



# BABY FOR THE MAFIA

AMAZON BESTSELLING AUTHOR

LENA LITTLE

# **BABY FOR THE MAFIA**

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# HER MAFIA MAN: BOOK 1

LENA LITTLE

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Also by Lena Little

## PREVIEW

Possessive, vengeful, psycho...even a murderer.

I've been called a lot of things, but jealous was never one of them...until now.

Until her.

This feisty young woman needs discipline, and I'm just the one to give it to her.

She's got a gift of her own...one that I have to have for myself. Me and only me for the first time...for forever.

But she's also got a secret, one she's not telling me.

One that will bond us together...and she's got the baby bump to prove it.

But can I prove I'm a changed man when another man tries to stake his own claim with what's mine? Or will my heavy hand prove a man can try and leave the mafia life behind, but the mafia ways will never leave him...especially when it comes to protecting what's his?

His family. Forever.

*\*This is an all-new standalone 'mafia-lite' romance. No dubcon.*

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# CHAPTER 1

RAOUL

I've done a lot of bad things in my life, hurt a lot of people, most who deserved it, but I will never be able to say that I was a good man. I'm still not a good man, but one look at *her* makes me want to be.

And I don't even know her name.

I've been watching her for some time now, sitting in the corner of the bar and keeping my attention fixed on her as she flits about the place. Denim shorts reveal shapely legs, and her tight white t-shirt lets me see the outline of her black bra. I'm sure she catches the eye of all kinds of men that she might think are similar to me, but I'm willing to bet she's never dealt with one quite like me.

I'm not just ogling her, either. I can have my pick of stunning women, sleek and sophisticated with lips as red as cherries. Inside, though, those women are dull. Gray. And this girl shines like the sun incarnate. For the first time in my long, violent life, I feel warm.

I know how intimidating I look, but the waitress does the best she can to appear unfazed and cheery, her head tilted to the side and blue eyes wide as she greets me. I'm so lost in those eyes, and the pink, full mouth asking me a question, that I don't hear what she's saying the first time around.

"You're going to have to repeat that, sweetheart. I didn't catch a word."

"Oh," She giggles nervously. Adorably. "I just said my name is Skye and I'll be taking care of you today."

“I’m Raoul,” I respond. “It’s my first time here, so I’m putting my trust in your hands.”

It wasn’t a lie, either. I’ve lived in the Canary Islands, on Tenerife, for a little over a year now, and I’ve only recently started to venture out into my new home city of Santa Cruz over the last few weeks. I’ve had to lay low for some time, so some of the heat on me died down, but now that I know I’m truly unknown here on Tenerife, I’m ready to see what the beautiful island has to offer me. I might have to return to Italy one day and reclaim my spot as the heir of the Damiano crime family, but for right now, I’ve made my fair share of money, and I’m more than happy to let my brothers fight over my father’s throne once he passes.

My new trips into the city proper haven’t revealed much to me besides the expected...good food, gorgeous views, and a friendly population of people that had no idea about the killer shark now lurking among them. There hadn’t been any surprises...at least not until Skye, and oh, what a surprise she is.

Small but distractingly curvy, Skye is my type, but besides her body, and the way her tits jiggle under her white uniform shirt when she laughs, it’s her smile that immediately drew me in like a moth to a flame. It’s wide, joyful, innocent, and everything that I’m much too jaded to deserve. Deserving or not, though, I’m going to make it—her, mine.

I’m going to kiss those sweet lips, touch those soft curves, and if I have any say in it, put a baby in her. It’s wild to think this way so quickly, but I can’t help it. My body is drawn to her in an almost animalistic fashion, and it makes me want to see her ripe with child. My child.

“Well, it looks like it’s my lucky day then, Skye,” I tell her, keeping my voice low. “Do you think you could get me a whiskey straight?”

She looks relieved at the simple drink order, nodding so her soft blonde curls bounce around her face. “I’ll be right back.”

The restaurant, called Salt and Breeze, is like so many others in Santa Cruz, built to be half inside and half out, lazy ceiling

fans spinning above and circulating the otherwise too-hot sea air. Everything is decorated with worn, vintage wood and locally made decor. It's nothing groundbreaking, but I've been cooped up for so long, that anyplace would do at this point. I never could have guessed a gem like Skye would be waiting for me here. I had sat at the bar, hoping to scope out the type of drinks and food they serve without drawing too much attention to myself, but Skye's attention is a completely different animal altogether.

Romance has never been my thing, but now I know it's because I've never felt the spark before. From the second I laid eyes on Skye, I knew she was destined to be mine. I crave her, blood rushing into my cock just watching her bend over to take a bottle from beneath the bar. Perky and full of youth, she's everything I'm not, and it makes me want to have her even more.

I can't be sure, but I think the chemistry is going both ways, because she keeps stealing glances at me, her lovely sun-kissed skin blushing the slightest bit of scarlet when she sees me looking back. It makes me wonder what else I can do to make her blush like that.

She returns with my whiskey on a tray, her eyes lowered but a small smile on her face. I don't know what it is about her, but time seems to slow down. It might be the downcast gaze, or the fact that she's clearly nervous around me, but Skye briefly loses her footing. The glass goes flying off the tray, making a perfect arc before landing in my lap. It's only two ounces of liquid, barely noticeable. I don't even flinch, but poor Skye blanches, tucking the tray under her arm and covering her mouth with her hands.

"Oh my God, I'm so sorry," she blurts out, quickly grabbing handfuls of napkins from the table beside her. I think she's just acting on instinct, but before I can even tell her that it's okay, she's crowding into my space, blotting my chest with the napkins while she babbles on, her voice thin and anxious.

"I'm seriously so sorry," she repeats, "I'm new here, and my boss will kill me if he sees me spilling liquor. He always wants

to have these one-on-one meetings whenever I mess up and I *hate* them. But now you must hate me because I—”

I grab her wrists in my hands, causing her to freeze and look slowly up at me, as if she’s only now realizing how close she’s gotten. A slow grin blooms on my lips as I watch her sea-blue eyes go wide, and feel her pulsed pick up through my hold on her wrists.

“Sweetheart, it’s fine. No need to get so worked up.”

“But the cost—”

“Hush,” I cut her off. “I’ll even pay for the spilled drink. If you can give me something else I want, that is.”

It’s like no one else is in the restaurant, just the two of us. I give her the slightest tug, and she stumbles forward, to the point where she is almost flush to me.

“What else could you want?” she squeaks.

I stroke the inside of her wrists with my thumb, her skin is impossibly soft. “Just a date.”

Skye seems perplexed, “You mean like a *real date*, don’t you?” Not me coming to your place or anything like that?”

I release her wrists, chuckling. “Of course not. Not on the first date, at least,” I wait until she visibly relaxes to add, “Maybe the second, or third. But don’t worry, you’ll see my home sooner than later.”

Flustered, Skye picks up the drink glass and tray, dusting the latter off while she avoids my eyes. She’s so nervous and sweet that it makes my heart, something I had once thought dead and gone, ache. I give her time to think about the date, but from the attraction in their air between us, I already know what her answer will be.

“Okay,” she says finally. “When and what time?”

“Tonight, and you’ll see.”

She looks around, probably for the boss she mentioned earlier, “I’m not sure when I’ll be off work, but I know it’ll be later this afternoon.”

“I can wait. I’m a patient man. I’ll take my time for you, Skye.”

She flushes again, this time with a fleeting look of excitement. I have a moment of hesitation about my plans for this girl, who is obviously so much younger than I am, but I can’t even complete the entire thought. There is no part of me that would be content letting Skye walk out of my life now that I’ve met her. I just have to take it slow so I don’t scare her off.

Tenerife in general is so different from the dark alleys and underground clubs I had grown accustomed to in Italy. For such a beautiful country, I didn’t get to experience things like scenery or wine. Instead, I was a killer who had thrown his entire existence into his work. I did it to please my father, but when he took ill and I could suddenly see my future as the boss of the Domiano syndicate spreading out before me, I was filled with the sudden desire to see what else life had to offer before I shackled myself to that life forever.

There were women I could have married back home, too. Started a family with them, maybe marry for the political alliance and have children that would stand to inherit both family’s fortunes, but I can’t stomach the idea of being with some of the she-vipers my father introduced me to. Now, looking at Skye, and the way she shines, it’s clear why I never settled. It was all leading up to this moment.

She deserves more than a man with blood-soaked hands and a past so dangerous that we would never be able to fully relax. I’ll protect her, keep her far from the eyes of all the enemies I have made over my career, but I still have no illusions that the life I offer is one many women desire. But I’m a selfish bastard, which means she’s going to be mine, no matter the cost.

“I—I’ve got to get back to work,” she tells me, but the way her body sways towards me lets me know she doesn’t really want to go.

*Let’s leave, quit this bullshit job, and I’ll take care of you forever,* I think, watching as she turns and leaves me behind.

*Just say the word, Skye, and you'll never want for anything ever again.*

It's not time yet for those declarations, but watching her talk to other people, giving them a glimpse of all the sweet warmth, I have to clench my fists to stop myself from jumping up and sweeping her out of here.

Thinking back to what she said about her manager, I know it won't be hard to convince her to quit. It's all a question of when.

Skye turns, makes eye contact with me again, and a frisson runs through my body like nothing I've ever experienced before. Fate, or something like it. I'll play this game of dating, taking it slow, but when I want something, I get it. And right now, all I want is Skye.

## **CHAPTER 2**



**I**t all happened in what felt like an instant. A ridiculous, clumsy instant. One moment, I was making flirty eyes with the hunk at the bar, and the next moment I was wiping the liquor I had just dropped off of his chest, while being all up in his personal space.

And wow. Up close, whatever energy that had been rolling off him I had just chalked up to attraction was so, *so* strong. It wasn't just attraction, either, I had quickly come to realize.

Unlike so many other patrons at Salt and Breeze, this guy didn't get pissed when I spilled his drink. Instead, he seemed almost amused, and by the time I recognize just how close I am to him, it's too late. Heat rising up my neck, I keep dabbing at the wet spot on his otherwise-spotless black suit jacket, apologies spilling from my lips before I can stop them.

This close, I want to climb into his lap, bury my face in his neck, anything possible just to be a little bit closer. I feel a surge of need rush through me, unstoppable. When he grabs my wrists in his giant hands, rough thumbs caressing the sensitive inner part of my wrist, I swear I can feel myself melting right then and there at the feet of this perfect specimen of a man.

I raise my eyes slowly, shivery and flustered, to meet his gaze. My heart starts pounding, an echoing pulse answering from between my legs, just from looking him in the eye. I'm in trouble, but apparently I don't even have enough self-preservation to get myself out of it.

His eyes are the exact shade of the liquor I had poured for him, brown but bright with copper as the sun reflects in them. Square jaw, strong nose that might be too big on any other man, and a mouth that makes my knees feel weak with the possibilities it holds.

Raoul is a different breed from the surfer boys and rich vacationers I see every day. His hair is inky black, cut into an expert undercut, but I get the feeling it just falls into place naturally. He probably demands obedience from anything and everything in his life, hair included.

I have the wildest urge to reach out and run my hand over his stubbled, bronze jaw. Maybe it's the cologne he's wearing, something that reminds me of the deep evergreen forests I would visit as a child, or the welcoming heat rolling off his body, but it makes me waver there in front of him, feeling silly, inexperienced, and for the first time in my life, turned on to the point of being uncomfortable.

“Sweetheart,” he rumbles, voice a silky baritone. “No need to get so worked up.”

Raoul might be some kind of warlock, because I'm not even sure what happens next, but before I know it he's inviting me out on a date and I accept. A date for *today*, of all things! I've never been so impulsive. I'm excited, though, in that frivolous way that always seems to bite me in the ass later on. As always, I'll cross that bridge when I come to it. Right now, I'm going to follow my joy, right into the arms of a near-stranger if that's what it comes to.

Just into his arms, though. Not his bed. From the looks of Raoul, losing my virginity to him might be the death of me, and if not, it would surely ruin me for other men forever.

I watch him stand to leave, dropping way too much money for his single spilled drink on the bar top, and he's even taller than I anticipated. 6'5, maybe even 6'6. I'll look like a hobbit next to him when we go out.

*That height difference won't matter so much if you're laying down,* my treacherous, horny brain informs me.

I put my cool hands on my burning cheeks, embarrassed about the wild things going on in my own mind. What is wrong with me! I've been a good girl all my life, for the most part. Besides the running away to Tenerife when I turned eighteen thing, that's it. There has never been a single celebrity, classmate, or casual boyfriend that has made me feel like this. Like my skin is tingling, and the only relief will come from the touch of this Raoul.

Growing up in Washington, the overcast skies and deep, dark forests had never sat right with my soul. I had a good family, a calm upbringing with parents who made their living as college professors, but I spent all those formative years longing for sun and sand. I wanted endless oceans and salt in the air, but the expectation was that I would attend the university my parents taught after I graduated high school, and then after that, maybe, just maybe, I could find my way to paradise. It had seemed forever away.

And then my best friend told me her parents were sending her to Tenerife as a graduation present, and that I was invited along. Just the two of us, on our first outing as adults. It was supposed to last a couple of weeks.

Except when she got on the plane home, I stayed, using the money I had sat aside from summer jobs over the last few years to rent a tiny efficiency apartment. My parents were apoplectic, the most emotion I have ever seen them express, but everyone expected me to go home sooner rather than later. Heck, I even figured that I would get this beautiful slice of heaven out of my system after a couple months, and be ready to head back to Washington and continue the life that had been planned out for me.

That had been over a month, and after getting a job at Salt and Breeze, I have been able to scrape by with a decent existence. Best of all, I get to walk the coast every evening and feel the sun on my skin and the wind in my hair. I might eat a lot of instant noodles, but for the first time in my entire life, my soul is at peace.

That was until Raoul walked through the slatted wooden restaurant doors and shook everything up again for me. This

time, in a totally new way that I'm not exactly prepared for.

I check the time on the wall clock, and sigh. Only an hour left on my shift, if I'm able to slide out of here without Paul catching me. I love working at Salt and Breeze, even if it brings out the worst parts of my nervous disposition from time to time, but when I was hired Paul, the general manager, had been on vacation. When he came back, it was like he fixated on me immediately. Every mistake that I made, every second I was late to work, he noticed, and "corrected" me for. His corrections somehow always consist of me sitting in his tiny office with him, filling out worksheets that he must have made on the spot, while he sits uncomfortably close. So close that I can smell his foul coffee breath.

"I could come by your place and give you some remedial training," he would say, and no matter how many times I brush him off, he continues to ask and try to land himself an invitation to my apartment.

In his late fifties, with a greasy, balding head, Paul oozes sleaziness. I don't want to ruin my date and potential amazing day with his weird negativity.

The thought of Raoul washes skeevy Paul out of my mind immediately, like a breath of fresh air, and the last hour of my shift ticks by quicker than I could have hoped. I hand my money for the day to an assistant manager, knowing that Paul would give me grief for not reporting directly to him, clock out, untie my apron, and then I'm free.

I pull open the front door, feeling as light as air when the sunshine hits my face. I soak it in, lingering long enough that I hear a faint, "Skye? You know you're supposed to cash out with me directly," from back inside the building.

"Crap," I mutter, hurrying away from the store and hopefully out of Paul's sight, but out of nowhere I'm stopped by a hand on my upper arm.

I squeal, jumping aside. The man who grabbed me is dressed in a suit jacket and tie, and he looks apologetic at how startled I am.

“Skye Whitney? Sorry to startle you. I’m one of Mr. Damiano’s drivers and he sent me here to pick you up from work.”

“Mr. Damiano? Do you mean Raoul?” I ask, laying a hand over my racing heart.

“Yes, ma’am. I’m to drive you to your date.”

It’s then I notice the sleek black limo parked behind the driver, and everything clicks into place. “Ohhh. How sweet. But I need to go home first to change.”

The driver shakes his head. “No need, ma’am. Mr. Damiano has provided everything you need.”

Confused, I follow him to the car. He opens the door for me, and as I lower myself into the vehicle, I catch a glimpse of Paul standing outside Salt and Breeze, arms crossed and eyes narrowed. I shiver, knowing there’s going to be hell to pay with him later, but within seconds the driver has closed the door and Paul is blessedly gone from my view.

As soon as I’m in the dark, cool car, any worries about work fade away. Folded on the seat beside me is a gauzy, buttercup-yellow sundress, four different pairs of matching strappy sandals, and a small collection of refreshments, including a little hairbrush and a package of face wipes. It’s an odd, sweet collection of things. Everything a girl would need to get ready in a hurry.

“I’m going to put the privacy screen up, ma’am, so you can get changed. Don’t worry, the windows are tinted so no one can see in either. You’ll have complete privacy I assure you.”

I look around the spacious interior as we start moving. “Okay, thanks, uhh, sorry, what’s your name?”

“Trevor,” he says with a chuckle. “I have a feeling we’ll be seeing a lot of each other, so better to get properly introduced.”

“Nice to meet you, Trevor.”

The privacy screen rolls down, and now that I’m completely alone, I quickly strip out of my work clothes and into the

dress. Raoul has provided a few options for shoe sizes, much to my amusement, but he has a good eye for it considering that one pair fits me like a glove. I dab my face with a wipe, sip some chilled water, and run the brush through my hair. With the windows so dark, I have no idea where we're headed, and I have the brief thought that getting into a random limo is *insane* for an eighteen-year-old woman, but for some reason I trust Raoul, and by extension, any of his associates. There's something instinctual about our connection, and it makes me feel like I've known him my entire life.

*I really am naïve*, I chide myself, but before I can fall any deeper into that train of thought, the limo comes to a stop. Through an intercom speaker, I hear Trevor ask, "Is it okay to roll up the privacy screen, Ms. Whitney?"

"Yes," I answer. The screen disappears, and I see Trevor turn his head to look at me. Behind him out the windshield, I recognize where we are...somewhere I've wanted to visit but just haven't had the time.

The Palmetum of Santa Cruz de Tenerife is half botanical garden, half conservatory, and it takes advantage of Tenerife's amazing weather to house some of the rarest palm trees in the world. There are pathways that lead through the Palmetum where one can walk and see the incredible ways the palm trees have been displayed in ways that are as close to their preferred biome as possible. There are winding streams, sprawling green meadows, and even waterfalls to enjoy. Inside the half-sunken glass conservatory, I've heard it feels like a hidden world encapsulated in green foliage and brilliant flowers. I'm excited to get to experience it, and even more so to see it with Raoul.

"Enjoy your time," Trevor says with a grin, just as the door beside me opens.

Raoul reaches his hand down into the limo to assist me, and I take it, my eyes wide with wonder. Before, he had been dressed in a perfectly tailored black suit, looking almost menacing and unapproachable, but for our date, he's changed himself into an even more devastating version of himself. His white linen button-down has the sleeves rolled up so I can see his defined forearms, and the cuffed, navy blue shorts show off

legs so thick and muscled that I have to will myself to tear my eyes away.

As I rise out of the limo, Raoul waits until I'm on my feet to place his lips on the top of my hand in a brief caress. "*Tesorina*. You look lonely."

I give him a brief twirl, and am rewarded with an amused exhale. Something tells me Raoul Damiano isn't one prone to loud laughter. "Thank you for the outfit."

"My pleasure. Seeing you wearing something of my choosing brings me joy. Now. Come. Let's walk."

I take his outstretched hand, which dwarfs mine, and we twine our fingers together. It should be uncomfortable, with the heat of the day and our size difference, but it isn't. It feels right.

He leads us along a brick path through a tropical forest, eventually switching from holding my hand to putting his arm around my waist, his hand clasped firmly on my hip. It's a very personal touch, and it gives me another wave of that heat that settles between my legs.

I had no doubt of our physical connection, but Raoul quickly shows me there is more to him than deep pockets and an irresistible body. He tells me about his old home in Italy, and the rolling hills, steep cliff sides, and nearly ancient architecture that made up the background of his youth. He speaks of it fondly, but with the slightest hint of exhaustion, like even the memory of it is hard to bear. I listen intently, fascinated with all these places I long to see one day with my own two eyes, but when I sense that tiredness in his tone, I take over.

"It's the sun for me," I explain, watching the dapples of said sunlight dance across the paving stones on our path. "Washington was so dark and dreary. I felt like I wasn't really awake until I stepped off the plane here." I look up into his handsome face, to see he's already gazing at me. "H-have you ever been to America?"

Raoul gives me another one of those amused sighs. "Yes, I have, but not to the places you speak of. New York City, for

the most part, and never for very long.”

“Why didn’t you ever stay?”

“It was for work, *Tesorina*, and therefore it left me very little time for enjoyment.”

I nibble at my bottom lip thoughtfully. Raoul has mentioned that he’s in retirement now, but he is so young that it boggles my mind. Not that he’s truly young, per se, being quite a bit my senior at thirty-eight, but retiring before forty seems wild to me. I try not to linger on the idea of his age... my time in Tenerife is time I’m supposed to be spending finding joy in life, and if I find a little... or a lot... of it with this older man, then so be it.

Sensing my thoughts, Raoul adds, “Don’t bother asking, Skye, because I can’t tell you anything about what I did for my past...career. We will have a much better time if we stay away from such topics.”

“Understood,” I blow out a breath, “I’m sure it’s no comparison, but my job has its downsides, too. Something, or someone I should say, can make even a good day miserable.”

I feel his grip tighten on me. “Who is causing you trouble?”

I shrug. “It’s nothing big, but my manager Paul is kind of a creep. I think he’s figured out that I’m in a strange place on my own, and is trying to take advantage of it.” Raoul makes a deep noise of disapproval in his throat, so I quickly add, “I brush him off every time, so it’s really no big deal.”

We emerge out of the palm forest and into a clearing in front of one of the palmetum’s waterfalls. Jewel-colored birds scatter into the sky as we approach, interrupted from their drinking and bathing. The water below the falls is so crystal clear I can see the minnows swimming within, their scales a shimmering silver. I open my mouth to comment on how amazing it all is, but Raoul clearly isn’t finished talking about Paul.

He takes me firmly by the shoulders and turns me to face him, grabbing my chin in one hand and tilting my face up. The touch is possessive and a bit intimidating.



“No one, including this man you speak of, is to cause you any trouble, or even look at you the wrong way, you hear me? From this moment forward, if this Paul has it in his mind to treat you with anything but respect, he will be disrespecting *me*. And I promise you that isn’t a line he wants to cross.”

I should tug my face out of his grip and tell him that I don’t need his help, but instead I just swallow hard and nod. When my tongue snakes out to lick my suddenly-dry lips, Raoul focuses in on it like a predator catching sight of his prey.

I’m definitely not thinking of Paul now, seeing the way Raoul is looking at my lips. I’m not thinking of *anything* but the man in front of me, and the way his free hand is grabbing the back of my neck and pulling me forward until our bodies are pressed flush against one another.

I gasp, right before he lowers his mouth to mine, the spark between us igniting in an invisible flash as I sink into him. Raoul’s lips are firm, but he kisses me softly, maybe sensing my inexperience, moving from kissing the corners of my mouth to laying his lips over mine again fully, right before he runs his hot tongue over my bottom lip. Like he’s requesting entrance.

I hesitate for only a second before I open for him, and when his tongue slides into the cavern of my mouth, I’m utterly lost. Moaning, I slide my tongue against his, and it makes Raoul growl. He releases my chin, that hand moving to my lower back and then slowly downwards to cup my ass. He kisses me relentlessly, like I’m something to conquer, and if I thought he made me flustered before, it was just a drop in the bucket compared to now.

My nipples tighten, wetness gathering at my core as if my body is readying for Raoul after just this simple kiss. Truthfully, it’s anything but simple...it’s scorching, and with each sweep of his tongue I find myself becoming more and more helpless to resist. By the time he drags his lips from my mouth to my jaw, all of my weight is leaned into Raoul. Of course, he bears it effortlessly.

The furious passion between us doesn't quite cool, but I can tell Raoul is easing us out of the haze of it, trailing kisses from my jaw to my ear before whispering, "You could drive a man mad, you know that?"

He pulls back gently, hands moving to my waist, and lays one last kiss on my forehead. I have to stand on my own again, and this brings a whimper out of me, causing Raoul to drag my body back against his.

"Don't worry," he rumbles, brushing my hair out of my flushed face while I catch my breath. "This won't be the last time I kiss you, *Tesorina*, far from it."

As I step back, and Raoul takes my hands in his, I can feel something breathing its first breath in the air between the two of us. Something monumental, and coming on like an unstoppable storm. My body is nearly vibrating with need for him, but it's a shock to know that my heart isn't far behind.

With the birds singing around us, and the spray of the waterfall covering us both in the finest mist, I can almost see my future spreading out in front of me, and in all outcomes I am by Raoul's side. I'm terrified, but at the same time, exhilarated.

## **CHAPTER 3**

## RAOUL

I haven't slept, which is why I find myself tucked into a corner booth at Salt and Breeze the moment they open. A server, not my Skye, brings me coffee, and I settle in to begin my wait.

At first, the plan had been to surprise her, maybe with roses or something of the sort, but the more I tossed and turned last night the more I thought about the hesitation in her voice when she talked about her asshole manager. Saying I have a temper is an understatement, and just thinking about Skye being manipulated makes my blood boil in my veins. The animal part of me wants to steal her away, lock her in my villa and keep her there forever, lavishing her with gifts and anything else she could ever desire. In turn, she would carry my children, and we would be happy, far from anyone that would ever dream of putting their hands on my woman.

That animal part isn't the only troublesome aspect of my personality, either. Raoul Damiano, oldest and most ruthless of the Damiano boys, expert marksman and killer of men, wants to just gut the manager like a pig and leave it at that. The world would be a better place without creeps of his nature, and killing him might be the first good deed I've ever done.

In a rare choice, I'm once again dressed down, this time because I just couldn't imagine putting a suit on after so many hours of fraught insomnia. This choice serves me well when Skye walks in, and I make the split-second decision to pull the hood of my sweater over my head so I can watch her in anonymity. It isn't that I want to hide from her, just that the

opportunity to observe her like this is irresistible. I want to know everything about her...I crave any knowledge about her life that I can get. I want to hold those little facts like tiny jewels that no one will ever know but me.

Her presence changes the mood of the place immediately, her coworkers smiling and greeting her gladly. Skye looks around a few times, as if she's nervous about seeing someone, but once it becomes clear it's just her and a few other morning staff members, she relaxes. With her blond hair pulled up on the top of her head, I enjoy the sight of the long line of her neck and the few errant curls that escape to float about her face. I want to tuck them behind her ears, or, more urgently, bury my hand in those curls to hold her head in place while I ravish her mouth.

Wearing the same uniform, shorts and white shirt that the rest of the staff is wearing, Skye still manages to stand out. It's easy for me to watch her between mouthfuls of hot coffee, memorizing her natural, unconscious movements and the way she carries herself. For only being eighteen, she seems sure of herself and confident in the way she has chosen to live her life, and that makes me even more attracted to her.

Last night, after getting back home after our time at the Palmetrum, I had no choice but to go to the shower and jerk myself off, one hand braced on the stone shower wall and the other wrapped around my painfully hard cock. I could taste her still, hear the little sounds she made when I dipped my tongue into her mouth, causing me to come in record time, white ropes of my spend covering my fist. It was only a momentary reprieve, because even afterwards, I was still hard. Nothing will completely sate me until I'm able to sink into Skye's body for the first time and make her mine.

The server taking care of me stops by, but she quickly picks up on the fact that I'm watching Skye. She seems cautious at first, rightfully protective of her young coworker, but when I close out my check and tell her to just keep the change but not stop the refills, tipping her enough to make her eyes nearly bug out of her head, she no longer seems to mind where I focus my attention.

Now that I'm fully unbothered, I return to watching Skye, and therefore miss when the front door of the place opens and another man walks in. In sloppy business casual, with thinning hair and a weasel face, the man makes his way to one of the terminals and appears to clock in. The difference in his dress, and his age, makes it readily obvious that this must be Paul, the creep. I do a double take when this fact clicks together, and I can feel my temper already starting to rise. One hand skims my waistband, but of course, there is no pistol there. That's my old life, this Raoul isn't constantly carrying a firearm. Though now, I might want to rethink picking that habit back up. Even a garrote would be welcome.

It doesn't take him long to zero in on my Skye, and when she sees him, her inner lightness visibly dims, shoulders slumping and head lowering.

Ah, well. I don't like that one fucking bit.

Still, I keep myself anonymous, waiting for the bastard to give me any opportunity to take him out. I have to clench my fists as I watch him verbally scold her for something, but it gets worse when she nods, downtrodden. Paul's expression changes from annoyed to satisfied, and he pats her on the back as if to comfort her.

I'm ready to launch myself out of my seat and tear his head off his shoulders, or at least break his nose with my fist, just because he's touching her, but seeing Skye stiffen and her little shiver of disgust, my vision goes red. She hates this, but he's in a position of power over her, so she just takes it, probably afraid to lose her paycheck. Paul continues to pat her back and talk to her with his head lowered, the words too quiet for me to hear, but then he makes the biggest mistake of his sad, pathetic life. Paul's hand drifts from between Skye's shoulder blades, to her lower back, and finally, cupping one asscheek in his slimy hand.

Everything happens at once, then, and I'm holding on to control by a thread. By control, I mean the self-control I have to exert not to strangle him here and now, because I already have him by the collar of his shirt, holding the little weasel up until his feet dangle.

Skye lets out a cry of surprise, and the spare number of other people in the restaurant gasps. I give Paul a little shake, savoring the terror in his eyes.

“You’re lucky I don’t kill you right here and now, you little fucker,” I growl. “If you ever even *think* about touching my woman again, I’ll rip your balls off and feed them to you, do you understand?”

“Who the fu—” Paul tries to say, but I just shake him harder. In the background, I can distantly hear Skye telling me to stop and pulling at my sleeve, but I can’t let myself be distracted.

“I said, *do you understand?*”

Struggling for breath, Paul can’t get another word out, and just nods instead. I drop him unceremoniously, and he crumples on the ground like used tissue paper. I observe him for a second, weighing my options, before bringing down my fist on the side of his head as he tries to stand. This time, he falls like a sack of flour, dead weight. I briefly wonder if I’ve gone too far with this pathetic little man, my body used to fighting other strong warrior-types, but his chest still rises and falls as he unconsciously sucks in air through his open mouth. Good. Exactly what I wanted.

Now that Paul is sufficiently dealt with, the ringing in my ears that helps me drown out anything else during an altercation dissipates, and Skye’s panic hits me hard.

“What have you done!?” she cries, her voice high and thready, before covering her mouth with her hands in shock. Looking from the man on the ground and then back to me, tears fill her eyes. Not ones of sadness, but ones of uncertainty, and maybe fear.

“Skye,” I start, reaching out for her, trying and failing to shut out the chaos now going on around us as people yelp or pull out their phones, either to record or make calls. Fuck, that’s bad news. I don’t need my face plastered across social media with some bogus headline. Skye jerks away from me, almost buzzing with anxiety.

“Don’t touch me,” she breathes, quietly enough that only I can hear.

This pisses me off, no matter how much I want to comfort her. “You can tell me that, but you can’t tell this asshole to stop groping you?”

Skye sputters, something about needing to keep her job, but my attention is drawn by the first camera click coming from some cellphone. Making the only call I feel is available to me right now, I jerk my hood back up, grab Skye by the upper arm firmly, and start to steer her out of Salt and Breeze.

She fights me...some, at least, but I chalk it up to the adrenaline that is more than likely pumping through her veins. There’s a good chance this is the first bit of violence my little Skye has ever seen with her own two eyes, when for me it’s unremarkable at best. Paul was still breathing, which made him one of my luckier victims.

“Settle, *Tesorina*. It was a necessary evil.”

“You’re crazy!” she hisses, but she’s already starting to wind down, only giving it the most nominal effort to pull her arm out of my grip.

“Yes, that was never in question. But unless you want to have to see me do a lot worse than that, we need to get out of here before someone slaps my face all over social media.”

“Why?”

“Because my enemies and what they and I do to one another make whatever happened back in there look like child’s play. Now, no more questions until we’re home.”

I quickly guide her to my car, a sleek black Mercedes that blends in quite a bit better than the limo I had sent for Skye the day before. I let go of her long enough to open the passenger door, watching her out of my peripheral to make sure she doesn’t bolt, and I’m satisfied to see the way she hesitates, but ultimately stays next to me. She’s already starting to accept that we aren’t meant to be separated, and her tacit acquiescence is more than I could have hoped for.



I take her hand, which is cold and clammy, and help her down into the low vehicle. No one has stopped us yet, and besides a potential snapshot of my retreating back, we are still anonymous as far as I can tell.

Once I've shut the door and it's just the two of us in the Mercedes, I let out a slow breath, grabbing Skye's knee for just a second to assure myself she's really there. Knocking her boss out was such a small thing, but it still threw me right back into the headset of the killer that I once was. That I still am, I guess, and more than anything I'm afraid that part of me will make this beautiful girl that I've only just been able to find after all these years look at me differently. As if I'm not good enough for her...which I'm not, but that doesn't mean I'm willing to give her up, either. I just have to hope that she accepts me. Otherwise, it's going to be a long few weeks of her coming to terms with it.

Skye lets me touch her, but she's rattled, looking around the car as if something is going to jump out and bite her. "I live on Fourth street," she tells me, "In the Blue Fin apartment complex. Building B."

I nod. "I'll send some of my staff to collect your things."

Skye whips her head around to look at me. "What do you mean? You said you were taking me home."

"Ah, no, sweetheart, I said we were *going* home. As in my home." *And yours, too, you just don't know it yet.*

"Oh no, no, no," she laughs nervously, "That is not happening."

"It is, Skye, and there's nothing you can say to convince me otherwise. He may be a sniveling coward, but I sense the possibility of violence and retaliation in that man. It's safer for you to stay with me for some time."

"A possibility of violence!?! You shook him around like a ragdoll!"

"Yes, but whether you want to admit it to yourself or not, he assaulted you first. And from the defeated look that I saw on your face, it wasn't the first time either, was it?"

Skye looks at her feet. “No...”

“And he has your address, right? Because he’s your employer.”

“Yes,” she all but whispers.

“You will not be a victim as long as I’m around,” I promise, temper flaring from her admission. He could have gone to her home any number of nights, watched her through the windows...fuck. “Not ever again.”

My voice is hot and angry, and I see her shrink into herself. I hate that she’s afraid, but if that’s what it takes to get her to fall in line for the time being, then so be it.

My life before Tenerife was a violent, blood-soaked nightmare to say the least, but I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t good at what I did, or that it didn’t allow me to gather an impressive amount of wealth. The villa I purchased is the perfect example of how my career paid off. It’s perched on a low cliff overlooking the sea, a winding staircase carved into the stone wall of the cliff and leading down to a private, sugar sand beach.

As is the style in the area, my sprawling residence is only two stories, but makes up for it with floor space, the half-moon shaped Mediterranean tile terrace taking up more space than most normal apartments. The home itself is as white as snow with a red-brown terracotta tile roof, and gardens of bright flowers and tall palms surround the place. For me, a man that has lived most of my life in the darkness of alleyways and underground hideouts, it’s an almost painfully bright paradise, and I’m still having trouble adjusting, much to the amusement of my local household staff. The hired security I brought with me from Italy, though, has been thrown through just as much of a loop as I have.

As Skye gets her first glimpse of the villa, it’s like she temporarily forgets that she’s pissed off, and she opens the car door herself, stepping out with her mouth slightly agape. I smirk to myself. She’s impressed, which means that the astronomical amount of money I spent on the place was more than worth it.

“You like it?” I ask, sliding up next to her and looping my arm around her waist. Instinctually, she leans into me, but stiffens when she notices what she’s doing.

“It’s lovely, but...you still need to take me home, Raoul. We... we barely know each other! I can’t stay here.”

“Don’t you trust me?” I ask her seriously.

“That’s not fair,” she responds, crossing her arms and looking petulant. If I wasn’t feeling so volcanic, it might be cute. “I trust you. It’s just, you know, it’s not like I can pretend that we actually know one another.”

“Skye, I assure you I know you quite well.” I want to throw her over my shoulder and carry her inside, but I have to calm myself. If I handle her too roughly, I might fuck this all up. “Let’s sit all of that aside and let me give you a tour. What do you think?”

She nibbles at her bottom lip, looking out over the sea and the late morning light twinkling on the waves. I remember how she told me her soul had craved a place like this since she was a child, these still slightly wild utopias, and there’s no denying my villa lets her be that much closer to her heart’s desire. Much more than a little crackerbox of an apartment. When the sun begins to set and the white walls of the house take on the same orange and pink cast as the rest of the world, it can almost seem like the villa is part of the island itself. It’s where she belongs, and she knows it. Syke just has to allow herself to accept it.

“Well...”

“How do you take your coffee, *Tesorina*? I’ll have my housekeeper make you a cup while I show you around.”

“Two sugars and cream.” She closes her eyes and exhales. “Fine. Show me around. But this really isn’t a healthy start to a relationship, though.”

I don’t acknowledge her complaint, taking out my phone to send a quick message to my head of security while she walks up the driveway.

*Raoul: Once the treasure is inside the villa, she doesn't leave without supervision. Understood?*

Trevor, my jack-of-all-trades and most trusted employee, is quick to respond.

*Trevor: Yes, sir. Understood.*

*Raoul: Oh, and tell Mariana to bring us coffee. One black, one two sugars and cream.*

I'll be crawling out of my skin with all the caffeine I've drank today, but running on no sleep means that I'll need every advantage I can get.

Looking up at Skye as she approaches the villa, her heart-shaped ass a magnet for my attention, I know I've got my work cut out for me. For once, though, I'm looking forward to the job.

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THE VILLA, which had been dubbed *Castle on the Rock* by whoever built it decades ago, was full of empty rooms and spaces. I hadn't really paid it much mind before, but seeing the way Skye looks into each bare place with a wistful sadness on her face, I'm glad they are there. It is space for her to fill with the things she loves...hobbies, trinkets, whatever she fancies. In the future, though, it will be space for our children. Our many, many children.

She's going to look so beautiful when she is with child. *My child.*

Filling my mouth with hot coffee, the momentary burn hurts just enough to keep me from getting hard again. I've been half-erect since the second I saw her in my home, and my cock is getting more and more persistent by the second.

It's the pale lipstick mark on her coffee cup, the way her nails tap on the ceramic, and most of all, the way she nibbles and licks her bottom lip when she's deep in thought. I'd sucked that same lip into my mouth just last night, but that's been far too long ago.

Now, Skye is standing at the railing of the terrace, once again staring out at the horizon. She reminds me of a dove, ready to take flight.

“What do you keep looking at, *Tesorina*?”

“I’ve just never seen it all from this angle before. Sometimes when all I do is work and go home to sleep, it’s easy to forget what this place is really like. All I see some weeks are the city streets, and the only evidence that I’m actually in Tenerife is the smell of the ocean.” She sighs. “You’re so lucky to see it this way every day.”

I come up behind her, putting my hands on the railing on either side of her body, bracketing her in while I dip my face down to her ear. “I’ve never seen it more beautiful than it is today, but something is different about the view.”

Skye melts into me with a contented sound. “You’re such a charmer.”

I chuckle, nuzzling her jaw. “You’re the first person to ever use that word to describe me. Usually it’s *nightmare* or *asshole*.”

Skye shivers in my arms, breath coming out of her in a rush when I brush my lips over the shell of her ear. She lets me kiss her cheek, the line of her jaw, and down to her sensitive neck where I can feel her heartbeat thundering under my mouth. I can’t help myself—when she moans softly, I press myself fully against her, the stiff line of my cock pinned against her softness.

Her moan takes on a desperate note, but like a nervous filly, she tries to scurry away from me and out of my grasp. I don’t move my arms, keeping her in place. Skye’s body knows she’s ready, I just need her mind to catch up.

“Easy,” I rumble, once more pushing forward until her body is trapped between the railing and me. My manhood is surging against the zipper of my jeans, almost painfully, as she squirms against it, the feeling of her ass an almost unbearable distraction.

“This is going too fast,” she pants, squealing as I narrow my hold on her, hands sliding up her soft belly as my fingers brush the undersides of her tits. “I—I think you should take me home.”

“Let’s talk about that in a bit. Right now, I have different plans.”

Skye shudders again, but she’s still denying me. “I said take me *home*,”

I didn’t want to have to do it this way, but maybe the pleasure I can give her will ease the divulgence that she’s just not leaving. Not anytime soon, anyway. I caress right under her bra again, fingers meandering over the cups of it and stroking where I can feel her stiff nipples begging to be set free. “This is home for you now.”

Now she gives escaping my grasp an honest effort. I want to continue touching her gently, and hearing her gasping breaths, but she isn’t going to give me that chance. As she bucks, I wrap my arms firmly around her waist and hold her in place, lifting her off the ground when she attempts to kick me in the shin. Her fiery anger turns me on even more.

“Feisty,” I comment, laughing. “What a little spitfire you are.”

“Let me go!” Her rage is there, bright and burning, but it’s the edge of fear that gives me pause.

“You don’t have to be afraid.” I loosen my grasp enough to let her put her feet on the ground. “I will never hurt you, Skye.”

Wiggling until she’s facing me, she stares defiantly into my eyes, red spots on her cheekbones the only indication she’s feeling anything but fury. Pissed that I’m holding her here, touching her like I want, but her traitorous body enjoying it nonetheless.

I know what I have to do to bend her to my will, now.

“How can I not be afraid, when some giant is holding me hostage?” she spits like a cat, “Anyone would be!”

“Then why—” I push my hand between her legs, and she yelps, caught between wanting me and her instinct to flee. “Are you

so hot and wet for me right now, *Tesorina?*”

“I...” she pants. “You’re...”

I’ve had enough. Grabbing her chin with my free hand, I crush my mouth to hers, tongue sweeping into the cavern of her mouth in perfect sync with the heel of my palm pressing against her most private area, *hard*. She squirms, as I expected, and the motions just make the feeling of my hand even firmer. There’s a second or two of fight left in her, readily apparent when she tries to push me away with her small hands on my shoulders, but it doesn’t last long. She’s needy, and that new emotion is too much for even her anger to overcome.

I pillage her mouth like I’ve never kissed anyone before, making sure to mark every centimeter of her sweet lips and mouth as mine. Shoving hands give up, wrapping around my neck as she sways into me, the movements of her hips grinding my hand against her still. She needs that pressure, I know, but I’m going to give her so much more than that.

The beach the terrace overlooks is private, and none of my house staff would dare disturb me when I’m with Skye, not with how shocked they looked to see me with a woman when we arrived. We’re out in the open here, but also completely alone, and I plan on making her come right here and now. Then we’ll see if she’s still so keen to leave.

Skye lets me undo the button of her shorts, pushing them down her legs until she can step out of them. I don’t break the kiss, wanting to keep her firmly in the fog of lust. I back her up slowly against the railing again, hands moving down the lines of her body until I can hook my thumbs in the waistband of her panties. We’re too close together for me to even see them, but I can feel that they are small and lacy, and I regret not being able to remove them with my teeth.

*Fuck, this girl is going to be the death of me.*

When her panties are around her knees, she turns her head away, pulling her mouth from mine. “Wait, Raoul—”

I press a finger against her mouth. “Hush. We’re alone, and I’m going to make you come. That’s it.”

She seems unsure, but I see her glance down at her bare pussy and where my fingers are stroking her skin only inches from it, and she makes a noise of pure want. “No actual sex?” she asks.

“Not today. Just my mouth on your pussy.” Now I slide my fingers over her slit, ever so softly, and her knees go weak.

I don't wait for her approval now, sinking to my knees and holding her firmly with my hands on her thighs. My mouth is watering at the scent of her need filling the air when I coax her legs further apart, so she's bracing herself with her hands on the railing with her hips canted towards me. Skye is swollen with need and about to jump out of her skin with the torrent of emotions no doubt running through her at this moment. It's time for me to clear her mind of everything except *me*.

I could explore her with my fingers first, but something tells me she's going to need a lighter touch. Leaning my head forward, I let my tongue part her lips, swirling it around her clit that is ready and waiting for me as soon as I do. The noise she makes is the most incredible thing I've ever heard, as if she's never even imagined a sensation like this before.

There is no choice but to take it slowly, holding her in place and supporting a good portion of her weight with my hands on her thighs as I tongue every bit of her pussy, as patient as any man has ever been. When I lick deep into her, where my cock is desperate to be, Skye threads her fingers through my hair and tugs desperately.

“Oh my God,” she groans. “Raoul, *please*.”

I repeat the motion a few more times, and am rewarded by her fingernails scraping against my scalp. She gets wetter and wetter for me, the taste of her coating my tongue, sharp and sweet all at once.

It isn't until I move back to her now-engorged clit that I feel the change in her body. Skye twitches with each lick, but when I wrap my lips around it and suck her entire body shudders, muscles seizing as her hands in my hair close into fists.



So that's what is going to make her come, then. Me sucking on her clit.

I build her up to it, licking gently between sucking, but as she begins to thrust against me I put that pressure on her longer and longer. At this point she's nearly sobbing my name, oblivious to the fact that we're out in broad daylight. Her entire world has zeroed into my mouth on her pussy, just like I had planned.

What I hadn't planned was how fucking hard I would be, but there was nothing to do about that now.

I think about sinking my fingers deep into her pussy, but I don't want to overwhelm her, and it's crystal clear Skye is about to come for me. Moving my hands to her asscheeks, I hold her as still as I can and suckle her relentlessly. No more gentle licks or tongue swirls, just a furious push towards her climax. She's almost shaking out of my grip, frantic with how close she is, but there's no way in hell I'm letting up now.

My persistence is awarded when she goes stiff, head thrown back and face towards the sky as she cries out. Skye comes hard, riding my face with abandon as she nearly soaks me, but her pleasure is the most incredible thing I've ever tasted. Growling against her pussy as she rides out the last of her climax, I'm more positive than ever that I can never let her go.

## CHAPTER 4

**R**aoul helps me get dressed, which is a good thing since my mind is fuzzy and I'm pretty sure I'm not in control of my body anymore, either.

What just happened between us...what he just did to me...I'm absolutely spent, and any objections I had for him are long gone. How can I complain when he just ate me out on his patio and gave me the most intense orgasm of my entire life?

Not that I have much experience. All I've ever done before is touch myself discreetly beneath the covers, occasionally bringing myself to a small, unsatisfying climax. But even in my inexperience, I know that what just happened between us was special. Out of this world, even. I feel like a changed woman.

When he notices how out of it I am, Raoul laughs softly and sweeps me up into his arms. I'm happy to bury my face in his chest as he carries me to what I can only guess is his bedroom, breathing in the masculine scent of him and taking comfort in how gentle he is with me. Raoul doesn't pressure me to go any further, which makes him all that much easier to trust.

From what I've seen thus far, his house is tastefully decorated, but his bedroom is the first place I've seen that screams *Raoul's Home*, to me. There are pictures on the wall of what I assume is family, some black and white and tattered with age. In the corner, there is an old classical guitar leaning on a stand, and a pile of vinyl albums next to a vintage record player. The walls are painted a dark, forest green, with the floors an

equally dark cherry wood, and a huge king-sized bed occupying the center of the room. His bedding is, of course, black, made from shimmering silk and looking utterly luxurious. Thoughts of what we might do on those sheets make me feel heated all over again. As he sits me on the edge of it, I see the blatantly obvious bulge in the front of his pants...I'm getting an idea of how to reward him for his good behavior.

I have to put everything else out of my mind if I'm going to go through with it, though. Everything from earlier...the fight, the insistence on keeping me in his home, all of it. It might be my naivety speaking, or maybe I'm just enjoying myself a little too much, because any need to escape Raoul has faded into warm, sugary contentment.

Raoul, though, is anything but content, no matter how patient he is brushing my hair out of my face and smiling down at me.

"How was that?" he asks. "Are you feeling alright?"

"Amazing," I admit, getting up the courage to touch him the way he deserves. "But what about you?"

"You letting me taste you was the greatest gift I've ever been given, *Tesorina*. I am happy."

Reaching out with hands that are steadier than they have any right to be, I put them on his chiseled upper legs, slowly moving them towards the center, where his cock is ready to burst through the denim. "Something tells me that you could use some relief, too,"

"Ah, Skye," he smiles wickedly down at me. "I can take care of myself later. Just get some rest. You've had an eventful day."

"So have you," I point out, "Raoul, I've never done this before, but I want to make you feel good just like you did for me."

He inhales sharply through his nose, jaw clenched. "If you say those kinds of things to me, I'm not going to be able to resist."

"I don't want you to." I'm working the button of his jeans open now, tugging them down when it pops open.

Looking up, I can tell he's hanging on by a thread. I'm nervous, but I really, *really* want to do this. All the talk about taking me home can be dealt with later.

The truth is, after I came, it was like my thoughts settled into place for the first time since the initial confrontation back at Salt and Breeze. There was no chaotic feeling, no panicked jumble of ideas, and now that I can see everything with a clear outlook, I can admit that Raoul did something amazing for me. He protected me from Paul, and made me realize I had been letting myself be a victim just to keep a stupid restaurant job. All that, plus the amazing oral sex, makes me want to thank him in any way possible. The details of what is happening between us can wait. Right now, what he needs is staring me right in the face.

"I want this, Raoul," I tell him. "Just be patient with me."

"You've got every ounce of time and patience in me, Skye, I assure you."

Seeing the outline of his manhood through his boxer briefs now that his pants are at his ankles makes me even more excited. Excited, and just a little bit afraid. He's bigger than I could have ever guessed, and I'm infinitely glad we aren't talking about intercourse right now. I just don't know if I'll ever be able to take him inside of me like that, not with how long and thick he is.

*Yes we can*, my needy inner thoughts inform me, *We can take it. Soon.*

Again, that's a problem for another time. Now, it's time for me to make Raoul see stars, just like he did for me.

Before I can lose my nerve, I jerk his briefs down in one movement. It's not the most sensual of undressings, but Raoul doesn't seem to mind, sucking in a breath through his teeth as his cock is *finally* able to spring free.

His skin there is the same even bronze as the rest of him, darker and the tip leaking a single drop of precum. Raoul already lets off heat like a forge, but when I wrap a tentative hand around the base of his member, it's somehow even hotter

than the rest of him. With soft skin and the intoxicating scent of him even stronger than ever, I get a rush of confidence like never before.

I dart my tongue out and lick that drop of precum off of the head, and Raoul gives me an honest-to-God groan. When I look up, he's watching me, eyes narrowed and expression as controlled as he can possibly manage. Even now he wants to be careful with me, and this fact makes me feel ridiculously affectionate towards the giant man. Lover, and fighter, Raoul is fascinating to me.

I lick the head of his cock again, going slower this time, while my hand still holds his at the base. I take my time exploring his length with my mouth and fingers, stroking him like I imagine he might touch himself, and licking long lines up the shaft to twirl around the top. I watch his face when I can, and the longer I go, the more he has to close his eyes and turn his face up to the ceiling to maintain his ironclad control. Too bad for him, I want him to lose it.

I take as much of him as I can in my mouth, pulling him out slowly before starting again. He's too big to swallow whole, but I use my hand to pump him where my mouth can't manage, and from the strained noises he's making and the way his legs lock in place, I'm doing just fine.

When I add a tongue swirl on the head of his cock to each of my passes, one hand shoots down and fists in my hair. For a split second it's painful, but Raoul realizes right away and lets up. I don't mind, honestly. In fact, knowing that I affect him so is addicting.

The motions, the feeling of him hitting the back of my throat, and the salty taste of his skin all blend together until I'm almost in a dreamlike state as I suck his cock. I feel like I can go on forever in this moment, but it isn't too long until his grip tightens and his hips begin to twitch as if he's fighting the urge to fuck my mouth.

"I'm going to come so hard," he grits out between his teeth, "So if you don't want to swallow it all I suggest you take that gorgeous fucking mouth off me, Skye,"

I shake my head quickly, mouth too full to speak. Once he knows I want him to spill himself down my throat, it's over. Raoul does thrust into my mouth now, hand in my hair holding my head still while he slides in and out, in and out, never going too deep, but when he freezes, he jerks my head forward until he's filling my mouth and throat to the point I can barely stand it. Breathing carefully through my nose, I let him explode, swallowing his cum over and over. Above me, he curses, eyes screwed shut and thighs quivering, until the curses melt into praises for me, and his grip finally relaxes.

Then, he's sitting on the bed next to me, naked from the waist down, holding my face in his hands like some precious treasure and kissing me over and over. At first I'm shocked he's not bothered by the taste of his own spend in my mouth, but it's all too easy to let my thoughts drift while he dotes on me.

"You honor me, *Tesorina*," he mumbles against my lips. "I will remember this forever,"

The adrenaline and lust bombs that have occupied my day thus far are hitting me full force now, and exhaustion is creeping at the edge of my consciousness. Combined with the sweet, gentle way Raoul is kissing and caresses me, I can feel my eyelids getting heavy.

"Rest with me," Raoul says, standing up enough to pull just his briefs back on. "The day will still be here for us afterwards."

"Okay..." I agree. I unbutton and kick off my shorts, matching my lover, and crawl up into the bed beside him.

It's still very much the middle of the day, but for some reason, lounging in bed with Raoul, sexually satisfied, while the sun is still high in the sky, feels wonderful. Like a vacation away from reality.

He pulls me into his arms, our legs twining together, murmuring sweet nothings to me in Italian as I drift off. Nothing about this day makes sense, but at the same time, it's perfect.

---

I'M USUALLY NOT much of a midday napper, but apparently violence and oral sex takes it out of me. When I wake up, it's after 7 p.m., and I'm the only one in the enormous bed. I reach over, bleary-eyed, but Raoul's side isn't even warm anymore. How strange.

I slide across the bed and stand, feet hitting the wooden floor. As I rise, I can feel the sensual muscle ache in the middle of my body, a gift from the mind-altering orgasm I have been given, and it lessens my annoyance at being left alone. Raoul seems like a busy man, maybe he has work to do. Whether that work is legal or not, I'm still not sure. But that's none of my business at the moment.

His ease with fighting, coupled with the oddly vague way he had spoken about his past at the Palmetum had tipped me off that maybe Raoul was some sort of mobster or retired gun runner, but he's told me again and again that he's retired. So... what does it even matter, at this point? Sure, the abduction and then seduction isn't really the epitome of appropriate early dating behavior, but something tells me Raoul is a man out of time. Nothing is normal with this gorgeous, dangerous man.

I find my purse dropped by the bedroom door. I had powered my phone off before going into work, and it's still off when I fish it out of my bag. I shudder thinking about the messages and missed calls that await me, but there's no getting out of it. I power it on, walking aimlessly through the villa in search of Raoul, until I'm out on the terrace. Alone.

Once fully on, my phone explodes in a cacophony of texts and alerts. Shockingly though, only once voicemail, and I bet I already know who it's from. I tap the screen, putting it on speaker, and listen to Paul's message, feeling nauseous.

*Skye, I've got a lot of things to say to you, and you're lucky I don't press charges on you as an accomplice. I'm concussed, not that you care, but I promise you that I'll find out where that Neanderthal is hiding you, and when I do, he'll be*



*arrested and you and I will have a real talk, face to face. You don't get to be cocktease to me and then just bolt when you find someone bigger and richer. Obviously you're fired, but if you play nice I might still let you have your last check. See you soon.*

Revulsion pours over me. I save the message to show Raoul, even more determined to find him now.

I finally do as I'm standing at the top of the staircase that leads to the main floor right in front of the home's entrance. He's back in a white button up shirt and black pants, shirtsleeves rolled up, but my eyes are immediately drawn to the holstered handgun on his hip. I stare at it so long that it takes me some time to digest what I'm looking at.

Trevor, the driver, as well as a few other employees are bringing in bins of familiar looking things. Clothes, shoes, books, and all of the other obvious things that I might need brought over from my apartment are being stacked inside the front door, all overseen by Raoul.

He's moving me in. Oh, God.

"Raoul," I yell, and he looks up at me, a satisfied smile on his face. He looks accomplished. "This--how--?"

"Don't worry, *Tesorina*, we can talk more later. For right now, though, I just want you to be comfortable and have your things while I keep you safe here."

I think about the voicemail, Paul's hand groping me, and my address on my paperwork back at Salt and Breeze. Stomach rolling, I look down at Raoul again, strong and safe, and know staying here is the safest thing I can do for myself, as crazy as it seems.

"Okay," I say tentatively. "Thank you."

"Anything for you, Skye. Anything at all."

## CHAPTER 5

I know my little treasure is chafing at her bonds, and as necessary as it is for her to stay with me, I still want her to be happy while doing so. I've never been in a serious relationship, but my need to keep Skye happy is as natural as the tides themselves. Still, it becomes clear I have a lot to learn.

After our first sexual encounter, she needed some time to recover, which I gladly gave her. Skye soaks long hours in the marble bathtub, sometimes taking a book in to read, her blond curls piled on top of her head. Other days, she insists on walking down to the beach hand in hand so she can don her rather conservative one piece and swim, finding that little bit of freedom in the work her muscles put in. She never wants to come to my personal gym I frequent every morning, tucked into a small corner of the first floor, preferring this exercise under the blue sky.

Some days she lets me lick the salt from her skin right there on the sand, her bathing suit peeled off and my head between her thighs within minutes. Other times she's famished, and we share meals together on the terrace, her favorite place in the house. Skye asks about going home here and there, but I think we both know it isn't happening. Especially not after she showed me the voicemail her boss had left her. I haven't felt closer to murder in years than I did listening to that slimy voice come through her phone speakers.

It doesn't help that there is a strange vehicle that's been observed driving by the villa at the same time every night,

slowing each time as if the driver is looking for something. When I show Skye the security footage of it, she admits it looks like her manager's car, but it's too dark to say for sure.

Paul has a week, maybe two, to stop. After that, he's gone. It's as simple as that.

Our days blur sometimes, between exploring the island together and coming home to explore each other more, but it never goes farther than oral sex. Skye will sometimes drive me to the point of madness with her mouth, but we both want more from each other. It just hasn't happened yet.

Then, the days blur into weeks. She's been living here for a little over two weeks when I wake up, harder than I've ever been in my entire life, and know that today has to be the day. Either Skye tells me why we haven't made love yet, or we finally take that step. It's time.

I tell my housekeeper Mariana to set up a picnic on my private beach for us, Skye's favorite spot. My lovely partner is a romantic, and I know she will be charmed. Anything I can do to make her smile is worth it.

I might be losing my edge. But it is what it is, and here in Tenerife, it's a new life for me.

That afternoon, I gift her with a white string bikini, and tell her to wear it under whichever dress she chooses for date night. She blushes, looking at how diminutive it is, but agrees. Inside a velvet box, there is also the bracelet I've commissioned for her. I'm as still as a statue as she opens it, knowing her reception could swing either way. Taking the silver band slowly out, she rotates it in her hand, a line of confusion between her brows.

“Property of Raoul?” she asks, unsure. “Do you really want me to wear this?”

“I want the world to know you belong to me. It will bring me great pleasure if you wear it for me.

What I don't tell her is that there is no way she'll be going out alone without it. I know it's controlling, and maybe even out

of line, but I have to have it this way. My masculine tendencies will allow nothing else.

She nibbles her lip apprehensively, but after looking the cuff over a few more times, and then back at me, she slips it over her wrist with a shy smile. I want to pound my chest and yell in triumph.

When she arrives at the top of the stairs leading down to the ocean for our date, where I'm waiting on her, she's a vision in red florals. My mouth is watering imagining what is waiting for me underneath.

"This bathing suit is completely transparent, for your information," she tells me quietly, linking her arm through mine.

"Oh, I'm very aware," I tease.

I want to touch her everywhere already, but I settle for holding the back of her neck while we walk.

The oversized blanket stretched across the sand is full of finger foods that we feed one another while talking about anything and everything. The sunset on the water is the perfect backdrop as she climbs into my lap and we sip champagne from each other's lips.

Finally, we strip down to our swimwear, Skye's nipples hard and visible through the white triangles of her suit. She takes some time to appreciate my skin tight swim briefs, stroking me through the fabric until I'm fully erect before diving into the water with a mischievous laugh.

I catch her easily, grabbing her around the waist as she squeals, the waves crashing around us. She pretends to fight, but eventually rotates in my arms, wrapping her legs around me. The mood of the night changes, then, as she rubs up against me.

When I kiss her, she tastes of salt and champagne. The sea is calm tonight, and it lets us kiss leisurely, lips and tongues going everywhere that can be reached. Skye squirms against me, her soft pussy almost irresistible on my cock, just our thin suits separating us.

I kiss the spot under her ear that makes her shiver, and whisper, “Let me make love to you tonight.”

She freezes in my arms, pulling away enough that she can look at me. “I have to tell you something, Raoul. It isn’t that I haven’t wanted us to...go all the way, you know? It’s just... I’m a virgin.”

The confession hits me hard, and I’m shaken. It isn’t that I didn’t suspect, but hearing that no other man has had her, that I will be her first, is the most incredible gift I have ever been given. Skye will truly be mine, and mine only. But I will have to be very, very careful with my little treasure, especially with how nervous she is in my arms right now,

I rub my nose against her, and nip her bottom lip gently. “You have no idea how happy that makes me, *Tesorina*.”

“Really?” she asks, surprised. “I thought you wouldn’t want all that extra nonsense, you know, dealing with someone who has no idea what they’re doing.”

I push my hips against her, sharpening our contact, and she gasps. “Your body will know, Skye, and you have already pleased me so much. If you will have me as your first, it will be the greatest honor of my life.”

“Oh, Raoul,” she snuffles, overcome.

“My only regret is that I’m not a virgin as well, but maybe it will give you some solace that I haven’t been with anyone since I was twenty-two,” Skye sucks in a surprised breath, but I continue, “Sex felt empty to me without love, and I’ve known since I was a young man that there would be one woman for me only. One great love, Skye, and here you are. I’ve been waiting all these years for you.”

Getting emotional, she buries her face in my neck for a few moments, taking even breaths as she collects herself. Finally, she lifts her beautiful, now red-splotchy face, her eyes the same color as the ocean around us. “I want you to be my first. Tonight.”

I answer her with a searing kiss, everything in me screaming out in triumph. She’s mine. *Mine*.

## CHAPTER 6

**B**oth of us are enveloped by this trance, everything else obscured by our need for one another. There is no hurry...this villa is a place outside of time for us, and it's all ours.

Raoul laces his fingers through mine as we climb the stairs up the cliffside, through the terrace door, and into his bedroom. The fact that we're dripping seawater behind us like a trail doesn't matter, and neither does the fact that our things have been left on the sandy beach. Something important, monumental even, is on the horizon for us now, and there is no going back.

In the ensuite bathroom, Raoul cranks on the shower, steam filling the room in no time. The tile floor is heated, which is lovely as the cold begins to set into my bones. I take a quick look around as Raoul readies our shower, the main feature an enormous jacuzzi tub, big enough for both of us, and I look forward to exploring its possibilities more later. The shower is made from smooth stone in shades of gray and brown, with a rainfall showerhead in the center pouring water down.

Once he's satisfied with the temperature, Raoul turns around slowly. His swim trunks, which had already been tight and leaving little to the imagination, are now soaked to his body and hanging low on his hips. I want to lick the vee of his hip bones.

He holds my eyes with his as he hooks his thumbs in his waistband and removes them. Half erect already, his cock



swells the longer I look at it, and it's hard to pull my eyes away. When I look back up at his face, he's smiling, both smugly but with a touch of sweetness. Raoul crooks a finger towards me, and I go wordlessly.

I hold my arms above my head, back arched, while he undoes the ties of my bikini. First, the top falls to the tile floor, and Raoul is momentarily distracted by my bare breasts, plumping them with his hands and grazing my nipples with thumbs. Once they are pebbled and I'm breathing hard, he moves to the strings on my bottoms. In seconds, they're gone too, and it's my ass he's squeezing now.

I'm not in denial that I'm curvier than most girls my age and height, and while I am sometime self-conscious about how big my tits are or the way my ass jiggles when I run, I want to sing my curve's praises now, because Raoul worships them with a single-minded purpose.

We both move into the shower, washing the salt from each other's skin and hair with lazy movements, spending more time kissing and caressing than anything else. Raoul spends an excessive amount of time licking and sucking my nipples as he holds me in place, rasping his stubbled jaw over the sensitive peaks before soothing the ache with his tongue again. It's the first time he's spent time on my breasts, and I'm surprised at how powerful the pleasure from it is. Each touch coils in my belly like a wire that's connected straight to my core.

When I'm gasping for air, he relents, standing straight again and pulling me to him. His cock is an iron brand against my stomach, causing my pussy to clench in anticipation. I'm nervous, maybe even scared, but I want this. So, so much.

Once we're clean, Raoul and I exit the showers, and he dries me with a soft, fluffy towel before I do the same for him. It gives me another chance to appreciate his body...long, muscled legs, broad chest dusted with black hair, chiseled abs and the thickest arms I've ever seen. He's worth exploring, but he and I are both anxious for what comes next. I feel warm, limber, and ready.

Raoul leads me by the hand to the bedroom, motioning for me to sit. I do, and to my surprise, he lowers to his knees, brushing my wet hair from my shoulders and cupping my face in his hands. I'm quickly learning it's what he does when he wants to be sincere, and it makes my heart squeeze in my chest.

*"Tesorina, are you sure you want this? I—"* he licks his lips and looks away, trying to find the right words. *"I have no intention of letting you go. I'm not a strong enough man for that. But I still feel like I don't deserve this gift you're prepared to give me."*

This time I cup his jaw with one of my hands too, and he nuzzles it, planting a kiss on my palm. *"I want to give it to you,"* I tell him, voice steady. *"I'm ready."*

*"Then I will make it everything you could ever dream of, Skye. I promise you."*

*"I believe you,"* I breathe.

Hooking one leg over his shoulder, Raoul kisses a line from the hollow of my ankle to the apex of my thighs. When he swipes his tongue over my slit, I shudder, but start to protest. I want to come with him inside of me.

*"I have to ready you, love. Just relax,"* he assures me.

Bracing myself with my hands behind me, I do as he says, letting the tension flow out of my body just as he begins to lick me. Raoul's tongue dips and swirls into every inch of me before zeroing in on my clit. It feels so good, I'm afraid I'll come before I can stop myself, the pleasure of it washing over me before settling into my core, winding tighter and tighter.

This time, though, I feel one of his fingers circling my channel, dipping in by slow degrees. It's so tight, tighter than I thought it would be, and I hiss as he pushes the finger slowly inside. It doesn't hurt, per se, but the pressure is unpleasant. He eases it by sucking on my clit, just the way I like, before he starts to add another finger.

*"Raoul—"* I warn him.

*"Trust me,"* he cuts me off.

Slowly, the second finger joins the first, until I'm fuller than I've ever been. The unpleasant feeling fades by slow degrees, just as he starts pumping them in and out in an imitation of what's to come. The fullness adds an entirely new degree to how good it all feels, and my legs start to shake uncontrollably.

I look down at the erotic sight, but I'm distracted by the fact he's only two knuckles deep in me. I feel a shiver of trepidation, right before—

“I'm sorry, Skye,” he murmurs against my clit, sucking hard then just as he pushes his fingers in all the way and makes a scissoring motion inside of me, snapping something I didn't even know was there.

I cry out in pain, the sensation like a needle jabbed into me, but Raoul gives it his all to erase the pain right away. He sucks and licks with abandon, fingers crooking inside me until the pain is overshadowed by a deep, unnamable pleasure unlike anything thus far. Hurt disappears, and only pleasure remains.

Once I start thrusting into him, Raoul pulls away, much to my displeasure. I know I want to come with him inside of me, but I was *so close* that I was ready to change my mind. I start to complain, but he crawls over me, kissing my mouth before the words can escape. I'm keyed up, ready to explode like a ticking time bomb, so this is no gentle, loving kiss, but a wordless declaration of my want and need for him. Right. Now.

Raoul's self-control is admirable, but I can tell this is all getting to him, too. He's as hard as steel against my leg, and every time he moves or shifts even slightly he sucks in a breath, sensitive beyond measure. Still, he's slow with me, taking my wrists in his hands and pinning them above my head as he ravages my mouth and neck before dipping his head to my nipples again. It's exquisite torture.

It's all just a distraction, though, because slowly, Raoul has been positioning the thick, blunt head of his cock right outside the mouth of my pussy. I feel it part the lips just as Raoul takes one of my legs and wraps it around his waist.

Now, all the kisses and caresses have paused so we can look into each other's eyes as he fills me up for the first time. Raoul's eyes, usually amber-brown, are nearly black with lust.

"Just tell me if you want to stop," he murmurs, his arms now on the bed next to my head so he can lean in close. It bends me nearly in half, but something tells me the angle might help ease what is to come.

Raoul pushes into me inch by inch, my inner walls spasming and resisting such a large intrusion. I feel myself stretching to accommodate him, but every time I think I'm about to fall into pain, I loosen just enough to take more and more of him. It's so much, so intense, that I can barely breathe, yet he's still not fully in.

Whimpering, I toss my head side to side. The stretching almost has me wanting to stop, but I can take it. For Raoul, I can take it.

Finally, after what feels like ages, he's seated fully inside of me, his hips bumping against mine. His cock is all the way in my pussy. I'm stunned.

"I'm in you, *Tesorina*," he rasps in my ear, "A part of you,"

My body is telling me that I need something, but it's all so new to me. "I think I need you to move now," I tell him, hands gripping his shoulders so hard I'm afraid it will leave marks.

It must be exactly what he wants to her, pulling out with equal slowness and then filling me again. A wave of sensation shudders through me as his cock presses against my inner walls, my back arching. Raoul's smile is triumphant.

He fucks me with paced, even thrusts, never hurrying. Any uncomfortableness from earlier eases up, and before long, it's all pleasure. Once I start meeting him thrust for thrust, he picks up the pace, and fucks me in earnest.

And *it's everything*. Stroke by stroke he builds my orgasm, winding that cord in my belly tighter and tighter each time he hits that secret spot inside of me. The climax is going to be so intense that I fear it almost as much as I crave it. Now I have the time to touch him like I've wanted to, stroking his hard

chest as he fills me over and over, fingers sliding down his flexed arms and then back again.

He nearly sings my praises, telling me over and over again how beautiful I am, how I'm such a good girl for taking all of his cock, but after some time he grows quiet. At the same time, he starts to tense under my fingers. He's close to coming, and that thought alone nearly sends me over the edge.

Hiking my other leg over his other shoulder, Raoul is now fucking me with a single minded intensity. At this angle, the head of his cock is hitting my g-spot with perfect precision each time, and I'm hurling towards my own orgasm.

*Oh my God, he's going to come inside of me.*

The wire inside me snaps like it's a barely controlled earthquake the way it tears through me, pleasure filling me from the tips of my fingers to my toes, all centering in on where Raoul's cock is still moving in and out of me. Feeling me lose control has Raoul doing the same, and he pushes into me almost harshly three more times before he stills with a drawn out moan, and I'm feeling the warm rush of his cum filling me deep, deep inside. The mental image has the aftershocks of my orgasm hitting me hard, and I'm almost sobbing with how good it feels. I'm flying.

Once we both have our feet back on the ground, Raoul pulls out of me gently, hissing as he does so, before collapsing beside me and pulling me to him, my back to his front and my ass perfectly fitted against him.

"How do you feel, *Tesorina*?" he asks, grazing his lips over the shell of my ear.

"A little sore," I admit. "Really tired. Satisfied."

He chuckles, "I'm sorry you are sore. That's to be expected. Would you like me to run you a hot bath?"

I almost groan, it sounds so exquisite, even though we have just showered. Combined with the ocean and all my swimming, I might turn into a mermaid soon. "That sounds incredible."

He kisses the back of my neck, going to rise, but a question that has been bouncing around in my mind comes to the forefront of my mind without warning. I grab his hand and pull him close to me again, body to body.

“Raoul, what does *Tesorina* mean? I keep forgetting to ask.”

Raoul’s voice is tender and full of affection. “It means ‘little treasure’ in Italian. Which you are to me.”

I feel like I’m glowing from the inside out with happiness. “Oh. I like that.”

## CHAPTER 7

**I**t all happened so fast, that I'm still not sure how to explain what happened.

Yesterday, I had asked to go to the store to pick up some new clothing. Some of my things were getting tight, probably from all the delicious Italian food, and I was hoping Raoul would let Trevor drive me to buy a few new things while he took care of some family matters over the phone. He had agreed, distractedly, and I had gathered my things to go.

Our lives had been quiet, no hide or hair seen from Paul in over a month now, which may be why what happened was so shocking. I'm still reeling, standing here in the dark of my old apartment, with Raoul glowering at me from the doorway.

On the way to the boutique, it all occurred in a flash. One second, we're driving, and the next, something slams into the back of the car and spins us, hard.

All of Raoul's cars are heavy with extra security measures, so the wheels never left the ground, but even the huge sedan we were in was battered by the other car clipping us in the side. We skidded across the pavement, and I was thrown against the window, my hands instinctively going to cover my belly as if I was...

*Oh my God, I had thought in that brief chaotic spin, Could I be pregnant?*

Still crushed against the side of the car by gravity alone, my brain offered up such a bizarre thought for such a moment. My period was two weeks late.



We were crashing, and I could possibly be pregnant. I had gripped my stomach even harder, full of fear.

When the sedan finally came to a stop, we were still in one piece, only shaken from the force of it all. It was just Trevor and I, and he immediately whipped around to me.

“SKYE! Are you alright!? I don’t—”

Then, there was a pounding on my window. Shaking like a leaf, I turned, the tint so dark it was hard to make out the figure on the other side, but the voice was unmistakable. Paul.

“I know you’re in there, Skye!” he yelled. “I followed you from that motherfucker’s house! You owe me a face to face conversation you little—”

Then, like an avenging angel, Trevor was out of the car and struggling with Paul. It was still so hard to see, and I was crying in heaving sobs, but it lasted only seconds before two shots rang out in the air.

Trevor climbed back into the driver’s seat, a pistol in his hand, jaw clenched. “I fucking missed. That bastard ran away. Coward!”

I remember very little from then on out. I wasn’t hurt, but when Raoul arrived only moments later, looking wild, he insisted I be checked over by the paramedic that had arrived on scene. I let it all happen, my mind busy with only two thoughts.

Paul. A baby.

Still utterly shaken, I stayed glued to Raoul for the entire day as he made call after call. I had no idea who I spoke to, overwhelmed with that one question still at the front of my mind.

*Am I pregnant?*

Raoul made slow, gentle love to me that night, and I fell asleep clinging tightly to him, my only lifeline in this storm. For the first time, I missed my parents, Washington, and the places I knew so well.

It's why when I awoke that morning to the house completely empty besides Mariana and the rest of the staff, I stayed in bed and had my breakfast brought to me. I had planned on calling my mother, but then a message came through from an older coworker, and it sent my world spinning once more, just like the accident.

*"Skye, turn on the news! They found Paul dead in his pool this morning!"*

I didn't need to turn the news on, because I already knew deep in my heart what had happened. Everything went white, and then I was bolting across the bedroom to the toilet, vomiting.

Raoul had killed him. I knew it without hesitation. Raoul murdered Paul.

It had been only a few hours ago when I crammed everything I could into my small backpack, and fled out to the terrace and down the steps to the private beach. I needed to breathe, needed to be somewhere that didn't have Raoul written all over every inch of it, and in my wild mind I knew my old apartment was my only option.

Santa Cruz wasn't too big of a city, and it didn't take me long to get there on foot, but I was exhausted by the time I made it. The place looked the same as it had over a month ago when I last saw it, just emptier of the things Raoul had packed up for me. I had decorated it cheaply, but the white walls and scattered paintings were still comfortingly familiar.

I locked the door, safe for the moment, and with tears streaming down my face, dropped my bag and curled up on the old plaid couch. Blessedly alone, I cover my face with my hands, and weep. What am I going to do?

I don't know when I fell asleep there, only that I have just been woken up by the sound of metal scraping across the lock of my front door. It's a small apartment, and bolting up from the couch, I can see the knob turning. Then, the deadbolt flips, and it opens.

I start to scream, terrified, but it cuts off when the tall, dark figure silhouetted in the doorway steps forward and shuts the

door behind him, throwing his lock pick kit to the floor. Raoul.

We stare at each other. A standoff, almost. My head is clearer than it has been since the car crash, and it's infinitely clear to me that I have fucked up big time. Raoul's nostrils are flared, and his hands clenched into fists.

"Skye," he growls, "What could you possibly gain now, running away from me?"

"I wasn't, Raoul," I insist, knowing that I'm in trouble. His cuff weighs heavy on my wrist. "My mind is just a mess. I need to be alone."

"Do you know," he begins stalking towards me, "How I felt learning that you had disappeared? After yesterday?" His voice is getting louder, but he still manages to keep it controlled. "I trusted you not to run. That's why I didn't have security watching you constantly anymore. We've lived together for over a month now, and today is the day you choose to run from me? The day after I almost lost you?"

I've never seen him so emotional, and it's clear he doesn't like being this way, tuning his head and sucking in deep breaths to calm himself.

"We can go home," I say, standing and cautiously approaching him, wanting to comfort him even as my emotions are spiraling. "Let's just go."

"Bend over the arm of the couch. Arms out in front of you and hands together."

A lance of fear spikes through me. "W-what? Why?"

Raoul's face is like stone, his expression unreadable. "You made a promise to stay with me. To obey me. For your own safety, Skye, and you've already betrayed me."

"Betrayed!?" I yell. "All I did was come back to my own apartment!" I can feel myself getting worked up, so I breathe slowly to try and get myself under control. "I just needed some space."

"You forfeited that option."

“A verbal promise right after something dangerous, when my adrenaline was up, does not mean you control me Raoul.”

He stalks towards me, face still unmoving. “Why don’t you tell me the real reason you ran, Skye?”

Tears fill my eyes, unbidden, and I turn my face away from him. I’ve told myself over and over that I won’t mention it, won’t ask for the truth, because once I know for sure there is no taking it back. But what choice do I have now?

“You killed him, didn’t you? That night.” The tears start to roll down my face. “A friend messaged me this morning and said Paul was found dead. It can’t be a coincidence that yesterday was when he escalated things with me, and then he’s murdered!”

Raoul searches my face, trying to see how exactly I’m going to react. In reality, I don’t know how I feel about it all. By now, I know Raoul had a violent life before me, but I’ve been hoping that he’s different now. Killing Paul meant he’s still capable of those terrible things, but it’s not like I feel sorrow that my old boss died. And, well, I love Raoul, deep in my soul, even if we haven’t said the words out loud yet.

Finally, he shrugs one massive shoulder. “Yes. He had the potential to hurt you, or even kill you, and that was an unacceptable risk to me. Even if he had given up on you, he certainly would have done the same to another woman, and assholes like that just continue to escalate. I have no doubt he would have hurt someone gravely, and I’m not sorry I took him out of this world. It’s a better place for it.”

So there. It’s out in the open and painfully real. I let the confession roll through me and settle into my bones, waiting to see how it will change my feeling towards Raoul now that I know he’s killed for me. Standing in front of me in one of his many perfectly cut suits, arms crossed and expression closed off, it isn’t hard to imagine telling him that I’m done...that it’s over. Yet, when I picture it, my stomach drops and my heart squeezes in my chest. I don’t want him to leave. I want to let myself be wrapped in his arms. Even after his confession, I’m not scared of Raoul. He will never hurt me, ever.

Then...there's the secret I hold beneath my ribs, too new to even speak of yet. But it's there, glowing, alive, and precious inside of me. I want to tell him, but even though I'm sure, I have to take a test and know without a doubt. It would break Raoul's heart to be told that I'm carrying his child but then have it not be true in the end. I never want to cause him pain like that, not when I...I love him.

That's it, then. I'm in love with a killer, and I plan on staying with him. It sounds crazy, but at this point, my entire life is in chaos.

"So what now?" he asks, voice gravelly. "Are you going to tell me to leave? That it's over? Because that isn't going to happen, Skye. Like it or not."

Running to the apartment had been a mistake. I know that now. It's the only place on the island where I truly feel like I'm in my own space, or at least so I thought, but when I entered and the whole place felt foreign and strange, it became clear that I think of Raoul's villa as home now. I want to tell him that, along with so many other things, but I feel as if words aren't going to fix anything right now. At least now nearly as well as actions will.

I don't look at him as I walk to my old couch, but I know without a doubt he's watching me like a lion would watch a gazelle. It gives me a thrill, that I have so much control over this powerful man, even if he will never admit it fully.

Once I reach the sofa, I lean over it just like he wanted, belly on the arm of it and arms stretched out in front of me, wrists together. My ass is up in the air, almost on display, which would be embarrassing under any other circumstances, but right now it's making me hot and needy, wondering what he plans on doing.

"*Tesorina*," Raoul sounds like he's barely holding himself together, the tone of his voice low and restrained. "There is so much I want to do to you, but first I have to know. Are you willing to take your punishment now? Because if so, I'm going to consider all this done and over with. You're going to be submitting to me, body and soul, do you understand?"

I shiver. His words feel like fate. “Yes.”

Raoul exhales slowly, and I hear the sound of his belt being undone before he tosses his suit jacket onto the floor in front of the couch. “Good girl.”

I keep still, only whimpering slightly as he reaches his arms over me and loops the black leather belt around my wrists, cinching it just tight enough that I can’t pull free, but not so tight that it hurts. Then, he jerks my leggings and panties to the ground in one swift motion, making a satisfied sound in his throat at the sight of my bare ass.

“Don’t move,” he tells me, leaving briefly to rummage around my small kitchen. This confuses me, and I want to question him, but something tells me this will just make my punishment worse.

Raoul returns, and out of the corner of my eye I can see him sit the small glass jar of coconut oil from my pantry on the table in front of the sofa. I haven’t even opened it yet, and my mind is reeling at the possibilities that little jar can offer. What in the world could he possibly want with it?

“This is going to sting,” Raoul tells me, his calloused hands plumping and stroking my asscheeks now, “But only for a moment. Remember, you brought this on yourself.”

As if I could forget. His soft touches do make me relax some, though, which is a mistake. The second I start to untense, Raoul raises a hand and *spanks* me with a sharp slap. He’s right. It really stings, and I yelp, hands instinctively trying to escape my bounds. Now I see the reason for the belt.

“Easy...easy...” he murmurs, “The stiffer you are, and the more you fight, the worse this will be.”

“Raoul—” I start, but then his hand comes down on my other asscheek with another smack. I jerk again, unable to stop myself, but I manage to stay silent. This time, since I’m not taken off guard, I can feel the sting fade into a warm, tingling pleasure once the pain subsides. I’m starting to regret my decision to submit like this but on the other hand, maybe there

are some interesting possibilities my punishment will bring to the table for later games.

“Better,” he praises, soothing my stinging flesh with his palms. “Just a little more, and then I think you will have learned your lesson. We aren’t going to stop this time.”

Raoul isn’t lying, either. He spanks me again, and again, and again. By the fourth slap, I’m struggling to get my hands loose again, but it’s useless, and he’s relentless. He never spanks me hard enough for the pain to exist for more than a split second, but the frequency has my whole ass warm and throbbing. Then, his hand starts to land lower, and lower, closer to my pussy each time, and much to my surprise, my body’s opinion on the whole punishment does a complete switch. It feels... good. Too good, even, when he’s that close to my entrance.

When he starts to alternate light spanks with soft passes of his fingers through my folds, I can’t help but to moan. Raoul laughs darkly behind me, satisfied with my reaction. I can feel how swollen and puffy both my buttocks and pussy lips are, and it makes everything all the more sensitive. Squirring, I try to get him to touch me more firmly where I need him most, but he doesn’t give in.

I’m breathing like I’ve run a marathon when he stops, laying my damp forehead against the couch as my bottom half shakes from the effort of standing and the ministrations of my lover. I hear him exhale, and he sounds wound just as tightly as I am. I can’t see him, but I hear him remove his pants before his hands land on my hips, and then I feel the brush of his rock-hard erection brush against me from behind. Just feeling it makes my need for Raoul soar, and I know I’m wet and ready for him.

“I’m going to give you what you want, but then, *Tesorina*, I’m going to take what I *need*. And that’s your sweet ass, understand? We’ll take it slow for you.”

Apprehension surges in me. “Do you mean—?”

“Yes,” he confirms, reading my thoughts. “I’m going to fuck your ass, Skye. When you surrender to me, you surrender *everything*.”

I swallow, butterflies of nerves taking flight in my belly.  
“Raoul I don’t know...”

“BUT I DO.” The blunt head of his cock pushes at the entrance to my pussy, and how badly I want him wars with how scared I am of what is to come next. Raoul has always been gentle with me but how can he make something like that not hurt?

I have to trust him. What other choice do I have?

He tightens his grip on my hips and enters me with one smooth stroke. I’m so ready for him, almost dripping wet, and my mind short circuits as his manhood kisses the mouth of my womb as he hits bottom within me. This position, with my ass in the air and pelvis tilted, changes all the angles.

He leans forward and snatches the coconut oil off my table, its purpose becoming crystal clear for me. I’m almost annoyed. He’s had this planned the entire time.

I feel the room temperature oil covering my crack, and then, humiliatingly, he covers my puckered back flesh with it, fingers delving between my cheeks. It feels so strange, and I fully expect to hate it, but like everything Raoul does, he manages to make it feel good, gently massaging my hole with his oil-coated fingers as he hips slowly work his cock in and out of my pussy. It’s a bizarre feeling, all of it happening at one.

His fingers swirl there between my asscheeks, again and again, no doubt waiting for me to relax. He picks up the pace fucking me, filling me so full that it’s hard to concentrate on anything else. If he can just keep this slow, steady pace up, I’ll be able to come even if he’s playing with my asshole.

Play turns more serious though, when one hand slips under me and finds my engorged clit, the concentrated sensation of his rough finger touching me nearly blinding. My moan is cut short when at the same time, he sinks one finger into my back entrance, just as he starts to work my nub firmly.

Pleasure and pain war for dominance inside of me, his finger in my ass causing a burn that is almost too much to bear.



When Raoul starts to work his finger in and out in an imitation of how he's fucking me simultaneously, some of the burning dissipates and is replaced by an odd, not completely unwelcome sensation. Any other time, his expert caresses of my clit paired with his cock fucking me so good would be a quick road to making me come, but I can't help but be distracted.

"Relax," he tells me, "You're never going to be able to take my cock here if you don't calm down."

God, his words are so dirty. He punctuates the statement with a few extra hard thrusts of his cock, and when I cry out his name, bound hands grabbing at the couch upholstery desperately, Raoul adds another finger into my ass.

I hiss and arch my back, and it follows the same course...burn, and then strange pleasure, so different from everywhere else he's touching me.

The coconut oil helps his fingers slide in and out with ease, and once the uncomfortable feeling is completely dissipated, I'm struck by how *full* I am. Raoul fucks my pussy with his cock while finger fucking my ass, all the while still rubbing my clit. I've never been so overwhelmed with sensations in my entire life, nor have I ever felt so utterly filled up. Like a switch being flipped, I can't take it much longer. I'm going to come.

I tell Raoul as much, and he praises me again and again, playing my body like an instrument.

I'm helpless, completely bound and owned by Raoul, my body no longer my own, and before I can even suck in another breath, I lose that one last ounce of control, coming harder than I ever have in my life.

I can feel the rush of liquid between my thighs, my inner walls fluttering around Raoul's cock as my orgasm rolls over me in waves, blooming from the base of my spine and then out. Everything is condensed down to Raoul inside of me, and the way my body is shattering in ecstasy for him.

As my climax begins to wane, I feel him pull out of me, both hands returning to my hips, and then his cock bumping against my back entrance. It's time, and there's no going back.

Raoul takes advantage of my orgasm still rippling through me and how helpless it makes me, pushing his cock into my well-lubed hole. It hurts. Oh, it hurts, but he takes it incredibly slow just as he promised. The stretching is the worst part, but I put my trust in Raoul, clenching my bound fists and breathing in through my nose and out through my mouth. Aftershocks from my climax do make it easier, and whenever Raoul feels one shiver through me, he presses himself into me just a little further.

"You're doing so good, my beautiful Skye, my treasure." His voice is so deep that I can almost feel it physically against my skin.

It feels like hours, this invasion of my most secret spaces, even though it surely isn't. Raoul waits for the pain to fade each time before moving again. It makes for an achingly slow process, but it's bearable, and I have to admit feeling him inside me in this new place is interesting. Maybe once I'm used to it, it will even feel good.

Finally, the seemingly-impossible occurs, and Raoul's hips bump against my asscheeks. "I'm in you, Skye. All the way."

All I can do is whimper.

"Hold your hands up for me," he says, and when I obey, he removes the belt. Blood surges to my tingling hands, and I wiggle my fingers.

"Touch yourself," he continues, his hands stroking up and down my back comfortingly where he has pushed my tank top up. "I want this to be good for you, too."

I want to tell him that it's useless, but I know Raoul will never take no for an answer, so I push one hand between my legs and circle my still sensitive clit with my fingers. I'm positive I won't come, not with how uncomfortable I am with his cock buried in my ass, but then he starts to move.

Oh. *Oh.*

“Raoul,” I breathe shakily. “That feels good.”

“I know it does. Your body sings for me, *Tesorina*, and only me.” Raoul grits the words out between his teeth, “But I am not going to last long, love, not in this tight ass of yours.”

It feels forbidden, almost taboo, but against all odds Raoul starts to fuck my ass in earnest, and it feels *incredible*. Pleasure, with just the hint of pain, and so different from how he feels in my pussy. He’s gentler, not as rough or fast, and it’s exactly right for us both.

My hand works frantically on my clit, my eyes clenched shut. It’s such a strange and delicious feeling, and my legs start to helplessly shake within minutes. I wouldn’t be able to come without touching myself, but with both the familiar and powerful feeling of my fingers between my legs combined with the brand new sensation of Raoul’s cock inside my back entrance, I’m hurtling towards that precipice.

“I’m going to fill you up,” he growls, leaning forward to pepper kisses along my spine as his hips begin to stutter, “Come with me, Skye,”

As soon as I feel the first hot rush of his seed, I do as he says, coming so quickly that my whole body arches. It’s like a thunderclap, harder and quicker than I’ve come before, and with each spasm I can feel how full I am with Raoul inside of me, all over again.

I love it. I love *him*.

When we both come down, he pulls out of me carefully, catching me as I start to crumble to the ground, utterly exhausted. Raoul gathers me to him, kissing my face and lips.

“You’re amazing,” he tells me, “I can’t believe how perfect you are, Skye. You were made for me, and I for you.”

And with that, all is forgiven between us.

We clean up very briefly in my small shower stall, but I’m begging him for a soak in the huge jacuzzi tub back at the villa. He assures me that housekeeping will have it waiting for us, letting me lean on him as we walk to his car, the sky

having gone full dark while we reconciled with one another inside.

Back at the villa, I can feel the soreness of it all setting in, and Raoul sees me wince as he helps me out of the car. He frowns, and to my shock, looks a bit guilty.

“I may have worked you too hard, *Tesorina*. I forget how rough it must be on you sometimes.”

“I’m fine,” I assure him, standing on my tiptoes and kissing his full, soft lips. “I just need a long soak, good food, wine, and rest. Can we do that?”

He chuckles, “Such huge demands from you, little one. Of course we can do that. Let’s get you inside and into that bath you keep going on about.”

Inside, the house is dark except for a few lights burning in the kitchen. I follow Raoul through the comforting shadows, seeing the warm orange glow of candlelight coming from under his bedroom door.

As he turns the doorknob, Mariana walks out of the room, giving Raoul a quick curtsy. “Your bath is ready, Mr. Damiano and Ms. Whitney. Shall I have dinner sent up as well?”

“Yes,” Raoul says, “Just leave it outside the door.”

His phone vibrates then, and he answers it as he walks into the bedroom. Sensing my one chance at being alone, I hiss Mariana’s name, and she quickly turns from where she was retreating down the hallway and comes back to me. I hold a finger to my lips, indicating to be quiet, while flicking my eyes in the direction of where Raoul has disappeared.

“Mariana,” I whisper. “Raoul can’t know yet, but I need you to get me some...” I swallow, all of it hitting me right at once. This is real, and what I’m about to ask for confirms it. “I need you to get me a few pregnancy tests.”

Her eyes go wide, hands flying to her mouth, but she nods quickly. “Of course!” she breathes, visibly excited. “Oh, how wonderful!”

My smile falters, nerves starting to set in again. “I hope so. Find me in the morning when Raoul leaves to work out, okay?”

“Yes, ma’am.” She hesitates at first but then gives in, embracing me swiftly but warmly, before heading back down the hallway, a spring in her step.

I fold my hands over my stomach. At least someone is feeling joyful. Me, though, I’m full of anxiety. What if I’m counting wrong and I’m not pregnant or what if Raoul changes his mind about wanting kids? What if...what if he starts to doubt being with someone younger like me?

“Skye,” I hear him call from inside. “Come on, before the water chills.”

His voice fills me with comfort. I take a deep breath, give my stomach one more brief pat, and follow Raoul into the room, the scent of lavender steam drawing me to the ensuite bath like a moth to a flame.

There, reclining in the enormous tub, bronze skin shiny and wet with the oil-scented bathwater, is my Raoul. My heart fills with love for him, and I can’t stop the smile that blooms on my lips.

Without another word, I strip down, and go into the wonderfully hot water and his waiting arms.

“Raoul?”

“Hm?”

I lick my lips, close my eyes, and just say it, that confession that has been on my mind for weeks now. “I love you.”

He sucks in a breath, and if I didn’t know better, I think I hear a hitch in his voice when he squeezes me tightly and says, “I love you too, *Tesorina*.”

## CHAPTER 8

I kept Skye in bed for as long as I could, from the second after we woke in each other's arms after one of the most emotional days of both of our lives, to when I had left her just a few hours ago, the manicurist arriving to pamper her a little as I ran some errands.

Well, one single errand.

The small velvet box is heavy in the pocket of my suit as I stand on our terrace, helping Mariana and the rest of the staff to place the hundreds of candles leading from the bedroom to where I stand. It's dusk, and Skye should just be finishing up with the in-room massage I had ordered for her. She's a nosy little thing, so I had to keep her busy if I want this to truly be a surprise.

I pull the box out, looking once more at the glittering two carat solitaire diamond set in white gold. It's time for me to make Skye, my woman, my world, mine for good. She's going to be my wife.

My heart is going to beat out of my chest. I can feel it.

The last few candles are lit, and I stand stock still on the center of the terrace, the glow of the dozens of candles make it seem otherworldly.

I wait for her, thinking about everything I've felt in the last forty-eight hours. Cold terror when I got the alert that her car had crashed, fury when I found out who caused the accident, worry for my little treasure and how out of it she seemed after the accident. I thought that in the morning, after I returned

from...taking care of Paul, she would be more herself. But instead, the villa was in turmoil as they searched for her. I had put a trace in her phone and her bag, so it wasn't hard to find her, but as I drove the miles to her apartment I felt my heart become stone, thinking about how sure I was Skye wanted to leave me. She wouldn't, she couldn't, but the fact she wanted to still hurt like hell.

I had killed for her...driven to that bastard Paul's house, waited like the ever patient man I am, and then garroted him as he came out for an evening swim. He struggled, and I loved every minute of it. Right before he took his final breath, I made sure to tell him, "This is for Skye."

Even if she had wanted to be done with me, I wouldn't have regretted ending Paul, but the fact that she still wanted me, and surrendered to me in such a beautiful, absolute way was the last thing I needed to leave any regret of killing him behind. Not that his life concerned me, but knowing I was still capable of it did. But it was done.

Now, on to joyous things.

Skye comes out, stars in her eyes, following the trail of candles. Her sweet smile grows as she sees me, one hand clutching something and the other wiping a single tear from her eyes. She's a vision in a dark green dress that hugs her tightly, leaving little to the imagination, my bracelet glimmering on her wrist and blond curls loose. I've taken good care of her, I know, from the way she has filled out so gorgeously, and I plan to do so for many years more.

A smart girl, she must know what is going on by the time she reaches me. There is a knot in my throat I have to swallow past, and I stall by kissing her soft mouth, just once.

"I love you, Skye Whitney."

"I love you too, Raoul Damiano."

I sink to one knee, opening the box for her and holding it out. The diamond catches the firelight in its depths. "Marry me, *Tesorina*. I'll take care of you, cherish you, forever. Have me children, Skye. Be my wife."



“Yes,” she breathes.

I slide the ring onto her finger, surging to my feet and moving to grab her in my arms, but she lays a small hand on my chest to stop me. “Wait, I have something for you, too. Hold your hands out.”

I do, and she lays something long and white in them. I bring the plastic sticker closer to read the small gray screen, and my world flips on its axis.

It reads *positive*.

“You’re pregnant.” I blurt out.

She nods, tears streaming down her face. I snatch her up and crush her to me, spinning us around the terrace while avoiding the lit candles, kissing her until she’s breathless. Skye is pregnant with my child, and she’s going to be my wife.

Every awful thing I’ve ever done was worth it for this. I would do it a million times over for this woman and the family we are going to build together. She laughs as I spin her, her voice like the tinkling of bells.

Skye. My treasure. My wife.

## **EPILOGUE**

**1** *year later*  
My parents arrived for their bi-yearly visit yesterday, loaded up with sunscreen and gifts for the baby.

Raoul and I had gotten married in a small, beautiful ceremony only weeks after getting engaged, my parents meeting Raoul and then watching as we married all within the same day. It was clear they were thrown for the biggest loop of their lives, but they took it all in stride.

The wedding was held on the Tenerife beach, and it was the best day of my life, my dress all lace and beadwork and Raoul in the only non-black suit I've ever seen him in, a gray-blue that looked scrumptious on his bronze skin.

Then, months later, I gave birth to little Evelina, and that became the new best day of my life. Raoul's too, if the way he spoils his daughter is any indication.

Halfway through my pregnancy, Raoul had surprised me with a townhouse in Washington, so I could be near my parents and give birth in the States. I missed Tenerife, but Raoul made the right call, because having my family there was invaluable. A girl needs her mom at a time like that.

It's been a year now since the proposal, and our little girl is only three months old. My parents couldn't stay away long, and it was made even easier when Raoul promised to pay for their tickets anytime they wanted to come. Maybe we could make beach lovers of them yet.

I left napping Evelina with Mom and Dad, going to find my husband to ask him if he wanted to talk a walk down the ocean side with me. Maybe even sneak off and get dinner while we were alone. When I crack the door to our bedroom, though, there is no Raoul, just a piece of paper next to a bathing suit on the bed.

*Picnic? For old times' sake. I even left out your favorite outfit. See you soon, Tesorina.*

I pick up the top of the white string bikini and laugh. Some things never change.

I strip, tie on the bikini, throw on a coverup just in case my parents are wandering around, and escape down to the beach and to my husband. He's waiting for me, right where he said he would be, in the paradise we call home.

## **EXTENDED EPILOGUE**

**T***en years later*

Back at my childhood home in Italy, it's surreal to hear my three children wandering the same halls I did in my youth. Evelina, the oldest, trying to corral her younger twin brothers, Milo and Renzo. She's only eleven, but her three-year-old brothers will have her exhausted by dinnertime.

Good. That means their mother and I can have some time alone.

Visiting my family has made me realize a few things. One, I'm older and grayer, but still greatly respected around these parts. Two, I miss this place, but not enough to return home. Three, making love to my wife in this home that held so many dark memories for me was slowly healing me from the inside out. The negative faded, and wonderful memories took their place.

Skye walks into our shared room and out to the small patio overlooking the city. She's dressed for dinner, but pulling at the chest of her burnt orange dress.

"I swear I get bigger every year," she complains. "I don't know how you're still attracted to me."

I look at her lovely body and her luscious, irresistible curves, and laugh out loud, "You're funny, *Tesorina*."

"I'm being serious!"

I sober and turn, taking her face in my hands. "Skye, you're more beautiful than you've ever been, and you'll be even more beautiful still when you wake up tomorrow." I kiss her softly,

and then pull back with a smirk. “Plus, I love how rough we can be now,” she huffs as I grab her ass, making an appreciative noise, “I can throw you around now. You’re not so fragile anymore, and all the sexier for it.”

After all these years she still blushes, but stands on her tiptoes to kiss me, apparently satisfied with my answers. I give her butt a final squeeze and her bottom lip a last nip, before lacing my fingers with her. If I keep touching her, we’ll miss dinner altogether.

As if reading my mind, she tugs me forward until our bodies are flush together. “Call your sister and tell her to take the kids to dinner for us. I want to stay in suddenly.”

I grin wickedly and capture her mouth with mine. My woman, who has given me children, and a life worth living. Even now, I can hear our little ones screeching from downstairs, and I laugh against Skye’s lips.

“Let’s make a baby,” I murmur.

“You’re crazy,” she laughs.

“You already knew that, Tesorina.”

Her arms loop around my neck, and she presses her forehead to mine. “I guess I did, didn’t I? I’ll think about it.”

I take her hand and pull her into our bedroom, prepared to convince her. Over, and over, and over again...forever and always.

*The End.* Thanks for reading!

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