hair was pulled back into a ponytail with pink ribbons.

She looked adorable.

And she was wearing her Sunday panties, of course.

Duke helped her lie over his lap. She started sniffing even before he'd pulled down her shorts and panties. She clenched her ass cheeks together, waiting for him to start punishing her.

“Relax, Little Rebel.”

Huh. That was easy for him to say. Not so easy for her to do when she was about to get her butt roasted. But he started rubbing her bottom, and gradually she started to relax.

“Right, the count is twenty.”

Twenty? Holy. Crap.

“I thought it was ten!”

“Ten for what you said yesterday. But you're also getting an extra ten for standing up out of the sunroof the other night. That was very dangerous, baby girl.”

“Sorry, Daddy.”

Before she could protest, though, he started in with heavy, slow swats. They built up in intensity, and it wasn't long until her butt was on fire. She kicked her legs against the couch cushions. Tears dripped down her cheeks as he held her on his lap, steadily spanking her.

“Daddy, ow! Ouch, it hurts!”

“It's meant to hurt, baby girl. It's a punishment.”

When it was finally over, all she could do was lie across his lap sobbing. He rolled her over, making sure that her bottom didn't rest on his lap. And then he held her tight, rocking her back and forth as he kissed the top of her head.

“Good girl. It’s all over. My gorgeous girl. You did so well.”

Eventually, her tears dried, and he grabbed a few tissues to clean her up.

Taking hold of her chin, he tilted her face back and kissed her lightly.

“I’m sorry, Daddy,” she told him after he pulled back.

“I just want you to remember what you mean to me. And that anything I can do for you, no matter how small or big, is a privilege.”

“You’re so amazing. How did I get so lucky?” She wrapped her arms around his neck, hugging him tight.

“Funny, I was just thinking the same thing earlier.”

“Really, Daddy?” She drew back to look up into his face. “You think you’re lucky to have me?”

“I’m the luckiest man in the world.”

She gave him a shy smile.

Then he stood and settled her on her feet, holding on to her hips.

“Now, you need to spend some time in the corner to reflect.”

She groaned. “If I ever win the lottery, I’m going to build a house.”

“Are you?”

“Yep, and it’s not going to have any corners, so I won’t have to ever spend time in the corner again.”

Duke just laughed.

Two weeks until the wedding ...

SUNNY RACED FOR HER PHONE, frowning when she saw it was an unknown number. “Hello?”

It was Saturday afternoon. Duke had gone to work today to finish off a couple of big tattoos for clients, but she was home with Hatter, taking care of some wedding stuff. Although, since she’d delegated a few of her jobs, she was feeling a lot less stressed and rushed.

Probably should have done that right from the start.

“Sunshine?”

She froze as she heard the familiar voice. “Mom?”

“Sunshine, I told you a long time ago not to call me that,” the other woman chided. “I don’t like to be labelled.”

“Sorry,” Sunny muttered. Never mind that she’d asked her mother countless times to call her Sunny, not Sunshine. “Are you calling to RSVP for the wedding?”

Kind of late to RSVP. But then that was her mother. She probably didn’t even know what day it was.

Be nice, Sunny.

And they were having the wedding and the reception in the backyard, so it wasn’t like they couldn’t add two more guests.

Sure, it might take a bit of shuffling and she'd have to speak to the caterers, but she should do it for her parents.

Even if she wasn't allowed to call them Mom and Dad.

They might have been absent parents who showed little interest in her life, but at least they were calling about her wedding, right?

"What wedding?" her mom asked.

Sunny stood there and took the hit. It could have sent her to her knees. But she wasn't going to let it happen.

Darn it.

She closed her eyes and sucked in a breath.

Maybe her messages hadn't gotten through. Her mom was calling on an unknown number, so perhaps she'd lost her phone. It wasn't like she was very good at checking it.

"My wedding, Serenity."

"You're getting married? I thought you were already married to that Jeff guy."

Seriously? Why had she even bothered her in the first place?

"It was Greg. And we got divorced. I'm marrying Duke. The man I now live with."

"Oh. I don't remember you talking about a Duke."

"That's because we never talk," Sunny bit out.

Don't let her get to you.

"You know that Phoenix and I don't like to be shackled to technology. The Government is listening to you through your phones and computers and CD players, you know."

CD players?

Was she for real?

Sunny sighed. "I know, Serenity. So, if you're not calling me about my wedding, then why are you picking up the Devil's instrument to call me?"

“Honestly, Sunshine. We didn’t raise you this way. You know we don’t believe in the Devil. Phones are an instrument of the man.”

Nobody said ‘the man’ anymore.

Then again, no one really used CD players either, so ...

“What do you want?” Sunny asked. She was fast losing patience with the other woman. Why should she give her any of her time, when she obviously never thought about Sunny at all?

“Really, Sunshine, when did you get so snappy? You weren’t like this when you were with us. You were always so serious as a child. So rule-driven.”

“I’m surprised you remember what I was like as a child.”

“Of course, I do. You had the sweetest smile and these huge eyes. And the best hugs.”

Okay, so that’s why she never completely wrote her parents off.

Because sometimes they showed hints of being the parents, she always hoped they would be.

“Why are you calling?” Sunny asked.

“Ah, well. It’s about the RV.”

She frowned. “What about it?”

“It broke down.”

“Oh, no, are you both all right? Are you stranded somewhere?” Why hadn’t her mom led with that?

“No, of course not. We called some friends who didn’t live far away, and they came and got us. They opened up their home to us. Such amazing hospitality.”

Right. Sunny rubbed the top of her nose, feeling a headache coming on. There were a lot of things she could be doing right now that were far more productive than this phone call.

“What happened to the RV?” she asked.

“Some Government officials towed it. Can you believe that? And impounded it.”

“Government officials, huh?”

“Yes, and to get them to release it, you will not believe the hoops they want us to go through. There are forms!”

She was definitely getting a headache. Moving to the sofa, she sat.

With a whine, Hatter hopped up onto her lap. Considering how huge he was now, he was too heavy to be a lap dog, but she appreciated the comfort he was trying to offer.

“There are always forms,” she told her mother.

“I can’t put my name on official documents. Who knows what they’ll do with that information?”

“Probably send it to ‘the man’,” she said dryly.

“Exactly!”

Please, someone save me.

“You’ll have to fill in the forms to get the RV back, Serenity.”

Her mother huffed. “They’ll want details about our lives.”

“I’m sure they will. Is there something I can help with?”

“Well, along with the forms, they’re wanting money. Apparently, there’s a towing fee, impoundment fee, and the sheriff’s office even wants money from us. And that’s before we fix the RV. Who knows what’s wrong with it?”

Sunny closed her eyes. “You want money?”

That’s why her mom was calling. Not to say they’d love to come to the wedding, or that they were sorry they couldn’t make it. Not to have a chat and ask about her life.

Nope. She wanted money.

“I don’t want to ask for money. It’s not our fault. We didn’t ask for it to be towed.”

“How long did you leave it for?” Sunny asked.

“I don’t know. A few weeks, I guess.”

Just perfect.

“How much?” she asked tiredly.

“Five thousand dollars should cover it.”

Sunny would have fallen off the sofa if Hatter wasn’t pinning her down.

“Five thousand dollars? It can’t possibly cost that much to get it back!”

“Well, and we need money to fix it,” her mother said airily. “Mechanical issues aren’t something that Phoenix excels in.”

“Where is Dad?”

“Sunshine,” her mother sighed.

“Sorry, where is Phoenix?”

“He’s meditating. He’s very upset about all of this.”

“How much is it to pay all the fees, plus tow it to where you’re staying?”

“Hmm, I’m not sure exactly, but I think about fifteen hundred should cover it. Can you mail us the money?”

“I’m not putting money in the mail!” Sunny told her.

“There’s no need to yell, Sunshine. Have you been meditating lately? You sound very stressed.”

Maybe because she was busy organising her wedding, then her mother called asking for money.

“It’s either that or we can come stay with you for a while, Sunshine.”

Oh, no.

No, nope, nuh-uh.

“I don’t have a lot of money right now. I’ll have to see what I can do. But you need to get a bank account.”

“And have the man track us?”

Sunny really didn't know how they'd managed all these years without a bank account, but somehow they'd done it.

"Open a bank account. Or find a friend with one." One that hopefully wouldn't rip them off. "I'll try to find some money."

"What about your husband? James? Doesn't he have money?"

"I just told you that Greg and I are divorced. Just ... do what I said, Mom." She finished the call as her mother started ranting about labels.

It was rude of her, but she didn't care.

She leaned her head back against the sofa, staring up at the ceiling. What the hell was she going to do?

She didn't have a spare fifteen hundred dollars. Most of their savings were going toward their wedding. And what was left was only for emergencies.

This didn't really classify as an emergency.

Although her parents moving in with them could certainly be called a catastrophe.

No way any of them would survive that. Duke would kill her parents. Nope, that couldn't happen.

So, she had two choices. Do nothing. Ignore the call and go on with her life. It wasn't like her parents could turn up on her doorstep and demand to stay with her. They probably didn't remember where she lived anyway. And they wouldn't have the means to get here. Although, her mom hadn't said which state they were in.

Sunny blew out a breath. It didn't matter. Because she wasn't going to go with that option. No way could she sleep at night knowing that her parents didn't have anywhere to live. That they might be homeless and starving.

That wasn't who she was. No matter how crappy they were at being parents, they were still her mom and dad.

So that left the other option. Finding the money from somewhere.

“I’m going to have to get it somehow.” Which wasn’t going to be easy. Shoot. “I’ll have to sell something, Hatter.”

Hatter whined, looking worried.

“Not you, baby. I’d never sell my pup.”

He breathed out a huge sigh. Sometimes she swore he understood what she was saying. She scratched behind his ears and he turned his head, smiling up at her.

And people said dogs couldn’t smile. That was bullshit. His mouth definitely turned up at the ends.

“But what do I have that I can sell?”

Maybe Duke would have some ideas. He wasn’t going to like this. At all. However, she had to tell him. They didn’t hide stuff like this from each other. But it might be easier to tell him if she had a solution already.

But what could she sell? She glanced around the room. There was nothing in here. Maybe she could sell some of her toys?

Her heart actually skipped at the thought. Not her toys. Nope. What else did she own other than some jewelry that she also couldn’t part with?

Unless ...

She wiggled out from under Hatter and made her way to the garage. Moving over to the corner, she pulled off the old sheet that covered it.

And there it sat, gorgeous and unused.

Biting her lip, she ran her hand over the body. She’d always hoped she’d get to take it for at least one ride. But Duke had made it clear that he didn’t want her riding it. So, it sat here, sad and unloved.

Sunny let out a deep breath. It was the only solution. And if she was never going to get to ride the pink Harley Davidson, then it should go to someone who would.

She just hoped they appreciated the rhinestones glued to the mudguards as much as she did.

It was worth a lot more than fifteen hundred dollars. It might even be enough to help her parents fix their RV. And Duke would probably be pleased to get rid of it. He'd been mad as a hornet when the Fox bought it for her.

It was silly, but it made her feel a bit sad at the idea of selling it. Like she was letting a part of the Fox go since he'd been the one to buy it for her.

Sunny shook her head at her foolishness. She got the key off the key ring holder on the garage wall. Better make sure it still started.

Hatter ran into the garage and began sniffing around. She watched as he focussed on one corner.

Grabbing the handlebars, she climbed onto the bike and lifted the kickstand with her foot. It always surprised her how heavy it was.

Too bad she couldn't ride it just once.

She turned the key, then hit the switch to start it up. Then she revved the engine, smiling at the sound.

Hatter's barking made her turn to check on him. He started racing toward her, chasing a giant rat.

Holy shit!

She screamed, lifting her left foot as the rat raced past, Hatter close behind. As the bike started to topple, she shoved her foot down. It landed on the gear stick and the bike moved forward, her hand twisting on the throttle as she fell backward, landing hard on the concrete floor. Her head thumped against the ground.

Fuck.

Sunny lay on the garage floor, staring up at the ceiling as she tried to breathe through the pain.

This wasn't good. Not good at all.

Hatter whined and dug his nose against Sunny's cheek.

"I'm okay, Hatter. I just ... need a moment."

Just then, the garage door started to rise.

Great. Today was turning into a complete nightmare.

Duke brought his bike to a stop in front of the garage, hitting the key fob to raise the door. It went up with a groan and he frowned as he saw a bike lying on its side right inside the garage.

What the hell?

Suddenly, he realized what bike it was. Hard to miss the pink paint treatment and rhinestones.

Turning off his bike, he hit the kickstand and climbed off, racing into the garage.

“Sunny!”

“Here.”

He was barely able to hear her pained, quiet voice over the noise of the bike.

Then he spotted her lying on her back on the floor with Hatter standing over her, his tail down.

Duke raced over to her, falling to his knees with a thump. “What happened? Where does it hurt? Fuck. I’ll call an ambulance.” Where was his damn phone? Why couldn’t he think properly?

“No, no,” she said hastily, reaching one hand toward him. “I’m all right. Just had the wind knocked out of me.”

“Did you hit your head?”

“Just a little bang. It’s made of concrete anyway.” She attempted a smile. But he wasn’t in the mood.

“Are you sure? How many fingers am I holding up?” He held up three.

“Um, twenty-four?”

“Sunny, this isn’t the time to joke.”

“Sorry,” she said hoarsely. “Three. I’m really okay. Just a bit bruised, I think. Is this ... is the bike all right?”

“Don’t give a fuck about the bike. All I care about is you.”

“You just said fuck.” She gaped up at him.

Duke had been trying hard not to swear around Sunny, but if there was ever a time to swear ...

“Because you just fell off your bike and likely hit your head. Are you sure nothing hurts?”

“My whole body hurts,” she grumbled. “But I’m pretty sure nothing is broken. Help me up?”

Fuck. What if he moved her and she was really hurt?

“Can you feel your fingers and toes?”

She frowned slightly. “Yep. Can wiggle all of them too. I’m really fine.”

“All right. I’m going to sit you up slowly. If anything hurts, tell me.”

“I will.”

He helped her sit, watching her closely. She gave him a huge, fake smile. “See? All good.”

“No, baby girl,” he said seriously. “Everything is not all good.” He felt behind her head to see if there was a lump.

Fuck. There was a bump, and she winced as he prodded at it.

“Ouch, Daddy.”

“I know,” he said soothingly. “Just want to check. Does your back hurt?”

“Yes, a bit. I think it might be bruised.”

He carefully drew up her top, sucking in a breath at the angry scrape just below her right shoulder.

“There’s some broken skin and looks like you’re going to bruise. Let’s get you into bed and I’ll call Hack.”

“I don’t need Hack or to go to bed.”

“Well, you’re getting both, and I don’t want any arguments.”

A sniffing noise made him tense. He closed his eyes. Fuck. She’d just hurt herself, and he was acting like a complete ogre.

He gently pulled her top down, then moved around to face her, his hand cupping her chin. Fuck. She was crying.

Damn it.

“Baby girl, don’t cry. Shh. It’s all right. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to sound grouchy.”

“N-no, you should be. I w-wrecked the bike, didn’t I?”

“Who cares about the bike?! It doesn’t matter.”

“But it does,” she wailed.

“Little Rebel, please stop crying,” he said with desperation. “What can I do to help?”

“Turn the bike off and check it.”

“I’ll turn it off. But then I’m getting you inside.” He hated that she was sitting on a hard floor, maybe injured.

Moving to the bike, he quickly turned it off. Going back to her, he carefully picked her up, cradling her against his chest. She sucked in a sharp breath.

Fuck. Maybe he should take her to the hospital, get her checked properly. She could need X-rays.

Yeah, that’s what he’d do. He headed to the car.

“Where are we going?”

“I’m taking you to the hospital.”

“No! No, please, Duke. I’m really okay. I’ll just have to wait there for hours for them to tell me what I know. I’m bruised and I need to take it easy for a day. Please.”

She stared up at him with those big eyes, and he could feel his resolve slipping. She looked so pale, though.

“All right,” he agreed reluctantly.

Relief filled her face.

“But I am going to call Hack, and if he can’t come over, then I’m taking you to the emergency room.”

“All right.”

He carried her inside and sat her on the bed. He took off her bra and top before putting one of his loose T-shirts on her. She lay down on her front while he called Hack who promised to come over as soon as possible.

“I’m going to see if that scrape on your back needs to be cleaned.” He raised up the T-shirt, wincing as he took in her sore looking skin. “There’s no dirt, but I’ll give it a small wipe anyway.”

He moved into the bathroom and took a deep breath to calm herself.

She was all right.

She was just a bit bruised.

Everything was going to be okay.

After that pep talk, he calmly walked back in and sat next to her. Hatter sat on the floor, whimpering pathetically.

“Oh, Hatter, I’m all right,” she told the dog. “I think I scared him.”

“Yeah? He’s not the only one you scared. When I saw the bike lying there like that ...”

“I’m sorry, Daddy.” She groaned as he wiped her back.

“Sorry, baby girl. I’d give you some painkillers, but I’d rather wait until Hack checks you over.”

Despite his nickname, Hack was a good doctor, and he trusted him. This was probably a better idea than the emergency room. If he'd had to sit and wait for her to get seen, he'd likely have lost his mind.

"It's okay. I'm really sorry." She sniffled. "I wrecked the bike, didn't I?"

"The bike doesn't matter."

"But it does."

He frowned. Why was she this upset about the bike? She seemed to be fixated on it. Was it because the Fox had given it to her? He definitely had mixed feelings about that asshole. He was constantly interfering in their lives and yet ... he'd betrayed Markovich.

Or had he?

He didn't know. What he did know was that he didn't want Sunny wasting any time worrying about that bastard.

"If you're worried about the Fox getting upset, I won't let him near you," Duke promised.

"What? No! I'm not concerned about that. He'd never hurt me."

Yeah, Duke wasn't so trusting.

"It's not that ... I was going to sell it."

She was? That was news to him. Not unwelcome news, but he wondered why she was going to sell it now? Unless ...

He crouched down, so they were eye-level and gave her a stern look. "Little Rebel, we have plenty of money to pay for the wedding."

Her eyes widened. "Oh no! That wasn't it. I know we have the wedding covered. It was just ... crap ... I need to tell you something."

He didn't like how worried she sounded.

"You've been keeping something from me?"

“What? No. I haven’t, I promise. I got a call while you were out and I ... I need to tell you about it.” She shifted around on the bed, wincing in discomfort.

“Easy, baby girl. Just lie still.”

“I want to sit up. I’m thirsty and I want Moody.”

“I think you’re better off lying down. But here’s Moody.” He reached over her to grab her monkey. “I’ll go get you a drink. I want you to stay lying down, though.”

“Okay, Daddy.”

He moved into the kitchen to grab her sippy cup. He filled it with water. Walking back in, he noticed she had her eyes closed.

Shit!

“Baby, don’t fall asleep.”

She opened her eyes suddenly, jumping with a gasp. “Ow. Ouch. I wasn’t falling asleep, just resting my eyes.”

“Please don’t rest your eyes. You’re gonna give me a heart attack. I’m going to be gray before the wedding at this point.” He helped her take a few sips of water.

“I think you’d look sexy with gray hair. You always look sexy. Even when you have that face.”

“What face?”

“Your spanking face.”

The doorbell stopped him from asking what his spanking face looked like.

Probably for the best. He had a feeling whatever she’d been about to say wouldn’t have been flattering.

“Don’t move,” he ordered, before walking out of the bedroom and toward the front door.

He unlocked and opened the door. Hack stood on the other side. With his motorcycle boots, jeans, and black T-shirt that showed off his tattoos, he didn’t look like a typical doctor.

But Duke trusted him to take care of his girl.

“Thanks for coming, man,” he said, leading the way back to his bedroom.

“Of course. What happened?”

“Not completely sure. Seems she tried to ride her bike and came off.” And he’d let himself get upset about that after he made sure she was all right.

“Well, here’s my patient,” Hack said cheerfully as he walked into the bedroom. “What mischief have you been up to, Miss Sunny?”

“I never get up to mischief.”

“Now, why don’t I believe you?” Hack asked as he set his bag down on the bed by her legs. “You want to tell me what happened and what hurts?”

“She’s got a scrape on her back and a lump on the back of her head,” Duke said hastily.

Hack shot him a look as he took Sunny’s pulse.

Right. He wanted to hear it from her.

Duke moved around to her other side.

“I’m going to sell my bike. I just wanted to check that it still started.”

“And okay, maybe I wanted to hear it. I just wanted to pretend that I was riding it. I never intended to actually ride it. I promise.”

Christ. He ran his hand over his face as Hack glanced up at him.

“It’s okay, baby girl,” he soothed. “Just tell us what happened.”

“Hatter found a rat.”

“What?” Duke asked.

“There was a rat in the garage. Hatter flushed it out and was chasing it. I don’t even really know what happened next. I put my foot up, I didn’t want the rat to climb up my leg. That can happen, you know.”

“So, I’ve heard,” Hack murmured.

“The bike wobbled as my foot came back down, I hit something and the bike went one way and I went the other.”

“So, you landed on your back?” Hack asked.

“Yes. I hit my head too.”

“All right, let me look at your back, then I’ll check your head and vision.”

For the next ten minutes, Duke couldn’t do anything except sit by and watch, frowning every time Sunny winced.

Fuck. He’d do anything to take away her pain.

“Okay, good news is that you don’t have a concussion. Duke, do you have some painkillers you can get for Sunny?”

Duke nodded and grabbed some from the bathroom. He gave them to her, then held up her sippy cup for her.

“If there are any signs of a concussion like vomiting, nausea, confusion, headache, dizziness, or fatigue then get her to the hospital, okay?” Hack said.

“Yep. I can do that.” He’d be watching her very closely.

“Nothing is broken, just bruised. My best advice is to take it easy. Rest. Stay in bed for the rest of the day. If you need to get up, make sure that Duke is with you in case you feel dizzy. Tomorrow, move around more but nothing crazy, understand me, young lady?”

“You got it, Doctor Hack.”

“We want you to be all healed up before the big day.” He patted her forearm lightly.

“I’ll be back in a moment, Little Rebel,” Duke told her, leaning in to kiss her cheek. “Want anything?”

“I’m all right, Daddy.”

Duke walked Hack through the house.

“Want to take a look at the bike?” Hack asked.

Duke sighed. “I want to trash the damn thing. Which is what I’ve wanted to do ever since it turned up.”

Hack nodded, and they headed into the garage. Duke lifted the bike, wincing at the scratches on the fuel tank and frame. “I’ll take it to Razor later. Get him to fix it.”

The garage door looked to have a small dent in it as well.

“Why does Sunny want to sell it? Is it because of the wedding? If you guys need money, I can lend you some.”

Duke shot Hack a look. “No, we don’t need any money.” And he wouldn’t take a loan even if he did. “I don’t know why she wants to sell it all of a sudden. I’ll find out. You sure she’s all right?”

“Yeah, she’ll be a bit sore for a few days. But give her a week at most and she’ll be good as new. Back to creating mischief and getting her butt spanked.”

“Oh, so I can’t spank her for a week,” Duke said darkly. “That’s going to be hard.”

Hack grinned. “You might want to start keeping track in a notebook or something. Got to go. My shift starts soon.”

“Thanks, man. Appreciate you coming over.”



SUNNY WINCED as she rolled onto her side and hugged Moody tight.

Well, this sucked.

How was she going to get all of her jobs done if she was stuck in bed today? And she knew that she wasn’t going to be allowed to do much for the next few days.

“I’ve got your phone,” Duke said as he walked into the room. “I heard it beeping in the living room. Looks like you’ve got some messages.”

She held out her hand, but he shook his head. “I don’t think you should be looking at a screen right now.”

“But I don’t have a concussion.”

“Still. Might be better to stay off your phone for a few hours. Most of these are on the group chat from the girls wanting to make sure you’re all right.”

“What? How do they know what happened already?”

“Hack was at Ink’s place when I called him.”

“Sugar. Can you text them all that I’m okay and will call them tomorrow?”

“Yep.” He frowned as he glanced at her phone. “You got a call from an unknown number earlier? Who was that?”

She groaned, and he gave her an alarmed look. She waved her hand at him. “That wasn’t a groan of pain. Well, not physical pain anyway. The call was from my mother.”

He raised his eyebrows. “What did Serenity want?”

“Well, she wasn’t calling to RSVP anyway,” she said bitterly. “She didn’t even know I was engaged. In fact, she thought I was still married to Jeff.”

“Jeff?” he asked, looking puzzled.

“Doesn’t matter. Long story short, she had no idea about the wedding and she doesn’t care. Oh, but their RV broke down and got towed and impounded. And she needs about fifteen hundred bucks to free it and who knows how much more to fix it or they’re coming to live with us.”

“Like fuck they are!” he snapped.

She winced.

“Shit, sorry, baby girl.” Contrition filled his face. “Are you all right?”

“Yeah, just a bit of a headache. The painkillers will help soon.”

“So that’s why you wanted to sell the bike.” He sat on the bed beside her, placing her phone on the nightstand. “For money to give your parents?”

“Yeah. I didn’t have anything else to sell that might give me that sort of cash.”

“Sunny,” he groaned. “Why didn’t you ask me?”

“I was going to tell you as soon as you got home. I promise.”

“Baby, you don’t need to sell your bike. We have an emergency fund.”

“Which is for emergencies.”

“If the threat of having your parents move in with us isn’t an emergency, I don’t know what is,” he muttered.

“Yeah, total catastrophe.”

He smiled down at her, brushing a finger over her cheek. “Baby girl, this isn’t something for you to take on yourself. We’re in this together.”

“I know. I really was going to tell you. But I thought if I had a solution, it might help. Selling the bike would solve everything. Only I fucked that up.”

“Hey.” He frowned at her. “I don’t like you talking like that.”

“I didn’t say *I* was the fuck up. Just that I messed up.”

“First of all, you need to watch your language.”

“You said fuck,” she protested.

“Extenuating circumstances. Also, you didn’t mess anything up.”

“The bike isn’t scratched?”

He sighed. “Yeah, it is. But you don’t need to worry about that. We’re going to use the emergency money.”

“What about the cost of fixing the RV?”

“Let’s worry about that later, okay? I’ll get Razor to fix the scratch on your bike.”

“But what’s the point in keeping the bike if I’m not ever going to ride it?”

He sighed. "I've been thinking about that. I think I might have been a touch short-sighted."

"You?" she gasped theatrically. "Never."

"Watch it, brat. You're still in trouble for getting on the bike and starting it without me being here. And without a helmet on. You could have given yourself a concussion."

"But I wasn't expecting it to move!"

"Doesn't matter. Safety first. That's one punishment."

Uh-oh.

"You're going to spank me, Daddy?"

"You should know better than to get on a bike and start it without your helmet, so yes. You're getting a spanking once you're completely healed. Like Hack said, I might have to start keeping a notebook for once you're feeling better."

"You know, I never liked that Hack. Always thought he was filled with jibber-jabber."

"Jibber-jabber, huh? That's a new one. And I liked his idea of a notebook. I have a feeling there's going to be a few spankings earned over this next week."

"But, Daddy, I'm a good girl."

"Course you are. But good girls still break the rules."

"I've kind of gone all gooey inside. Of course, that could just be the painkillers. Or hunger."

"You're hungry?"

"Not really."

"You still need to eat. I'll order some Chinese. Now, where were we?"

"Your short-sightedness toward me riding my bike. And also, toward forgiving punishments earned."

He just shot her a look.

Right. Might be time for her to be quiet now.

“Maybe I should have taught you to ride that bike. If I had, then this never would have happened. But I didn’t want you to ride it, because I was worried about you getting hurt. And because the Fox bought it for you.”

“Duke, you know the Fox is just a friend, right? He’s like that weird uncle that you dread inviting to your birthday party because you know he’s going to say something outrageous and insult everyone.”

“I know, baby girl. You’re right. And I should have taught you to ride.”

“It really doesn’t matter,” she told him, reaching over to take his hand. “I still think we should sell it. I’m not sure I want to ride it anymore.”

“You shouldn’t let this scare you off, Sunny. It was just an accident.”

“An accident which scratched the bike and dented the garage door and my head?”

His face grew serious. “Don’t joke about dents in your head. That’s not funny.”

“Sorry, Daddy.”

“Let’s just keep your bike for now. We’ll take that money for your parents from the emergency fund. Who knows, maybe there’s nothing wrong with the RV. They probably didn’t put gas in it.”

She groaned. Because it could totally be that.

“You’re right,” she said. “Thank you for understanding. They’re not the best parents in the world, but I don’t like to think of them being stranded and homeless.”

Duke stood and started pacing back and forth. “Honest truth is that if it was up to me, I wouldn’t do shit for them. They’re crap parents, Sunny. They’re neglectful and uncaring. And I know you think that because they didn’t harm you physically that you don’t have the right to call them abusive. But neglect is abuse, baby. So yeah, if it was up to me, I wouldn’t help them. And I fucking hate that the only time

they've called you since I've been with you is to ask for money."

She gaped at him. Then she pushed herself up, so she was sitting.

"Easy, baby." He came over and sat facing her. "You should stay lying down."

"I'm all right. I just ... I didn't realize you felt that way about them. You never said anything."

"I should have. But I know you love them, faults and all. However, they don't get to call you and ask for money and pay no attention to the rest of your life."

Sunny chewed her lip. "You're right. They got Greg's name wrong. They thought I was still married to him. And they didn't even know about the wedding when I left countless messages. I don't even think they have the same phone, since Serenity called me on an unknown number. They don't care about me at all, do they?"

Tears dripped down her face as she stared up at him in misery.

"Oh, my baby." He carefully pulled her onto his lap, holding her gently. Brushing the hair off her face, he grabbed her chin and tilted her head back. "That's why I never said anything. Because I didn't want you to be sad. But I won't let them use you. Understand?"

"So, we shouldn't send them the money?"

Duke sighed as she rubbed at her cheeks, wiping away her tears. But they kept flowing. Turning, she buried her face in his shirt and let go. All the emotion she'd held back burst out of her.

She wrapped her hand around his shirt. Duke was right. Her parents didn't care about her and it was time she came to terms with that.

"Baby, calm down. Shh, it's all right. Hey, listen to me. Maybe your parents are shit, but you know what?"

"What?" she asked.

“You have a family who loves you so much. Our friends are our family. And they’d do anything for you. You don’t need Serenity and Phoenix because you have people who adore you.” He reached over to the nightstand to grab some tissues.

It hurt to realise that her parents were never going to be the people she thought they might be. But maybe it hurt a bit less than she’d expected. Because she’d known for a while that they weren’t ever going to change. It was just time to stop hoping for the best and settle with her reality.

They’d always be who they were.

And they weren’t people she needed in her life.

“You’re right. My real family are the people who are always there for me. Who would drop everything to help me.”

He cleaned her face and held the tissue to her nose. “Blow.”

She blew her nose, groaning in pain because that hurt. Duke wiped her nose, which was a bit gross. Then he placed the tissue aside before lightly grabbing hold of her chin and tilting her face up.

“You’re amazing, Sunny. So kind and caring and sweet. It’s their loss, not having someone as special as you in their lives.”

He was so sweet.

“What should we do? Not send them the money?”

“No, I think we should send it. But I’m going to make it clear that’s it. That we’re not helping them with anything else. And that they’re not to call you unless they suddenly want to become decent parents.”

“All right. Let’s do that. Thank you, Duke. For being my family. For loving me.”

“You don’t ever have to thank me for that.”

F *our days before the wedding ...*

SON-OF-A-FREAKING-PEACH!

What was going on?

Like you don't know what's going on. Don't kid yourself.

Sunny groaned as she sat at the dining table, staring at the email on her laptop.

“Something wrong, baby girl?” Duke walked over, putting his hand on the back of her neck.

She was feeling a lot better after her incident with the bike. There was still a bit of bruising on her back, but she'd gone back to work today.

Of course, she'd wanted to go back to work last week, but Duke was nothing if not protective. He hadn't given her the punishments she was owed yet, because he wanted all of the bruising to fade.

Unfortunately, she'd managed to earn herself two more punishments as well.

She really didn't want to tell him about this, but she had to.

With a sigh, she gestured toward the email on her screen.

“I emailed the equipment rental people, the caterers, and the florist last night about paying the balance of what we owe.

I thought that I would have heard from them by now. But, well, something weird has happened.”

Duke sat on the chair next to hers, his gaze narrowing. “What kind of weird?”

She bit her lip, and he reached over to free it from her teeth. “It’s all been paid for.”

They’d transferred money out of their emergency fund to send to her parents. Serenity had managed to find a friend with a bank account. Duke had a chat with her, which had ended with him hanging up on her.

Serenity could be hard on a person’s patience.

But Sunny now felt like a boulder was off her shoulders. Sure, it made her sad to think about not having her parents at her wedding. But it was more the idea of her parents than the reality of them that she’d mourned.

Her parents would still have to fix their RV, but as Duke had told Serenity bluntly, they could damn well get a job and do that themselves.

“What do you mean it’s all been paid for?” he asked in a low voice.

She swallowed heavily. And here came the tricky part.

“I spoke to the florist today during my lunch break. And she said an elderly man came in to pay for the balance. I thought maybe it was a random act of kindness. Like how someone might buy you a cup of coffee or pay for your groceries?”

“But it wasn’t?”

“Ah, doesn’t seem so. I just heard back from the caterers and the same thing happened.”

Duke stood so suddenly that his chair fell over backward. Hatter, who had been sitting on her feet, started barking excitedly.

“Calm, dog,” Duke ordered. He leaned his hands on the table, his head dropping forward as he took some deep breaths.

“That son of a bitch!”

Uh-oh.

Things were bad if Duke was swearing.

“I’m sure he was just trying to do something nice for us,” she offered. “Think of it like a wedding present.”

“Sunny,” Duke groaned. He straightened and started pacing back and forth. “A wedding present is towels or an air fryer. Not to pay for half the damn wedding.”

She chewed her lip, watching him worriedly. She knew that this was a real sore point for him.

“We don’t know that it was the Fox,” she offered. “Could be a long-lost uncle I don’t know about. I mean, Serenity and Phoenix never took me to any family reunions. I could have a generous uncle.”

“Great, so now you have two mysterious men going around and paying for things for you?”

She winced. “When you put it like that, it sounds bad. I’m sorry, Duke.”

Duke stilled and ran his hand over face. He picked up the chair and sat before lifting her onto his lap. “Don’t say sorry, Little Rebel. None of this is your fault.”

“It feels like it is.” She twisted her fingers together in her lap.

He placed his large hand over hers. “It’s not. And I apologize if I made you feel like it was.”

“I know you hate this.”

“That’s on me. And the Fox. Because I’m pretty certain he does half of this stuff to rile me up and I gave him that ammunition.”

Yeah, that sounded like the Fox.

“He is a bit of a shit-stirrer,” she admitted.

“I thought he might have disappeared out of our lives.”

Sunny had a feeling that would never happen. But she didn't say that. Duke was stressed enough.

“Wait. How did he know what caterers and florist we used?” Duke asked.

“I don't know. Maybe he hacked my email?”

Duke groaned.

“To be fair, my password is Wonderland.”

“Yeah, you need to change that.”

She nodded. She guessed so. “Are you really upset?”

“I'm not happy. But I guess I'll have to get over it. However, we can't trust the Fox. I know you want to think the best of him, but you can't. He betrayed Markovich. We have to be careful, Sunny. I won't risk you.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck. “I know. I'll be careful. Promise.”

Two days until the wedding ...

“SPARKLE PONY, don’t eat too much cake,” Sunny fussed. “You’ll vomit it all back up. Unicorns shouldn’t eat that much sweet stuff. Wait, unless cake is a staple of a unicorn diet? Now, that is something to think about. What do you think, Moody? Oh, you think that Sparkle Pony should leave some cake for everyone else. Good point.”

A throat clearing in the doorway had her leaning out of her fort and glancing up at Duke with a smile. “Daddy!”

He studied the fort that she’d built, then crouched down, looking in at where she was having a tea party with Moody and Sparkle Pony. “I only put the trash out. I didn’t think I was gone long enough for you to build a fort.”

“I started building the fort this morning while you were in the shower.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Is that so? And is this a private tea party, or is there room for one more?”

“There’s always room for you in our threesome, Daddy! Oh, wait, that sounded wrong.”

He chuckled. “Well, as long as Sparkle Pony and Moody are the only ones in this threesome, it’s all right with me. But no one else.”

“Course not, Daddy. Then it wouldn’t be a threesome. Or foursome, now, I guess with you.”

Duke climbed into the fort. It was a bit of a tight squeeze, but they made it work. She’d built the fort in her playroom, which is why he hadn’t noticed it. She loved this space so much. This is where she came when she needed to escape from the world for a while.

Like right now.

“Tea, Daddy?”

“Of course, can’t come to a tea party and then not drink tea.”

“See, Sparkle Pony,” she said to the huge unicorn to her right. “Daddy knows tea party etiquette.”

Duke sighed, shaking his head. “Some unicorns are just rude.”

“I know, Daddy. Cake? I have red velvet, chocolate, banana, and rainbow cake.”

“You mean Sparkle Pony hasn’t eaten all the rainbow cake?”

“Not yet, but he sure is trying. Unfortunately, Moody buried his face in the banana cake, so it’s a bit smushed.”

“Yeah, banana cake isn’t my thing, anyway. Moody can have it. I’ll take the chocolate.” She handed him a piece, and he pretended to nibble at it. “Yum, delicious. Did you make it yourself?”

“Aww, kind of you to think so, Daddy, but no. I bought it from the bakery.” Also, it was made of plastic.

But it seemed he had a good imagination.

Sparkle Pony slowly slid forward, his face landing in his teacup.

“Oh no, Sparkle Pony! Just look at the mess you’ve made. I’ll have to go get a cloth to clean you up.” She crawled out of the fort to go grab a cloth to clean up the imaginary tea from

his face while Duke righted him. She climbed back into the fort. “Thanks, Daddy.”

“You’re welcome, baby girl. Perhaps Sparkle Pony needs a nap,” he suggested.

She sighed. “I think you’re right, Daddy. He’s been very busy lately.”

“I’ve noticed. He’s been helping you with the wedding?”

“Helping. Hindering. It’s all the same thing to a unicorn.”

After she’d cleaned Sparkle Pony up, Duke helped her pull him from the fort and put him to bed. They’d bought him a giant dog bed. He even had a blanket with unicorns on it. He was a very spoiled unicorn.

Taking her hand, Duke drew her over to a stool where he sat, pulling her down onto his lap.

“Hey, Daddy,” she said, wrapping her arms around his neck.

“Hey, Little Rebel.” He brushed her hair off her face. “You doing okay?”

“Better now that I’m getting hugs from you.”

He kissed the tip of her nose. “Feeling a bit overwhelmed?”

“What makes you say that?”

“Because you built a fort and snuck off into it as soon as we got home.”

“Oh, sorry, Daddy.”

“You know you can always come to me if you need something, right?”

“I know, Daddy. I just needed a bit of a break, you know? I just can’t believe how quickly time is going. It’s two days until our wedding.” Today had been her last day of work, so she had time to clean the house and tidy up the backyard.

“I know. I can’t wait to marry you, Little Rebel.”

“I can’t wait to marry you either, Daddy.”

“But there are a few things we need to deal with first,” he told her in a stern voice.

Uh-oh. She didn't like the sound of that. “Like what, Daddy?”

“Well, you're taking tonight off from wedding stuff.”

“I don't think I can, Daddy.”

“Before you tell me everything you have to do, I should tell you that I hired a cleaning company. They're going to be here in the morning to clean the house and they'll do another clean after the wedding.”

“What? Oh, Duke, you didn't have to do that.”

“I can't be here to help with the cleaning and I'm not going to have you running yourself ragged. But I'm going to get home early tomorrow to help with the yard. I don't want you doing too much on your own, understand?”

“I understand.”

Whether she'd actually listen was debatable.

“Oh, and there's something else we have to do tonight,” he told her, standing her on her feet.

“What's that, Daddy?” she asked innocently.

“Take care of the punishments you're owed.”

Sugar.

Was he serious?

“I want you to pull your pants and panties down, then bend over and put your hands on the stool.”

Yep, it certainly seemed like he was serious.

“What punishments?” she asked.

He held up his fingers. “There was starting your bike when I wasn't here and without putting on a helmet.”

Shoot.

“As well as that, you also earned yourself two more punishments while you were supposed to be recovering. Once,

when you were meant to be napping and instead, I found you on your laptop. The other when I came home from work and found that you'd been gardening instead of resting."

Shoot.

"You're going to get fifteen with my hand for the gardening. Fifty lines for going on your laptop instead of napping. And ten with the hairbrush for not being more careful with your safety."

"The hairbrush!"

"Careful, Little Rebel. I only made it ten because you hurt yourself, but I could easily make it fifteen."

"Ten is fine. Ten is fine," she said hastily.

"Right, get yourself in place, then."

Sunny gave him a pleading look, but he simply stared back at her sternly. So she slid her pants down.

"Take them off completely. I'm going to give you a bath straight after your punishment. Then it will be pajamas, dinner, and bed."

Feeling sorry for herself, she slid off her pants and panties. She'd already removed her shoes before she came into the house.

Then she bent over, placing her hands on the stool.

"Legs apart. That's it. Good girl. That's a really pretty sight."

It was? She wasn't so sure of that.

Smack! Smack!

Ouch! He was just going to start without a word? At least that was two down. Thirteen to go.

"Those weren't part of your punishment," he told her as though he knew what she was thinking.

"What?" She turned her head to look up at him. "What do you mean?"

“Those were because I could sense you were thinking bad things about yourself.”

“Daddy, do you have the ability to read minds?”

“I can read your mind. That’s a Daddy’s superpower when it comes to his Little.”

“Of all the superpowers, you have to have that one.”

“Comes in handy,” he replied. “Now, it’s a count of fifteen.”

He placed one hand on the small of her back as his other hand landed on her bottom.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

“When Daddy tells you to do something, he expects you to obey him.”

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

“Especially when that order is to do with your health.”

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

“Now here are the last three.”

By the time the last three smacks landed, she was sobbing. Tears dripped down her cheeks as she shifted her weight from foot to foot.

Ouch. Ouch. Ouch.

“Come here, baby girl.” Duke helped her stand and then drew her against him. He held her tight against his chest, rocking her back and forth. “Good girl. You did so well. Shh. My Little Rebel.”

When she stopped crying, he drew back to cup her face. “Right, you ready to write some lines?”

“Daddy, do you really expect me to say yes?”

“Poor baby, come on. Better to get it over with.” He led her over to her desk and used some tissues to clean up her face.

“Can I write them while standing up?” she asked.

“Afraid not, baby girl. Part of the punishment is sitting on a sore bottom. Fifty lines. I want you to write ‘I will obey my Daddy.’”

With a grumble, she sat on the hard chair to write the lines. It was torture. Maybe she should have asked for another spanking instead. By the time she finished, she was shifting around on the seat constantly and her handwriting was close to illegible.

“Daddy, I’m finished.”

Duke came and leaned over her to read her lines. “Hmm, some of these got a bit sloppy toward the end, but I’ll give you a pass.”

She breathed out a sigh and stood.

“Do you need to go potty, baby girl?”

“What? No, Daddy!”

“Really? You’re moving around like you do.”

“That’s because I just had to sit on a sore bottom and write lines.”

“You sure?”

Of course, she was sure. Except, wait a minute ...

“Oh, sugar. I’ve got to pee.”

“Come on.” Duke took her hand and led her into the bathroom. He helped her sit on the toilet, then left the room. When he returned, he was holding her hairbrush.

Uh-oh.

She stood and moved to the hand basin.

“Wash your hands, Little Rebel,” he directed. “Then I want you to grab hold of the counter and bend over, spreading your legs.”

Great. Just great.

She made sure to clean her hands extra well. Anything to put off getting her butt smacked with her wooden hairbrush.

“Come on, baby girl. Enough procrastinating.”

Sugar.

She got into position, staring at him in the mirror as he moved up behind her.

“Ten with the hairbrush, baby girl. Then your punishment is all done.”

She tried to stay relaxed, but it was nearly impossible. The hairbrush landed with a smack against each cheek and she let out a cry.

“Good girl. Eight more.”

Each whack of the hairbrush felt harder than the last. By the time he finished, it felt like her bottom was on fire and she was in tears again.

Duke set the hairbrush on the counter and then turned her, drawing her into his arms. “That’s it. All done. You did so well. What a good girl you are.”

“I’m s-sorry, Daddy,” she told him.

“I know, baby girl. I just want you to be safe. I know I can be overprotective, but you’re the most important person in my life. And I will do whatever it takes to look after you.”

W *edding Day*

“ARE YOU READY, SUNNY?”

Sunny glanced over at Betsy and Jewel. They looked stunning in their dresses. She’d told them to pick whatever they felt comfortable in. Betsy was wearing a simple pale gray dress that had three-quarter sleeves and flowed out from the waist. Elegant and beautiful.

Jewel had gone for something edgier. Her gown was emerald green and fitted on the top. The long skirt had a high split at the side.

“You both look so beautiful,” she told them.

“Pretty sure that’s meant to be our line,” Jewel replied. “Damn, Sunny. You look amazing.”

“Thank you. I couldn’t have done it without the two of you. Thank you for everything. For being my friends, my family.”

“You don’t ever have to thank us for that, Sunny,” Betsy told her.

Sunny held out her arms and they both moved in for a hug.

“Enough of this,” Jewel said, drawing back. “You’ll ruin your hair and make-up.”

Sunny grinned at her. She knew the other woman had been close to tears.

“Are you ready to go out now?” Betsy asked. “It’s time.”

There was a knock on the door and Livvy poked her head in, looking slightly flustered. Sunny’s heart started racing in worry. What was going on?

“Hi, um, oh my gosh, Sunny! You look incredible.”

“Thanks. Everything all right?” she asked.

“Yes, there’s just a slight bunny situation.”

“Bunny situation?” Jewel asked.

“Yes. Sunny, maybe you could just stay up here for another five, no, ten minutes?”

Sunny’s lips twitched, relief filling her. Bunny emergencies she could handle. “Did Buster bring Cinnabun as his plus one?”

Livvy sighed. “I promise I will sort this. He said he didn’t bring her. Somehow, she escaped from her cage on her own. Ten minutes?”

“No problem. And if Cinnabun wants to attend the ceremony, that’s fine by me.”

“Thank you.” Livvy disappeared.

“Maybe we should go help,” Jewel said to Betsy. “I’ll go, you stay here with Sunny.”

“Why don’t both of you go?” Sunny suggested. “I wouldn’t mind having a few minutes to myself.”

“You’re sure?” Betsy asked. “Because I’m certain the twins will be able to find that rabbit.”

“I’m sure.”

“All right, we’ll come back when everything is sorted,” Jewel told her.

Sunny peeked through the closed curtain, grinning as she saw everyone racing around the backyard, obviously trying to

find Cinnabun. Moving away from the window, she walked over to the full-length mirror.

This was it.

Her wedding day.

She twirled back and forth, the clear rhinestones sewn into the bodice of her pale pink gown glistened under the light, making her smile. She looked like a princess. The top part of the dress was tight and sparkly, while the bottom puffed out with miles of tulle.

Her hair was lightly curled and pulled back on one side with the most gorgeous vintage hair clip that Millie had lent her for the day.

She turned with a smile as the door opened again behind her. “Did they find Cinnabun ...?” Her voice trailed off as she took in the older man walking into the room.

He looked nondescript, with mousy brown hair and mud-colored eyes. He was dressed in a cheap-looking shirt and pants.

She’d never seen him before.

And yet she knew exactly who he was.

“Fox.”

He held up a finger to his lips, a smile crossing his mouth as he took her in.

“What are you doing here?” she whispered. “It’s not safe for you. If one of the guys sees you ...”

He snorted. “I’m not worried about that. They’re all busy chasing a rabbit around the gardens.”

“Did you let Cinnabun out?”

“What fun is a caged bunny? Poor thing was just begging to be liberated. If it’s smart, it won’t go far. Then again, rabbits aren’t known for their smarts, are they?”

“Fox,” she growled at him. “Everyone is upset with you. They think you betrayed Markovich.”

“And what do you think?” he asked.

“I ... I think ... I think that there’s stuff going on I don’t know about. And I think you never do anything by chance. Duke’s mad about you paying the balance on those invoices.”

“Is he?” The Fox grinned. “Then it was well worth it.”

“Fox,” she groaned. “What am I going to do with you?”

“You’re going to listen to me. I don’t have much time, but I had to see you on your wedding day. I have something for you.”

“I have to tell Duke you were here.”

“Of course,” he said easily. “But I’m sure you won’t want to do that before the ceremony.”

“I’m going to get my butt spanked on my wedding night,” she muttered.

“You’re welcome.” He winked.

He was terrible.

“Have you got something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue?” he asked.

“Uh, well, not really. I mean, my dress is new. Oh, and my hair clip is old and borrowed.”

“Good. Then I have something blue.” He drew a small jewelry case from his pocket.

Sunny groaned. “You know Duke hates when you give me things. Especially jewelry.”

“I know. That’s an added bonus.” He grinned wickedly. “But this time, it has a purpose. And it’s really an add-on to a previous gift. It’s a charm.” He opened the case to reveal a small round charm with a blue stone in the middle.

“Oh, how pretty. It sparkles!” She reached out to run a finger over it. “Pretty, but I can’t accept this.”

“Sure, you can. This isn’t just pretty. It’s functional too.”

She didn’t have her charm bracelet on at the moment. Duke had become more accepting of her wearing it, but she

figured she wouldn't push him on their wedding day.

"Functional?"

"If you press the stone firmly, it sends out an emergency signal to me."

Her eyes shot to his. "Do I need that?"

"Maybe. There's a possibility that shit's about to hit the fan. What fun!"

"Fox," she groaned. "What's going on? Are you safe?"

"Sweet girl, you don't need to worry about me. But promise you'll put this on your charm bracelet and that you'll wear it. And use it if you need to. Please."

It was the please that made her realize how serious he was.

"All right. But I have to tell Duke about this." She took the box from him.

"Must you? Seems to me it will just push him toward a heart attack. Hmm, on second thought ..."

"Fox," she chided.

"Joking, sweet girl. I don't want the big biker to die."

She wasn't sure if she believed him or not.

He gave her a hurt look, his hand on his chest. "Your doubt hits me right here. I've arranged a safe house for you as a precaution. I'll even let you take Duke. Now, isn't that nice of me?"

"Sure. That's nice of you." She didn't really like the idea of needing a safe house, though.

"I even put some biker magazines in the toilet for him for when he's doing his business."

Lord help her.

"I'm rather disappointed I'm not escorting you down the aisle. Although, not sure how I'd feel about giving you to Duke." Turning, he headed to the door.

"Wait! That's it, you're just going?"

He spun back. “Don’t you know that I’m always around?”

“Fox,” she said urgently.

“Yes?”

“I’m worried about you.”

“Don’t be, sweet girl. I can take care of myself. And you. Although, perhaps a motorcycle wasn’t the best gift.” He gave her a chiding look.

He knew about that? Of course, he did, he was the Fox.

“Why me? I’m no one special.”

“You’re special to me.”

She rushed over and threw her arms around him. “Be careful, Fox.”

“When aren’t I careful?”

Pretty much always.

He slid from her hold and walked out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Had that really just happened?

Another knock made her step back in fright. She shut the jewelry box as Betsy opened the door and peeked in. “Sunny? You all right?”

“Uh, yes. Sorry. You just startled me.”

“You look pale.”

“I’m fine.” Turning, she moved to her nightstand and put the jewelry box inside the top drawer. “Is Cinnabun all right?”

“Yes. She’s back in her cage. You sure you’re okay?”

“I’m sure. Let’s do this.”

Betsy nodded and held out her hand. Sunny took hold, letting her lead her to the back door where Razor waited, looking gorgeous in his suit.

“Ready, darlin’?” he asked with a grin.

“I’m ready,” she replied.

“Not got cold feet?” Razor asked.

She shot him a look. “No.” Although she was definitely dreading telling Duke about the Fox.

Worry about that later. This is your wedding day.

“Where’s Jewel?” She looked around.

Just then they heard barking, and Hatter came racing past with something in his mouth.

“Hatter!” Jewel yelled, running after him. “Come back here.”

“Was that ... was that the ring pillow in his mouth?” Sunny asked.

“Nothing to worry about. All under control.”

“Hatter,” Razor said firmly. “Stop.”

Skidding to a stop, Hatter turned and looked up at Razor with sad eyes. As though he couldn’t understand why Razor was ruining his fun game.

“Bring.” Razor held out his hand.

Hatter whined.

“Hatter,” Sunny said warningly.

Hatter trotted over and dropped the ring pillow in front of Razor’s feet.

The empty ring pillow.

“Please tell me the rings weren’t already tied onto the pillow when he took it,” Betsy said.

They all stared down at Hatter. He was already wearing the white harness that the ring pillow attached to. He stared up at them, his tongue hanging out of his mouth, looking very happy with himself.

“No,” Jewel said hastily. “I was about to put them on the pillow and attach it to his harness when he stole the pillow and raced off. I still have them.”

Thank the Lord. She did not want to wait for them to work their way through him.

“The ring pillow is a bit, uh, slobbery, though,” Razor said, picking it up.

“I’ll give it a clean,” Jewel said hastily, taking the pillow and disappearing

“Hatter,” Sunny scolded, straightening the bow tie he was wearing.

Jewel returned with the pillow. “It’s a little damp, but still looks fine. I’ve attached the rings this time.” She gave Hatter a firm look.

Razor held him while she attached the pillow, then clipped on his lead.

Crisis averted. Time for the fun part.

“Right, let’s try this again,” Razor said. “There aren’t any more animals that can go rogue, are there?”

She hoped not.

Razor walked out to signal to Ethan, who had the responsibility of starting the music. As *You are the Sunshine of my Life* started playing, Betsy, then Jewel, headed down the aisle. Razor held out his arm to her. She grasped hold of him with a grateful smile. Seats had been set up on either side of the path and the guests all stood and turned to watch her walk down the aisle to where Duke stood at the end.

Beside him were Reyes and Sav as his best men. Duke stared at her hungrily, looking impatient as he waited for her at the end. When she reached Duke, he stepped forward, grabbed her around the waist and kissed her. Thankfully, she had time to wrap her arms around him, so her flowers weren’t squashed between them.

Hoots and hollers surrounded them as their guests went mad.

He drew back, grinning down at her as everyone grew quiet.

“You’re supposed to wait until I give you the go ahead before you kiss her, you know,” Millie said.

Sunny turned to look at her friend. When she’d asked Millie if she’d officiate the wedding, the other woman had cried. Then she’d thrown herself into getting the credentials she needed.

Today, she wore a pale green gown with a sweetheart neckline that had images of dinosaurs dancing around the bottom of the skirt.

Sunny loved it.

“Sorry,” Duke said to her, clearly not meaning it as Betsy took hold of Sunny’s bouquet.

Razor shook Duke’s hand. “Take care of her.”

“Always,” Duke replied.

“Uh-huh,” Millie replied, but she was grinning. “If the two of you could face each other, please?”

Millie started the ceremony and Sunny tried to concentrate. She really did. But it was almost impossible with Duke staring down at her like she was the most precious being he’d ever seen in his life.

“Duke,” Millie prompted.

Duke cleared his throat. “I love you, Sunny. Sometimes I find it hard to tell you how much. But I have never been so damn grateful to have my gardening service not turn up.”

Everyone laughed.

“I couldn’t imagine my life without you. I promise to always take care of you, to protect you, to always listen to you, and to always keep you in rhinestones. But hands off my hog.”

She giggled.

And drat, she’d always had plans to bedazzle his Harley.

“Duke, you are everything to me. My best friend, my boss, my biggest supporter, and the voice of reason when I want to dye everything I own pink.”

Duke snorted.

“And as a sign of my love, I promise never to bedazzle Princess Moonbeam.”

He shook his head at the name she'd given his Harley.

“Duke, you're my family. You're my dream man. My biker babe. My life is so much better for having you in it. And I promise that I'll spend every day of the rest of our lives showing you how much I love you.”

Millie sniffled. “That was so beautiful, you guys.”

Sunny and Duke grinned at her.

“Right, what next? Rings! Hatter, you're up!”

Jewel brought Hatter over and Sunny patted him while Millie retrieved the rings, giving one to Duke and the other to her.

Duke slid the ring onto her finger. “Sunshine, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love. I will love, honor, cherish, and protect you as long as we both shall live.”

She sniffled. Sugar. She was not going to cry.

Duke gave her a soft smile as she reached for his hand, sliding the ring onto his finger. “Duke, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love. I will love, honor, cherish, and protect you as long as we both shall live.”

“I now declare you husband and wife. Duke, this time you can officially kiss your bride.”

Duke grinned and dipped her back, holding her weight with one arm as he kissed her. When he tilted her back up, she had to cling to him to stop herself from falling into a puddle at his feet. Whoa. It felt like his kisses were more potent today.

Maybe it was because he was now her husband.

“That was some kiss.”

Duke grinned. “More where that came from, baby.”

“Oh, goody.”

“Everyone,” Millie called out. “It is my huge pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. and Mrs. Canton!”



“ALL RIGHT, shall I do it here?” Sunny asked.

“Here’s good,” Millie replied cheerfully. “Come on, everyone, gather round. It’s time for the bride to throw the bouquet.”

It had been an amazing day. Her cheeks ached from smiling. She glanced over at her handsome husband.

Damn, she liked that word.

Husband.

She got to keep that man.

“Right, Sunny,” Millie told her. “Turn around and then throw the bouquet on the count of three.”

Sunny grinned at everyone, then spun so she was facing away from them. “One. Two. Three!” The bouquet went flying over her head and she turned to see who had caught it.

Her jaw dropped and laughter broke free as she saw Royal standing there like the cat who’d drunk all the cream, the bouquet in his hands.

“Yes, twin!” Baron said with a whoop, holding up his hand for Royal to high-five him. “Looks like we’re getting married.”

We?

Oh, good Lord.

Although she shouldn’t be surprised that they planned to share a woman.

Sunny walked over to where her friends stood. Betsy looked rather pale.

“This is not good for me,” Betsy muttered, staring at her sons with chagrin. “I’m not ready for the two of them to get

married.”

“I’m sure you’ve still got a few years until you have to worry about that,” Sunny reassured her.

“Do I? There is one thing I know about those two and that is that they’ll always do the unexpected.”

“Sunny, are you ready for your honeymoon?” Livvy asked with a grin.

“We’re not going on a honeymoon.” Livvy knew that, so why was she asking?

“Aren’t you?” Tabby asked. “Hmm, then what was that envelope on the table?”

They were all grinning at her, and she walked over to the table where the wedding cake sat. It was pale pink and covered with white flowers. On the top was a black cut-out of a bride and groom embracing next to a motorbike. Several gifts had been left next to the cake, even though they’d told everyone not to buy them anything. And there was an envelope with their names on it.

She glanced over as Duke approached. “I was told there was something we needed to open now.”

“I have a feeling that our friends have been up to no good. Open it?” She handed him the envelope.

He nodded, ripping open the envelope and staring at the letter inside. “Jesus, you guys shouldn’t have done this.”

She glanced at the note. “Son-of-a-peach!”

“It’s just three nights away,” Reyes said.

“At a luxury log cabin outside of Philipsburg?” Sunny was in shock.

“It’s a bit of a drive, so tonight you’re staying in Bozeman,” Razor told them.

“Then three nights in the cabin,” Dahlia added, clapping her hands together excitedly. “So romantic.”

“Don’t worry about work,” Madden told Duke with a grin. “I have your clients covered.”

“And we’re taking Hatter,” Millie added.

“I can’t believe you guys did this for us!” Sunny cried, moving around to hug each of them. “You’re the best friends we could ever have.”

“We’re family, aren’t we?” Betsy asked.

“Yeah,” she said. “We’re family.”

Sunny swayed back and forth on the wooden rocking chair, looking out at the forest as she fiddled with the charm bracelet around her wrist.

This place was idyllic.

She couldn't believe that their friends had gifted them three nights here. It was gorgeous. Quiet and peaceful.

And far enough away from their neighbors that they wouldn't hear her scream.

She winced at that thought. But she knew she had one heck of a punishment coming her way.

Duke was not going to be impressed when she told him about the Fox's visit.

She'd thought about telling him last night. However, they'd been so tired by the time they'd gotten to Bozeman that they'd just sort of fallen into bed.

And she hadn't wanted to travel the rest of the way on a sore bottom, so she'd figured she would wait.

Hatter would love it here. She'd brought Moody, but Duke had told her that Sparkle Pony was too big to come.

Who knew what mischief he was getting up to at home.

She shuddered to think.

"Everything is unpacked," Duke told her, walking out of the cabin and leaning against the porch railing.

“This place is so beautiful. Not sure I’ll ever want to leave. Can we come back again sometime?”

He grinned down at her. “We just got here, but sure. I’ll bring you back each anniversary if you want.”

“Aw, you’re so romantic.”

He shook his head. “No, I’m not. But I do like to make you happy.”

Oh, sugar.

He was trying to make her cry.

“What’s going on, Sunny?”

“What do you mean?”

“You were very quiet on the way here. What’s wrong?”

“Drat. You know me too well.”

“Sunny. Tell me.”

“I have something to tell you. And you might be an itty-bitty bit mad.” She held up her finger and thumb about an inch apart. “Or maybe like this.” She widened the space.

“Sunny,” he said warningly.

Just spit it out.

“Right before the wedding, the Fox came into our bedroom when everyone was chasing Cinnabun. I think he let Cinnabun out, which was a bit naughty of him. Although Cinnabun never goes far.”

“Sunny.”

“He said he wanted to see me before the wedding. That he felt like he should be giving me away, although he wasn’t sure he’d want to give me to you. Sugar. I didn’t mean to say that part. Then he gave me a charm and left.”

Duke just stared at her.

She waited for him to say something.

But he didn’t move. She couldn’t tell what he was thinking. Or if he was even breathing.

“Um, the charm he gave me is this one here.” She showed it to him. “If I press this blue stone firmly, it will send an emergency signal to him. Also, he said that he set a safe house up for us. And something about the shit might be about to hit the fan and he’s just trying to protect us.”

Well, he was trying to protect her. But she didn’t think it was a good idea to word it like that.

Still nothing.

“Are you this upset?” She held her hands about a foot apart.

And still he said nothing.

“This much?” She moved her hands further apart.

And he didn’t even blink.

“Duke? Are you going to say something? Oh, God. You’re not having a stroke, are you?”

“He was in my house, in the same room as my girl! He could have done anything to you!”

“The Fox won’t hurt me.”

“You don’t know that!” he roared, making her startle and settle deeper into her chair. “He’s the one putting you in danger! What the hell does he think is going to happen? Why do you need an emergency button and a safe house?”

“I don’t know,” she whispered.

Duke put his hand over his face and took some deep, slow breaths. Getting up, she moved over to him, sliding her arms around his waist.

“I know you think I probably should have told you straight away—”

“As soon as he stepped into the room!”

“But that would have been a disaster. It was our wedding day. And he wasn’t there to hurt anyone.”

He dropped his hand, staring down at her. “You promised that you would be careful.”

“I didn’t let him in. I didn’t contact him. I swear.”

“That fucking sneaky bastard. If I see him, he’s fucking dead. Christ. You were in our bedroom with an assassin and I was outside, chasing down a damn bunny.”

“Duke, I think there’s more going on here than we know.”

He gave her a skeptical look. “He kidnapped Dahlia.”

“Yes, I know. But I’m sure he had a good reason.”

“Sunny,” he groaned. “I know that you want to see the best in everyone, but the truth is that the Fox is an assassin for hire. He kills people. And he isn’t who you think he is. You should have told me that he was there straight away.”

“But by the time I found you, he would have been gone anyway, and what would have been achieved other than for our wedding to be ruined? I just wanted to marry you.” She sniffled.

“Baby girl.” He sighed, wrapping his arms around her. “Telling me wouldn’t have ruined the wedding.”

It was her turn to give him a skeptical look.

“I know that I have a bit of a thing about the Fox. And maybe you’re right. I would have fixated on him if you’d told me before the wedding. But I still don’t like that you kept this from me, Sunny. At. All.”

“I know, I’m sorry. Are you really mad?”

“I’m upset, not mad.”

Sugar. She thought that might be worse.

“I meant to tell you right after the wedding, but there was the reception and then we were so tired last night. Then this morning ... I didn’t want to sit on a hot ass the whole way here.”

“You’re going to be sitting on a sore ass for the rest of the day,” he warned.

“I figured that would be the case.”

“You’re getting twenty with your hairbrush.”

“Um, well, I might have forgotten my hairbrush.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Deliberately?”

“I’d like to plead the fifth on that.”

“You know, there’s a whole forest here. I’m sure I could go cut some branches to use on your bottom.”

Sunny gasped and covered her bottom with her hands. “You wouldn’t!”

“Well, what do you expect me to do when you leave your hairbrush at home? I suppose I could use my belt.”

She wasn’t sure if that was better or not.

“Or I could use your hairbrush, since I saw that you’d missed packing it and I grabbed it for you.”

Sugar.

“Can we forget and forgive that part, Daddy?” she asked.

“Sure. After you get an extra five.”

“Twenty-five!” He was right. She definitely wasn’t going to sit comfortably today.

“I’m your husband, Little Rebel. The man who loves and adores you. It’s my job to keep you safe, and that’s what I’m going to do. I might understand why you didn’t tell me straight away, but I do not want that to happen ever again. Understand me?”

“Yes, Daddy. I understand.”

“I don’t like that the Fox might be leading trouble your way. If anything odd happens at all, you must tell me.”

“I will,” she whispered.

“Come on, let’s get this punishment over with. Then we can start the fun part of the honeymoon.”

She really wished they could just skip to that part. But she took his hand and let him lead her into the cabin.

It was gorgeous. The living area had a huge stone fireplace and a dark leather sofa in front of it. There was a small kitchen

area that was fully stocked. The bedroom had a sumptuous attached bathroom with a big claw-foot bath.

She couldn't have picked a better place for a honeymoon. Duke stopped in front of the sofa.

“Strip off all your clothes,” he told her. “Then go and stand in the corner with your legs spread, bottom out, and your hands behind your head.”

“All of my clothes?” Why would she need to take off all of her clothes?

“Yes,” he said firmly. “And I don't expect any arguments.”
Sugar.

Okay, she was beginning to see just how upset he was. Slowly, she stripped off and put herself into position in the corner. Tears dripped down her face. She hated thinking that she might have disappointed him. She could hear him moving around behind her.

“Come out of the corner now, baby girl.”

Turning, she saw him sitting on the sofa. He had her hairbrush on the coffee table.

“Sunny, why are you crying?” he asked in a gentle voice.

“I just ... I feel so bad!”

“Come here, Little Rebel.” He held out his arms, and she dove into his embrace. He held her tight on his lap. “Shh. Hey, we haven't even started yet.”

“I know! S-sorry! Just feel g-guilty!”

“Look at me. Come on. Look at me.”

She moved her gaze to his, and he brushed her hair back off her face, his face filled with love. “You know that after a punishment, all is forgiven, right?”

“Yes, I know.”

“And that I'm not mad. I know he put you in a bad position. His timing was deliberate since he knew you wouldn't tell me straight away.”

He gently freed her lip from between her teeth.

“This punishment is both because I know you feel bad and it will help alleviate the guilt. And because I need you to know that your safety is paramount to me. You must never keep anything from me again. Especially when it comes to the Fox. I need you to understand that, Sunny.”

“I do. I promise.”

“Good girl. Now, as well as the twenty-five with the hairbrush, I think I’m going to give you five reminder spanks each morning.”

“What? Daddy, no! That’s not cool.”

“Ahh, but if it helps you to remember that Daddy loves you and wants to protect you, it’s well worth it.”

Of course, he would think that. He wasn’t the one getting the spanking.

“Let’s get this spanking over with, then I’ll lay you out on the couch and lick your pussy until you come on my face at least three times.”

“Duke!” she said, feeling herself blush. “I get to orgasm even though I’m being punished?”

“Special circumstances. It is our honeymoon.”

Well, she wasn’t going to argue with that.

And after he roasted her ass, he placed her on her back and ate her out until she screamed herself hoarse.

Yep, it was good that their friends rented a cabin where no one would hear her yell.

THE END

HOPE YOU ENJOYED Sunny and Duke’s wedding! You can find all of my books here on my website: <https://www.laylahroberts.com/books>

And don't forget to pre-order the Fox's book here:
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