

Darling Little Lexa

DOCTOR DARLING'S CLINIC



USA TODAY BEST SELLING AUTHOR
ADALINE RAINE

DARLING LITTLE LEXA

DOCTOR DARLING'S CLINIC, BOOK 1

ADALINE RAINE



CONTENTS

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also by Adaline Raine](#)

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CHAPTER 1

Alexandria

I never went to the doctor—it was not a place I liked at all. I took an extra minute to check in online since reception areas freaked me out. Too many questions while I was already trying not to run out screaming.

There was something different about the clinic. The outside of the building seemed like any other healthcare facility, but once I'd stepped through the tinted doors, it was like I'd wandered into someone's house by mistake. Admiring the warm tones and posh artwork along the corridor, I was wholly unprepared. Was I at the correct location?

“Miss?”

Oh no. I thought I had avoided the hassle of talking to someone. Pausing in my tracks, I stopped to acknowledge the older woman who had greeted me. She didn't look much like a receptionist, sitting in an oversized armchair instead of behind a desk. The only indication of her job was the neat pile of folders and a laptop on the small table beside her.

“I already filled out the needed information online,” I told her.

“Yes, dear, I’m sure you did,” she said with a warm smile. “May I have your name so I can tell you which office you are in?”

“Of course. Alexandria Lane.”

“Ah, yes.” She pointed at her screen. “You are in the correct spot. Walk down the hall and through the double doors at the end of the hallway.”

Phew. I didn’t have to answer any crazy questions after all. “Thank you.” I waved and hustled along the corridor. Though I wasn’t comfortable, I didn’t want to be late.

Twisting the fancy door handle, I gasped. The waiting area instantly soothed my frayed nerves. No doubt they would spark to life again, but for the moment, curiosity kept me calm. I spotted bins of Legos, building blocks, and action figures of all kinds in the cubby along one wall. The room itself had been divided into smaller spaces by an arrangement of oversized chairs with plush cushions, sofas and recliners draped in cozy throw blankets, and round tables perfect for puzzles or tea parties or coloring. Walking closer to the toy section, I saw the most ornate dollhouse. It was large with lots of windows. Peeking inside showed me dolls, furniture and accessories, but they were all so tiny and delicate, nothing you would allow a small child to play with.

Is that a mural? My feet seemed to move of their own accord as I drew closer to the wall. There was an intricate pattern done in black and white that reached just above my head. Spying containers filled with markers, pastels, pencils and crayons, I understood. *You can color on the wall!*

Glancing awkwardly around the room, I saw a couple of them were sitting in their partners’ laps. *Is this place for Littles?*

No, silly. Littles lived in my storybooks. It was a private thing I did at home in my own room. I pretended to have a caregiver, and I dressed up sometimes, but no one else actually...

I couldn't make myself finish that train of thought. And yet, it sure seemed like the majority of the people in the room might understand the lifestyle I'd been longing for. One man sat in a recliner away from everyone else, reading a book, but he had a pacifier in his mouth. I did my best not to stare. It wasn't judgement, just awe. He was obviously comfortable enough to be in a younger mindset. Just what sort of doctor's office was this place?

Realizing I was staring, I plucked a marker from a bin and set to coloring. I tried to focus, but my gaze wandered to the curvy redhead curled up on the sofa. She had a huge fluffy blanket draped around her and appeared to be sleeping. *Sleeping!* Who the heck could be calm enough to sleep in a doctor's office?

Fear prickled the back of my neck. Maybe I wasn't in a regular clinic. Maybe it was some weird experimental facility. No. My anxiety needed to tell a story to explain the racing heart and sweaty palms. Blowing out a few breaths, I returned to the pretty picture on the wall. Glancing to the side while I thought about what color to use next, I spotted my bunny! Well, she couldn't be *mine*, but she looked identical to the soft gray bunny I'd lost so many years ago. She even had hearts on her paws!

I plucked her from the shelf and cradled her in my arm. "Hi. You look sorta lonely all by yourself. Maybe you can keep me company while I draw?" I nodded her head up and down. "Cool. I'm doing everything I can *not* to think about

where we are right now. But you must be super brave since you live here.”

“We’re ready for our next guest!”

Guest? What type of place was this that the healthcare staff referred to their patients as guests?

I glanced over my shoulder. The announcement came from a nurse. She was dressed in the most adorable scrubs I’d ever seen! Teddy bears, fluffy clouds, and rainbows danced across her uniform. She had her long blonde hair pulled away from her face in a high ponytail that bounced as she scanned the room.

“Alexandria Lane?”

I raised my hand awkwardly and noticed it was trembling.

“Good morning! I’m Everleigh. Please come with me.” She gestured for me to follow.

Reluctantly placing the marker back into the bin, I wiped my palms on my work slacks and grabbed my purse. I set the bunny on the table, but I didn’t want to let go.

The nurse noticed and smiled sweetly. “All of our stuffies are available for adoption. Would you like to take the bunny home?”

I could hardly believe my ears. “What?”

Everleigh leaned down, close enough to whisper into the bunny’s ear. “Would you like to go home with Alexandria?”

I caught on quickly. Making the bunny nod again, I giggled.

“Lovely!” Everleigh clapped her hands together. “Come with us.”

I picked my new stuffed animal friend up, holding her outward. “Hi.”

“Hello!” Everleigh gestured toward the hallway. “Would you like us to address you by your name during your visit today, or would you prefer we use a nickname?”

I followed, feeling at a little more at ease. “Alexandria is okay.”

“Very good. Have you named your new friend yet?”

“Oh, um, not yet. But she looks just like my childhood stuffed animal.”

She beamed at me as we walked together. If I hadn’t signed up for the appointment, I could almost convince myself that we were doing something fun together. “Are you all right if we use endearments with you or would you prefer us not to?”

“Uh, endearments are fine I guess.”

Everleigh led me into a large room but it didn’t look like the standard examination room. There was a soft gentle glow from the lamps, not a bright overhead light. The walls were painted in warm golden colors and I saw decorations. A huge armchair was positioned by the window. I was used to ugly cabinets that housed clinical supplies, but the decorative storage made it seem like we were standing in a living room. “We *are* in a doctor’s office, right?”

Everleigh blinked at me over the tablet in her hand and slowly nodded. “Yes, sweetie. May I ask how you found us?”

“Um...” Unable to meet her gaze, I studied the artwork on the walls. A baby fox asleep in a flowery meadow. A baby duck stretched on its webbed tiptoes to look at a butterfly.

Subjects more suited for children, but executed with a level of sophistication clearly aimed at an adult's eye.

"I'm really afraid of doctors," I finally mumbled. To add to my mortification, several tears slipped down my cheek. "I need a physical for my new job. I don't know anybody in town. Your office was the closest." Tears slipped down my cheeks. New job or not, I needed to escape.

"Thank you for the explanation. May I put my arm around you, sweetie?"

"Mmhm."

Everleigh wrapped her arm around my shoulders, standing close to me. "Take a few nice deep breaths with me."

I nodded, willing the tears to subside. The sweet nurse took my distress in stride, and didn't make fun of me or talk down to me like I thought she might. She had more patience than anyone I'd ever met.

After a few minutes the edges of my vision cleared and the ringing in my ears settled. "I'm sorry for acting like a baby."

"Lots of guests who visit us for the first time are nervous. They might have had bad experiences in the past. Sometimes they haven't been to any sort of physician in a long time." She gave my shoulders a comforting squeeze. "We believe in ensuring every guest feels genuinely safe and loved at our clinics. If you don't experience that, you're less likely to come back when you really need us."

Her voice was so soothing, I began to relax a bit. "You're super nice," I murmured.

"Thank you, Alexandria. I hope that you will talk to the doctor about what might have happened in the past that's caused you to be upset in a medical office setting." She

squeezed me gently before releasing her hold. “Would you rather I take your blood pressure from your right arm or your left arm?”

“No.” I shuddered. “The automatic ones hurt so much! No one ever believes me when I bring it up. I decline.”

“You can absolutely decline any test or procedure, but will you give me one chance to prove I can measure your blood pressure without any pain?” Her eyes sparkled, almost like I had issued a challenge.

“I guess.” I hated the whiny tone falling out between my lips, but I agreed.

“Please set your things down and take a seat on the table, wherever you like.”

I complied, but kept my new stuffie in my arms. When Everleigh rolled her cart toward me, I stared at the manual cuff on top.

She slipped the stethoscope off her neck and put the ear pieces in as I reluctantly sat on the table and extended my left arm to her. She squeezed my hand before wrapping the cuff around my bicep. “I shouldn’t need to pump it very high. Do you remember what your blood pressure was the last time it was measured?”

“Um, it always shoots up when I’m in the office. I don’t really remember.”

“No worries, sweetie.” She spoke encouragingly and patted my hand once more before pumping the bulb in her hand. As promised, and for the first time in at least my adult life, the cuff didn’t feel like it was bruising me as it inflated.

Everleigh smirked at my stunned expression. “One eighteen over seventy-four. Perfect.”

“You didn’t hurt me,” I said in amazement. Everleigh was phenomenal.

“Automatic cuffs are useful in a hospital setting, but there’s really no reason to use them for everyday routine measurements.” She checked my pulse and stuck a pulse-oximeter on the opposite hand. “Good strong pulse. You’re doing great, sweetie.”

“I haven’t done anything yet.”

“Coming here was a big step for you, right?”

“Yes.” Her acknowledgement added scoops of warmth to my heart. She was the best nurse ever.

“Would you like to be weighed facing the scale or facing me?”

Her questions were strangely worded, in such a way that it didn’t give me any room to balk. It was almost as if the brattier side of me had the rug pulled out from under her. I wouldn’t brat at a doctor’s office—no, I was usually too scared to even speak up for myself—but the choice of words threw me.

“Um, what?”

“This is the first time you’ve been here,” she explained patiently. “We would like to have a base measurement of your height and weight on our scale. You can either face me and step backwards or you are welcome to face the numbers directly.”

“Oh, um...Away, I guess.”

When I removed my socks and shoes and dutifully stepped onto the scale, Everleigh put a hand under my elbow for assistance, as if I might teeter off of it. Her warm smile was

friendly and comforting. Having her as my nurse made me feel much better.

“Great!” She touched the top of a metal bar to the crown of my head. “Five foot seven. We’re almost done with vitals. There are different sized robes hanging on the other side of the divider along with slippers. Please undress to your level of comfort.” Everleigh gestured to the other side of the room. “The screen ensures your privacy.”

“Okay.” I nodded once before shuffling to the far side of the space.

As promised, there were soft, fluffy robes emblazoned with a pretty gold logo swirled with the letters ‘LDC’ in calligraphy. The robes were done in the lightest shade of blue I’d ever seen, reminding me of calm ocean waters. I took off my work slacks and blouse but kept my bra and panties on. I didn’t think I would need to remove either of them for a standard physical. From the rows of slippers, I selected a ballet-style pair. They were surprisingly comfortable.

Rounding the divider, I crossed the room and sat on the table again. It wasn’t against a wall, like the ones I was used to, but it was wider and seemingly more comfortable. I wondered if padding was added to it.

Everleigh patted my knee. “We’re almost done with the numbers, and then Dr. Darling will spend some time with you.” She smiled warmly, her features softening. “Would you rather lie on your tummy so I can check your temperature, or on your side?”

I stared at her in horror. *No. No fucking way.*

Everleigh must have seen the utter panic on my features because she took my hand.

“Pass,” I managed to squeak out.

“All guests have their temperatures measured in the most accurate way,” she assured me.

“You said I could refuse any procedure.”

“Yes, and you absolutely can, sweetie. We’d really love to have a full base set of vitals.” She gave my hand several gentle, soothing squeezes. “It will only take a few minutes.”

“No.” My anxiety flared to life, and I worried that the sweet nurse would suddenly morph into a nasty, condescending bitch at my refusal. “I have the right to say no.”

“No one is going to force you to do anything that you don’t want to do, even if it’s recommended.” Everleigh set the small, red digital device down. “Did any of our paperwork confuse you? Or would you like to clarify any part of it?”

I stared at her as mortification burned through me. I was scared of doctor’s offices and I hadn’t bothered to read the dozens of pages on the pre-questionnaire. It was slightly unusual since I couldn’t recall having that much paperwork before. “Um.” I squeezed my eyes shut and held my bunny close to me.

“Alexandria.” Everleigh joined me on the table, sitting close enough that her legs touched mine. “Can you please open your eyes?”

I shook my head. “I’m going to leave right now. I-I don’t care about the physical. I just want to go. You can’t keep me here!”

“Yes, you are free to go. No one will stop you. But if you leave before you see the doctor, he won’t be able to sign off on your forms. You came here for a reason, honey. Please don’t put your job on hold.” Everleigh said softly. “I think you might

even be a little bit more comfortable then when you first arrived. Am I right?”

Blinking my eyes open, I studied her face. “Yeah, but I don’t care anymore! I thought I could do this, but I just can’t!”

Two knocks sounded on the door and she held up as many fingers. “Please give me a few moments.”

She slid off the table and poked her head out of the room, talking to someone. She’d probably tell whomever it was that I was a terrible guest. Then she’d tell me that she wanted me to leave and never come back.

When Everleigh stepped back, she pulled the door open and my heart practically stopped.

The most handsome man I’d ever seen in my entire life stood in the doorway for a moment before crossing the threshold, pulling the door shut behind him. There must be some mistake because there was no way he could be the doctor. Everleigh was a few inches shorter than me and he towered over her. He wore cobalt blue scrubs almost the same shade as his eyes, but they fit him perfectly, accentuating his muscles. His hair was longer on top than the sides, black with specs of gray. Seeing him eased some deep-rooted fear inside of me but I couldn’t figure out why.

I had been staring at him for much longer than was polite. The name Dr. Darling was embroidered on his scrub top, but as far as I was concerned, he should call himself Dr. Dreamy. I inwardly sighed.

“Please meet Dr. Darling.” Everleigh gestured to the man. “He’d love to talk to you before you leave. Neither of us want to see you put your exciting new adventure on pause because you don’t have required paperwork. But as I said before, you

are free to leave at any time.” She sounded like an angel as she introduced him, making me like her even more. “Would you like me to stay here with you while you get acquainted?”

“Uh, um.” My mouth felt drier than a desert. I coughed several times.

“Let me get you some water.” Everleigh quickly located a bottle of spring water and returned with it as well as a small package of trail mix without peanuts and a granola bar. “I hate to see you so upset. I can sit next to you if you’d like.”

Accepting the water, I took a few good swallows and ate a few bits of the bar. “No, no. You’ve already helped me so much. I’ll, um, speak with Dr. Dreamy before I just leave.” I said the stupid nickname in front of him! “Sorry, uh, my mouth and my brain sometimes go rogue.” I focused on nothing but the snacks while the two of them looked on.

“If you change your mind, we can call Everleigh back into the room. How’s that sound?” Dr. Darling smiled, showing a line of pearly white teeth. His smile lit up the room.

“Sure, I guess,” I said, though I didn’t want to stay.

Everleigh waved to me before nodding to the doctor and exiting quietly, leaving me alone with the handsome man. I didn’t want to talk to him, so I leaned against the table and crossed my arms. After a moment, I gently set the bunny next to me. She wasn’t mad. I guess I wasn’t mad either, but I did not want to continue with the exam. Except as Everleigh had pointed out, that would mean no paperwork and no new job.

Darling cocked his head to the side. “Do medical people or procedures scare you, Alexandria?”

It seemed a little weird for Dr. Darling to address me by my first name instead of Ms. Lane, as most healthcare

professionals called me, but everything about this experience seemed a little weird. “Both.”

“Did someone perform a procedure on you without telling you all the details?”

“Yeah.”

“Can you elaborate?”

I never thought I could be aroused just from the sound of someone’s voice, but his deep, husky tone drove me wild.

“Uh, the first time I remember getting a shot. I was little, but I don’t know how old I was. No one listened to me. The nurse said it wouldn’t hurt but it did. I threw myself off the table, and it was high up, and...and...” Tears pooled behind my eyes. I don’t know why it was bothering me to tell him. I wasn’t a child anymore. As Everleigh promised, no one could do anything without my permission. Despite the strange rules and comfortable clothing, it was still a medical office. I held the power as an adult. Without my consent nothing would occur.

Dr. Darling turned to grab a box of tissues. Though I was upset, the way his scrubs cupped his ass gave me pause. Scrubs didn’t typically look that good, did they? Did he get his uniform pants tailored just to show off? I was letting myself get turned on by the first man who seemed genuinely interested in me. I forced several breaths before glancing up at him.

“She was dead wrong,” he said. “No one should lie when it comes to a test, procedure, medication, etc. It’s worse to lie to a child because they are trusting you at your word.” He seemed angry on my behalf. “Of course you wouldn’t believe anything out of any nurse’s or doctor’s mouth after that.”

“I jerked when the nurse jabbed me and the needle popped out. I fell off the table. After the doctor ruled out a concussion, a bunch of people came into the room...” Bubbling sobs suddenly fell out of my lips. Grateful that Dr. Darling had anticipated my tears, I grabbed a tissue from the box and wiped my cheeks. Telling someone after all this time was finally helping to heal the part of me that had held nothing but contempt and mistrust for medical staff.

“I’m willing to bet you’re also afraid of needles after that incident?”

I nodded, sobbing too hard to speak.

“Would you like a hug, sweetheart?”

I nodded again.

He gently set me on the exam table, wrapping both of his arms around me. It didn’t make any sense—I’d only known him for a few minutes, but so much tension was released in every part of my body as he held me there. Dr. Darling was stronger than he appeared. I couldn’t recall anyone ever lifting me before—I wasn’t tiny or petite. I had curves along with a little extra weight around my tummy. My thighs were thick. Yet I loved feeling small against his much larger frame.

“It’s not the pain,” I managed. “It’s the unknown. It’s the distrust. It’s so hard to get my brain to stop spiraling when I’m facing any sort of medical thing.”

“I’d really like to work through your fears, if you’ll allow me to help. My staff prides themselves on assisting guests who stopped going to the doctor regularly. They are amazing with those who have phobias or anxiety.”

I wiped the last tear from my face and hoped my skin wasn’t blotchy from crying. “Okay. I do need a physical before

my job will offer me the position.”

“Excellent.” He unwrapped his large arms from my body. I already missed the way they’d engulfed me, offering comfort and protection. “A pre-employment physical does not typically include any blood work or detailed medical history. We have time and the means for both, if you’d like me to add them.”

“As long as it’s okay that I ate today because I won’t ever come back knowing someone is waiting to stab me.”

“You don’t have to fast for the routine tests I plan on ordering. I can draw it right now.”

“I didn’t know a doctor could, uh, do that.”

“There are lots of things I can do.” He gathered supplies as he spoke, and I tried not to think about what I agreed to. Washing his hands in the sink, he dried them and slipped on a pair of purple gloves before returning to my side. “Would you like me to grab a few vials now or wait until after the rest of the examination is complete?”

“Can you get it out of the way first?”

“Of course.” Dr. Darling tapped the head of the exam table. “Lay down and focus on the pictures on the ceiling.”

“Um, can you put my bunny in the chair so she doesn’t have to see me scared?”

“I can, but I happen to know that she is very brave just like you. She had to go on quite the adventure to get to our office.”

“Maybe she’ll tell me about it when we get home.” I laid down, surprised that I hadn’t noticed the pictures displayed there earlier. Dozens of different flowers and insects covered the ceiling, with a few buttons, rings and ribbons scattered among them. It sort of reminded me of one of those hidden

object types of pictures that I used to enjoy when I was younger. I hugged the soft bunny to me.

“Wait!” I sat up terrified about forgetting to tell the doctor a key detail. “I hate butterflies.”

“I think they are the most harmless creatures on the planet. So many pretty colors, fluttering around like they haven’t a care in the world.”

“No, um, not the insect.” I was talking about the needles with plastic wing-like tips attached for stability.

The doctor grinned. “I was aware of what you meant but I don’t use that style.” He took my right hand in his and returned me to the previous position. “The only butterflies I have in this office are the ones on the ceiling. Can you find the pink-and-purple one?”

“Sure.” I relaxed into the bed, letting my left arm fall to the side. Dr. Darling rolled up the sleeve of my robe and tightened a stretchy rubber band around the thickest part of my arm just above my elbow. I concentrated on the gorgeous design on the ceiling. Locating several other butterflies, I frowned. None of them were pink and purple. I saw blue ones, yellow ones, oranges and other colors and combinations. I was vaguely aware of him rubbing an alcohol pad on the inside of my forearm, but I was dedicated to what he told me to do. “Does the butterfly have polka dots?”

“Nope. Keep looking.” Dr. Dreamy tapped his fingers along my arm. “Purple wings with pink tips.”

“Ugh.” I blew out a breath scanning the ceiling for the elusive butterfly.

“Big pinch, sweetheart,” he soothed as much as he could, given the situation.

The tourniquet snapped off and it startled me because I hadn't felt the needle at all. Dr. Darling had guided the needle where it needed to go without issue and was almost done filling the first tube.

"Oh wow. You're magical," I told him with a happy sigh.

"Not magical, just skilled." He switched out the tubes. "Keep your arm relaxed."

Marveling over how easily he handled me, I stared at his handsome profile.

"Did you find it yet, Alexandria?"

"Not yet."

Get yourself together! I chided in my head. *Don't fall for him. You don't know anything about him.* The rational side of my brain was right, but the emotional side of me had floaty hearts spinning around her head. *Fuck.* I could not fall head over teacup for a man just because he was handsome. His entire demeanor gave me Daddy vibes. *He's a doctor! Doctors are supposed to care.*

I stopped the war between my logic and my feelings, since it was all about how I felt anyway. After a few minutes of nothing but me quietly breathing and him collecting what he needed, I groaned. "I don't think there are any purple butterflies in this office at all."

"There is, but it's on the wall next to you." He removed his gloves slowly without snapping them. "I'll send these to the lab. Once I have the results, I'll set up a phone call with you so we can discuss them."

Nodding, I glanced to the left and saw the butterfly in question. "Has it been there the whole time?"

“Yes.” He held out his hand and I allowed him to pull me upright. “Would you like me to look in your ears first or your mouth?”

“Um, mouth then ears.” It was so unusual to have so much say over what was happening to my body in a medical setting, that I couldn’t help but relax as he checked me over.

“Everything looks good so far.” He patted my hand as he took his time. “Stick your tongue out and say ahh.”

I giggled and did as he instructed.

“You have lovely teeth, Alexandria. Did you ever have braces?”

“Nuh-uh,” I answered him with my tongue still out.

“You still have your tonsils. Have they ever given you any problems?”

“Nuh-uh.”

“Good to know. You can close your mouth.” He proceeded to look inside my nose and in each of my ears. “Do you frequently have any sinus issues or ear infections?”

“No, not really, but it’s hard to remember. I haven’t been to the doctor in a long time.”

“It’s important to take care of yourself, sweetheart.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Racking my brain to steer us to another topic, I cleared my throat. “Is your name really Dr. Darling?”

He grinned, and I decided he looked even more handsome when he did it. I wanted to see him smile. No, I concluded. I wanted to make him smile all the time. *Calm yourself!*

“Not legally, but I own the clinic.” He touched my shoulder. “It’s a rite of passage of sorts and the name is a gift.”

“Will you tell me your real name?”

“Maybe one day.” He winked. “I’d like to check the rest of your limbs, your hips, your breasts, your ribs. Are you okay with that order?”

“Yes. Do I have to take off the robe?”

“I can access your body a little easier, but it’s not a requirement. If you’re comfortable, you can undo the belt and I’ll work around it.”

“Mmhm.” I swallowed around the lump in my throat thinking about him touching my body. It was a professional exam and he would remain professional, but the thought of him looking at me so intimately caused heat to flame my face. I undid the belt and pushed the robe off my shoulders.

“Tell me if you feel any pain where my fingers press, okay?”

“Yup.” My eyes drifted to the ceiling as he stroked his gloved hands along my collar bone, stopping at my shoulders.

“Lie back so I can continue.”

I did so and he moved his hands around my chest and torso, hips, and belly. When he reached my breasts, I thought of piles of warm blankets and funny cartoons. He did the exam quickly without asking me to remove my bra. “I know it’s important to do a self-exam on my boobs once a month, but I don’t always remember.”

“The last time you checked was there a lump or a bump anywhere from underneath your armpit to your nipple?”

“No, not that I recall.”

“We can skip it this time, but if you feel anything unusual make sure you tell me. Is your period normal, and does it

arrive at the same time every month?” He assisted me in returning the robe in its place, tying the belt with flair.

“It’s normal and regular.” I didn’t want to answer more detailed questions, not when I barely met the minimum with my female gynecologist either.

“When was your last pap smear? You didn’t write anything on your form.”

“I’m here for a physical.” Crossing my arms over my chest, I tried to calm my racing thoughts. “That information isn’t pertinent.”

“It could be.” He raised an eyebrow at me before glancing at the tablet in his hands. “Was it longer than five years ago?”

“No, but I’m not ever getting another one.” Shaking my head back and forth, I narrowed my eyes. “She was terrible! The doctor hurt me!”

“I appreciate you sharing what happened, and I hate that you experienced a less-than-pleasant visit with your doctor. Do you remember if the results were normal?”

“Yeah.” I fidgeted with the anxiety ring on my finger, moving the little charms around in a circle. Usually the ring eased my nerves, but this time it only irritated me.

“Thank you for letting me know. We’ll talk about it on a different day.”

I didn’t like the sound of that. “I can refuse any test that I deem unnecessary.”

“Yes, you’re right, but there are a lot of important reasons to have one done.”

“We’ll see,” I answered noncommittally. Though I could see myself coming back when I was sick or hurt, I could not

even imagine the handsome doctor poking around in my lady bits. Well, at least not for professional purposes.

“My office is set up for a wide range of care. We have a few specialty practices but many of us are certified in more than one area.” Setting the tablet that contained my information on the counter, he stroked the scruff of his chin. He looked deep in thought which worried me.

“Why do you look concerned?”

“Even if you don’t stay at this office, Alexandria, I’d suggest you allow us to get a full set of vitals on file. If there is ever an emergency, the medical personnel know what you typically run and can better diagnose the issue.”

“Everleigh already obtained my vitals.”

“Hm.” He picked up the tablet, pressing a few buttons. “She didn’t document your temperature. I’ll be sure to ask her why she’d forget to notate such an important piece of information in your chart.”

“I refused.”

Dr. Dreamy glanced over the top of the tablet, locking his gorgeous blue eyes on mine. My entire body seemed to pulse with pleasure as he stared. *Nope*. I had a feeling where our conversation was headed.

“It’s a very simple measurement. Why would you not want us to have it on file?”

“I’m an adult.” I rubbed my sweaty palms along my thighs. Though the robe fit me, I had been edging it upward while playing with the texture to soothe myself. I quickly dropped my hands so it draped over my legs.

“Accuracy doesn’t have an age, sweetheart.”

“I didn’t like the location,” I said flatly, hoping he would drop the topic.

“We can go to a different room.”

“No, you don’t understand.” I swallowed around the lump in my throat. “I don’t want a baby thermometer used on me.”

“It’s just a tool. Pediatric patients are not permitted at my practice. No one under the age of eighteen is even allowed into my office.”

His explanation didn’t move me to cooperate. “I was told I could refuse *any* procedure. Knowing what my temperature is today doesn’t help tomorrow.” That statement wasn’t completely true. He had already stated the importance but the thought of him or anyone inserting an object into my most private hole filled me with a curiosity that had no place in a medical setting.

“I insist.”

“Don’t want it!” Oh no. Had I slipped into my younger headset? No. I had no business letting my Little out.

Dr. Darling flicked his gaze over my face while I stared at him. Chewing on my bottom lip, I set my bunny friend on the top of the bed. Touching her soft fur and looking at the hearts on her paws helped me calm enough to get a hold of the situation.

“Did you read the paperwork you filled out, Alexandria?”

“I apologize for yelling at you. No, um, I didn’t read it at all.”

“I’m not upset at you for raising your voice, however we cannot continue this exam until you read the documents.”

“It was overwhelming. I just need a physical. Besides, in the short amount of time that I’ve been here, your office is more comforting than anywhere I’ve ever been.”

His jaw clenched and relaxed as he stood by the bed. He held his hand out to me, and I placed mine in his. “Let’s go sit over by the window. We are going to read the documents together. If you need clarification on any part of it, you will ask me. Once we’re done, you’ll sign it again. Then we are going to come back over here, and I’ll check your temperature, because it’s important. And then you can go home.” He led me to the chairs on the far side of the room. “Do you agree?”

I curled myself into the oversized chair and tugged a small throw blanket into my lap. Comfort objects seemed to be in arm’s reach everywhere around the clinic. The textured blanket had the same calming effect on my nerves as the bunny. “Yes, Dr. Darling.”

“Good.”

* * *

I sat with Dr. Darling in the examination room reading page after page of what essentially broke down to consent forms. They were unique. No, the clinic was unique, in the sense that it catered to a... certain clientele and some procedures and treatments could be considered unorthodox to say the very least. However, in the fifty years that the clinic had operated, it had consistently scored highly, both in patient experience and in outcome. I had some reservations, but I couldn’t deny the level of care I’d received, both physical and emotional. And how could I argue with more than half a century of success?

After reading, I signed the consent forms, now with the full understanding of just what I'd gotten myself into. I could refuse tests and procedures but none of the staff would be obliged to drop the topic unless I discussed it thoroughly.

I climbed onto the exam table again, giving my bunny a headpat for being so patient and waiting for me. I was happy to have a new friend. Maybe we could watch movies together when we got home. Though I'd agreed for Dr. Darling to measure one last vital sign on me, sitting on the table and noticing he held a small digital thermometer dropped me back into reality. I wasn't sure if I was more worried that it would hurt or if it would arouse me.

"It's very small and it records quickly, Alexandria. Less than a minute."

"Can you use one that goes in my mouth?"

"An oral thermometer is not an option."

"So, when you get sick—"

"We aren't currently discussing me, sweetheart." He tore open a small silver packet and squeezed a dollop of ointment onto the tip of the thermometer. "It's single-use. We don't have to use a scratchy probe cover."

"I've never had anything there," I admitted.

"Do you want me to call Everleigh? She can hold your hand," he offered sincerely.

"You don't have to call her." I stared at the device. The metal tip was not thick or long. Darling had already drawn blood, a procedure that typically sent me running. Having him check my temperature couldn't be any worse.

Grumbling, I rolled onto my left side so I could stare at the pretty butterfly. I moved the robe up to my waist, thankful for the warmth, before settling my body deeper into the cushions.

Dr. Darling touched the waistband of my panties. “You can take these down to your thighs or I can lower them. Which way do you prefer?”

“You can do it,” I mumbled, trying not to think about the picture I presented to him.

“I’m proud of you for staying for the remainder of your appointment.” He slid my panties to my thighs and parted one of my bottom cheeks. “Have you lived here your whole life?”

“No, I moved here a month ago.” The icy cold tip pressed against my previously labeled no-entrance zone. It slowly entered, stroking nerves as Darling seated it inside of me. I shivered from the intrusion, doing my best to stay in place. “I worked remotely for a while, but the hours became crazy. This new job is fifteen minutes from my house. They offered me a hybrid schedule so I can go to the office whenever I want or stay remote.”

“I’m glad you were able to find another job willing to accommodate your schedule.” He sighed as I arched my hips and the stupid butt-ometer slipped out. “We have to start over since you can’t stay still.”

“I’m sorry! I’ll be good.” *Yikes*. Why had I said that?

“You are good.” He guided me back into place. “Knowingly putting yourself into a situation that makes you uncomfortable took a lot of courage.”

“I guess.” I blew out a breath. He hadn’t done anything inappropriate but in my current position my mind wandered to naughtier and more fun things than him using a rectal probe.

Darling slid the rod into the tight pucker of my ass, and it felt deeper than he had the first time. His hand splayed out across my bottom cheek, holding the instrument in place.

“I got worked up for nothing. It didn’t hurt and it’s not uncomfortable.”

“I’d tell you if a test or procedure would be painful,” he said. “Almost done.”

Gazing at the butterfly, I noticed the tiny details, different shades of pink and purple, as the doctor measured my temperature. His hand radiated warmth through his glove and it was soothing in a strange way. I lay there not speaking while being keenly aware of the tiny object touching nerves I didn’t know previously existed. Liquid arousal seeped along my thighs and I hoped he wouldn’t notice.

The instrument beeped. Dr. Darling removed it and fixed my panties and robe.

“Ninety-nine point seven. Perfectly normal temperature,” he announced.

“Am I taking up too much of your time? I’m sure you have other guests who need you.”

“We add additional time during the initial visit. You have all of my attention, Alexandria.”

“So, um, do you do this all day?” I scooted my body around to face him and sat up.

“Take care of others?”

“No, I meant vital signs and stuff. Or do you only have to do them when someone like me isn’t cooperating?”

“You’re cooperating just fine, Alexandria. I am a jack of all trades. There aren’t too many medically minded things that

I can't do."

"Will I get a copy of my physical? Can your office also send a copy to my job?" An icy cold wave washed over my body. "If my job looks up the details of your clinic, will they see my private information?"

"Relax, sweetheart." He patted my thigh gently. "Your employer receives a generic form."

"This *is* a really special type of office though, right?" I asked, the question banging around in my head.

"Yes, I thought we covered your curiosity before. Do you have more questions?"

I wanted more details. I had already been bold enough to make an appointment, show up and submit to the exam, so I might as well find out more. "For people who, um, have a hard time taking care of themselves?"

"Yes, sweetheart. Many of our guests prefer to visit while being in a younger mindset."

Oh my god. Maybe Dr. Darling could understand kinks more than I realized. Actual medical play wasn't outside the realm of possibility. Well, not here at the office, but perhaps one day I'd mention my interests. But an actual doctor wanting to perform kinky exams was impossible. Or was it? "Are you referring to something kinky?"

"No, not exactly. While I am a BDSM-friendly practitioner, kinks aren't typically discussed here. If someone has questions about their lifestyle choices as they relate to their health, I can answer them. Consent is placed at the top of the list when it comes to healthcare. We spoke at length about it."

“Yes, Dr. Dreamy. Shoot! I meant Dr. Darling.” I stumbled over my word choices and heat pricked the back of my neck.

“You’re very sweet, Alexandria. You can call me whatever you’re comfortable with.”

“I guess you probably hear guests calling you Dr. Dreamy all the time?”

“No one’s ever said it before.” He smiled all the way to his eyes. “Is there anything else concerning you health-wise, sweetheart?”

“No, but I sorta feel like you actually care about my well-being. I know it’s your *job* to care but—” I stopped myself from saying anything else equally embarrassing. “Never mind.”

“I *do* care. It’s the entire reason why I became a doctor in the first place. If anything comes up, you can call the office and ask for me. Otherwise, when I get the results from your labs, I’ll send you a meeting invite and we can discuss them. How does that sound?”

“Yes, please.” I nodded. “Thank you for being so understanding. It made a huge difference.”

“You’re very welcome. Good luck with your new job.” Darling smiled once more before patting the exam table. “We’ll talk soon.”

“Thanks. Bye.” I nodded at him, a smile breaking out across my face before he crossed to the door and exited the room. It was the first time I’d smiled in any sort of healthcare facility.

Just what sort of magical doctor was he?

Dr. Dreamy was professional and accommodating. I gathered the robe and slid off the table to dress. Though he’d

helped me relax, I didn't want to see him again soon, at least not for medical reasons.

Sigh. I was falling for my handsome doctor after knowing him for less than an hour. A thought that made me giggle. If seeing him became routine, maybe we could explore a private relationship somewhere far away from his clinic.

* * *

Darling

Glancing at the doorway to my office, I saw Everleigh standing with her arms over her chest. She was perpetually happy, and that was just one of many reasons that our guests loved her, but there was a frown on her sweet face now.

When she noticed me, she beckoned. "May I talk to you, Darling?"

"Of course, dear." I winked. She giggled. It was a cute exchange, and it never failed to bring a smile to her face.

With her youthful complexion, Everleigh appeared to be in her early twenties, though she was a decade older. Her entertaining scrubs, done in bright colors—usually with cartoons dancing across them—reinforced that appearance. We made a good team. When I purchased the clinic, I'd promoted her to head nurse. It was a position she'd previously been overlooked for. I admired her handling of every guest, including those who were downright fearful.

No one could seemingly stay upset or afraid with her in the room. I was also one of the few people who saw how badly

Everleigh needed a caregiver of her own. She gave out lots of hugs and stickers, and wiped away tears, but she'd found herself alone more often than not. Everleigh didn't talk too much about her personal life, but one night after everyone else went home, she had picked a stray stuffed animal that someone must have left behind. My poor little nurse had broken down into tears.

Our office staff was like family, but that night we'd become friends too. I'd taken her out for hot cocoa and we'd shared the good, bad, and ugly as she calmly explained her less-than-happy situation.

Everleigh also had her eye on Leo Callahan, a rather unorthodox physician in the practice who typically threw the books out the window and followed his gut. She liked his outside-the-box thinking, but she'd be mortified if she knew I'd seen her cheeks fill with color whenever he passed her in the hallway.

"I'm not asking for personal information," she said, "but was Alexandria okay when she left?"

I hadn't been able to get Alexandria out of my head. It wasn't often that I was struck sideways from one interaction, but she had trusted me right out of the gate. The fact that she'd shared her story about the terrible treatment from medical personnel when she was younger had surprised me all the more. When I'd hugged her, holding her as she cried on the exam table, she'd fully pressed herself against me. I'd wanted to scoop her up and promise that no one would ever hurt her again. But I'd had to remind myself that we were perfect strangers. There would be time for that later.

And of course, because Everleigh was as observant as I was, she would know that I'd been futilely searching for some

way to shift Alexandria's care to someone else so I could convince her to become my girl. We had worked together for a long time and she knew me well, but there was more to it than that. It was like Everleigh understood connections deeper than most people.

“Yup.”

Everleigh waggled her eyebrows at me. She closed the office door and sat in the oversized chair across from me. “You never give one-word answers.”

“Yes, Ms. Lane was perfectly fine when she left our office.”

“Ronnie.”

She was one of the few people in the office who knew my first name, let alone had permission to use it.

Shooting her a rather stern look, I leaned back in my chair. “If you have something to say, spit it out.”

“Alexandria went from nearly crying when she came into this office to practically dancing out of here.”

“It's a phenomenon that occurs with first time visitors here.”

“No! It's different!” Everleigh smacked her palm on my desk. “The way she looked at you, and how quickly you thwarted all her fears? It's something more.”

Leaning forward again, I grabbed her hand in mine and squeezed it. “Do that again and you can stand in the corner while you think about what you're actually trying to say.”

Her eyes widened. “You're not listening to me. It's important.”

“I am listening. You can speak without being disrespectful.”

“I am struggling this week, and I’ll take attention anywhere I can get it, but not here in the office.” Everleigh narrowed her eyes, but finally her features softened. “Please let go of me or I’m going to keep battling.”

I let go of her hand, pushed my chair out and rounded the desk. When I leaned down to hug her, she crumpled into my arms. “This has nothing to do with our new patient, does it?”

“Yes, it does. She reminds me so much of myself.” Everleigh sniffled. “I think she’s been on her own for so long, someone who is fiercely independent, but when you entered the room? I swear I saw a tiny, scared Little girl who could just really use someone else on her side.”

Rubbing her head, careful not to mess up her ponytail, I sighed. “I’m not blind to the connection, sweetheart. But I can’t pursue a patient no matter what I’m feeling.”

“There are lots of other physicians here that would all be wonderful for her.”

“And how would you respond if your doctor suddenly transferred you to someone else after only meeting him once? It’s not like I can call her and tell her the reasoning behind it. That’s a bigger breach.” Shaking my head, I wished for a solution.

“Abandoned,” she muttered. “I’d feel hopelessly abandoned.”

“Don’t you think that would be worse?”

“Shit,” she grumbled under her breath. “Yes, you’re right.”

“I’m usually right,” I responded before opening my arms and pushing her back so I could see her face. “Don’t curse at work.”

“I...” She slammed her mouth closed, and her cheeks pinkened.

“You know the rules, Everleigh.” I released my hold. “They haven’t changed.”

“It’s just me and you here. There are no guests.” She spread her hands out. “We’re in *your* office.”

Stroking the scruff on my chin, I slowly nodded. “So, the rules don’t apply?”

The sweet nurse in front of me showed me a glimpse of something brewing under the surface. Usually her disposition was entirely angelic, but her eyes darkened. There were specific rules for our clinic, but typically the only repercussion for breaking one was an extra task or chore, like cleaning the breakroom or restocking medical supplies. BDSM was not openly practiced, but sometimes Everleigh needed extra attention. Sort of like the mild tantrum she was throwing. When that happened, she trusted me enough to recognize it and adjust her headspace. Sometimes the repercussions were lines, a time out in the corner, or a hot cocoa break. Once she needed extra hugs. We had known each other a while, and I was happy to be there for her.

“I don’t know,” she mumbled. “What happens if I break a rule right now?”

“Probably not what you’re hoping for.” I wasn’t entirely sure what Everleigh needed, but my methods at the office to rein in a brat screaming for attention weren’t the same as in my personal life. However close the two of us were, I could

not step into any other sort of role for her – one that included physical discipline. I might consider pointing Leo in her direction sooner rather than later if I could find a clever way to hint to him. Everleigh had never told me she was crushing on him, so technically I wouldn't be sharing confidential information.

“I'm sorry for cursing, Ronnie. It won't happen again.”

“I forgive you.”

“Thank you.” She chewed on her bottom lip, staring at me for a moment. “I'm having an extremely hard time expressing myself. I understand that you can't call Alexandria and ask her to go on a date or whatever. But I *hate* that she looks as lost as I feel.” Tears welled up in her eyes, and she brushed her hand over them. “I am *not* attempting to be disrespectful, but it's been a very long time since I've had any sort of, uh, someone keeping me in line.” Everleigh wrung her hands together.

“I understand. It's very sweet of you to be thinking of Alexandria. I'm hoping she will express interest in some way. Once she does, I can offer to spend time with her outside the office.” I really did understand what Everleigh was referring to, but my position needed to remain neutral. For now.

“I know, but I'm telling you her entire demeanor changed,” Everleigh insisted as if I were being obtuse instead of professional. “She's aching for someone like you in her life. I just know it!”

“It's part of our job to be observant, and I see what you're seeing.” I winked. “Let's hope our new guest comes to that conclusion. All right?”

“Ugh. Yes, fine. I shouldn't have stormed in here demanding that you pay attention to me. I won't do that

again.” She worked her bottom lip in between her teeth again.

“You politely knocked, sweetheart. If you were trying to get a rise out of me, I would expect at least one slammed door.”

“I will keep that in mind.” She slowly rose from the chair. “May I have another hug?”

“Of course.” I hugged her tight. “Please don’t get caught in your head, okay? You were thinking of our patient’s needs. That’s a beautiful thing.”

“I appreciate the sentiment. I have to finish charting for the day.” Everleigh smiled. “Tomorrow we’re making hot cocoa magnets. They are the cutest little mugs with googly eyes. It’s going to be so fun! I love coming up with ideas for arts and crafts.”

I loved the happiness shining in her eyes. It had been her idea to do something once a week that was completely unrelated to medical type of procedures or visits so that our patients did not associate the office with painful, uncomfortable experiences. Everleigh was a gem. “I can’t wait to see them.”

“Next time I’ll bring up whatever my issue is out of the gate so you’re not tempted to stick me in the corner for my sass.”

The rules at the clinic did *not* include corner time as a punishment for any staff member, but I’d used it as a tool with her consent in the past when she became overwhelmed or chose to battle rather than speak respectfully. “I *like* your sass, Everleigh. It’s one of the many reasons we get along so well, but you were acting out. Or at least it seemed like you were determined to have my attention no matter what.”

“You’re so smart.” She rolled her eyes. Her tone was playful and not condescending. Still, it bordered on something I couldn’t quite place my finger on, as if she was attempting to get a reaction. “I’ll pick you up coffee in the morning. Does that win me points?”

“We aren’t playing a game, so there are no points. However, I appreciate the gesture.”

“Yay.” She giggled, and it was as if the tension bogging her down released a little. “I’ll see you later.”

“See you later. Have a good night.”

“You too.”

Everleigh waved once, a huge smile plastered across her face, and practically danced across the space to my door, turning the knob and leaving. I was happy that she felt comfortable enough to share her thoughts with me. Plus, she was spot on. I cared about Alexandria, the curvy brunette whose eyes lingered on mine a little longer than was polite.

My Daddy senses were in overdrive even hours after she left. I knew I’d do anything to show her how special she was, while raining down buckets of love and affection on her. If she wanted me to, at least.

Jabbing my fingers through my hair, I let out a long breath before making my way to the leather chair and sinking into it.

Alexandria had mentioned BDSM, but we hadn’t delved into the topic at all. I couldn’t start spouting off about Littles, highchairs, playpens, and the like without sharing a side of me that most people didn’t know about. I held my personal preferences close because so often there was judgment even in open-minded communities.

Running the clinic had really been a selfish endeavor since it placed me in a group of colleagues who had more than medical degrees in common with me. We were more like a family, getting together outside of work and talking about our latest relationships or lack thereof. I was lucky to find such a great group, but that knowledge didn't fill the aching hole in my heart that could only be filled by one sweet Little girl.

I swallowed hard, completely distracted away from the paperwork piled on my desk. Well, not actual papers—we had switched to electronic charting—however the task was the same. I had another hour of work to accomplish. Yet all I wanted to do was call Alexandria under the guise of courtesy. I wanted to make sure she was okay after everything she shared this afternoon.

Since she was seen at the office today, the invite for hot cocoa magnets would be sent to her. She was frightened at the beginning of her appointment, so it was unlikely that she would show up tomorrow. If she needed something from me, she would reach out first.

Touching the phone handset, I plucked it into my hand then set it back on the cradle. No, I would allow the system to communicate with her as it did with every new patient. *Fuck*. It was going to be a long night because all I could think about was finding a way to get better acquainted with Alexandria Lane.

CHAPTER 2

Alexandria

Staring at the text message, I contemplated what was wrong with me. I'd received an invitation to Little Darlings Clinic for an activity and I was thinking about going to it. I didn't even know if Dr. Darling would be there, but the tiniest chance of seeing him led me to pull myself off the couch.

Taking extra time to fluff out my hair and put on lip gloss, I scanned my reflection in the mirror. I looked extra adorable with flare jeans and a white hoodie dotted with penguins. Each penguin was participating in an outdoor event like ice skating, snowboarding, skiing, and sleighing. They were so cute!

Plucking my dark brown boots from my closet, the ones that were almost the same shade as my hair, I twirled around. Checking out my outfit, I grinned. Lifting my hair into a ponytail, I snapped the elastic when I attempted to fix it. Frustrated, I scoured my dresser for something else. Settling on a slim silver headband, I was pleasantly surprised at how it made my hair look, wavy and full over my shoulders.

Why was I getting so excited to see someone who only knew me professionally? Dr. Darling didn't have time for

someone like me. Worse, I was projecting my fantasies on a man I didn't know just because he had taken care of me.

Quit it! I would not talk myself out of this. I wanted to see Everleigh. If nothing else, going to the office when I wasn't sick would be good for me. Then my anxiety wouldn't flare every time the building came into view. *Oh!* I bet that was one of the reasons the clinic held such activities. Somebody was very smart.

Giggling, I firmly pushed the anxieties away. Twirling one last time in the mirror, I grabbed my puffy pink jacket, my keys and my purse. If I'd told myself a week ago that I would be headed to a doctor's office for fun, I would have screamed. Hell, if I'd told myself two days ago, I wouldn't have believed it either.

But today my heart felt lighter than it had in years, and I had a happy plan in place.

* * *

Nerves prickled through me as I hung out at the lounge in the clinic. It was a warm atmosphere, and everyone was smiling and laughing, but I couldn't focus on the craft.

When I entered, I received a gift bag containing a number of small candies and stickers, as well as a huge foam mug of cocoa for the magnet project. Charms, glitter, marshmallows made out of felt and all sorts of neat things were placed along the center of the table so you could make your mug unique. Gentle music played in the background, and there was a crackling fire playing on the large television stationed near the middle of the room. Three or four staff members walked around, asking questions or checking on guests.

My concern was the table at the other side of the room. Flu shots were offered, not expected and not required, but the sight of them worried me. I did *not* want one. Could this fun project be a cover for something else? Would someone suddenly jab me? No, that was silly.

“Hi, sweetie.” Everleigh sat down next to me and patted my hand. “Are you having fun?”

“I don’t want a shot,” I stated firmly.

“I wasn’t coming over here to give you one.” She plucked a few silver baubles from a cup on the table. “These would look so pretty in the corner over here.”

“There’s not really a corner on a mug,” I said smartly.

“I guess not,” she giggled. “But if you put them in a triangle near the handle it would balance out the rest of your pretty craft.”

“Oh, yeah.” I took each one from her and slowly affixed it to the mug. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” Everleigh glanced at me like she knew a secret. What the heck was on her mind? We had only spoken for a few minutes yesterday and it was completely professional. “If you wanted to consider getting a flu shot to boost up your immunity for the season, I’m really good at delivering it.”

“I had one a few years ago. It hurt my arm so badly that I wound up sore for days. I only agreed because it was mandatory for my job at the time.” Chewing on my bottom lip, I worried about potentially missing a mandatory requirement. “Did my job contact the clinic and say I needed one?”

“No, Alexandria. It’s my professional opinion. We’ve already been seeing an early influx of guests who’ve been sick

with the flu.”

I really didn't want to get the flu, but... “I don't think I can.”

“Yes, you can, but you don't have to.” Keeping her eyes on me, she stood. “If it's because a lot of guests are here and it's a public space, I can ask Dr. Darling to bring you to his office. It's quieter in there.”

I'd rather eat my hoodie than inconvenience Dr. Darling. Though I had to admit the mention of being alone with him in his office, despite the added scare of an injection, was almost enough for me to agree. Shrugging, I added the finishing touches to my craft. Unwrapping a few Hershey kisses, I ate them to stop anything embarrassing from falling out of my mouth.

“I'm sure Dr. Darling has better things to do,” I finally mumbled.

“You didn't say no, which is a win to me. Plus, it's really nice to see you today, considering how upset you were yesterday.”

I popped another kiss into my mouth. “I really only came here to see you and Dr. Darling.”

“How about I tell him you're considering the flu vaccine and the two of you can discuss it? There's really no pressure. I'd just like to keep you healthy.”

Shifting around the chair, I sat sideways so I could look at the sweet nurse. “Um, okay. But only if you're sure I'm not bothering him.”

“Nope, not at all.” Everleigh grinned. “I'll be right back.” She patted my shoulder and I loved the genuine concern she

showed to me and all her guests. “I’m going now so you won’t change your mind.”

I wondered if she picked up on my weird vibes yesterday after Dr. Darling stepped into the room. I figured he had guests fawning over him all the time, but he had taken my bumbling behavior in stride. Though I’d dressed up specifically in case I saw him, I was torn between glee and terror.

Everleigh claimed he wouldn’t pressure me, which was true, but I’d cave to his suggestion. There was something about his husky voice that drove me wild. I’d allowed him to draw blood, a test I seldom agreed to.

Packing away the craft, the rest of the goodies given to me along with stickers and pretty pens, I carefully put everything into my purse. Leaning my shoulder on the back of the chair, I flicked my gaze from the table to the rest of the guests. Some had partners with them and some were alone. There was one curvy redhead sitting in an oversized armchair all by herself. I noticed that she was the same woman who had been asleep on the couch yesterday. Her crown full of curly red hair was hard to miss. A lot of the people in the room looked positively ecstatic to be gathered, but sadness permeated the space around her. I wasn’t a chatterbox. I wasn’t even a very good friend most of the time, but something tugged at my heart strings.

Shouldering my purse, I stood up.

Cautiously approaching because I was making a rather bold assumption, I tapped her foot with mine. She looked up at me, and her eyes shined with unshed tears.

“Hi, um, I never do this. I don’t even know what to say, but you look really sad. Are you okay?”

“My, um, Daddy broke up with me because he had to move to the other side of the world.” She stopped and cleared her throat. “It’s really important for me to get the flu vaccine, but he left yesterday. I guess he’s not even my Daddy anymore.” Tears slipped down her cheeks. “I’m so awkward. I didn’t even explain myself correctly.”

“It’s okay. Do you want me to hold your hand while you get it? I’m scared of needles, but I’ll be brave for you.”

My offer made big tears roll down her cheeks.

Glancing at the window sill, I located a box of tissues and grabbed a few. Returning to her side, I held them out.

“You’re very kind. No, I’m not afraid of them, but he would take me to this cozy little restaurant afterward. We would have hot cocoa and pastries and....” She wiped her cheeks. “Sorry for being a baby.”

“You’re not a baby. It’s okay to cry when you’re upset. Do you want to maybe go get cocoa with me later?” Maybe the girl wanted to be left alone and I was being intrusive. I immediately backpedaled to give her an out. “If you don’t want to, that’s okay too. I am not really great at making friends, but I’m trying.”

“Oh!” Her eyes brightened and she brushed the last of her tears away. “I’d love to go! It’s about five minutes away. There are real live kittens that you can play with. We’ll have fun.”

“I have a meeting with Dr. Darling, but then whenever you’re ready I can meet you there.” Pulling my phone out of my pocket, I realized we hadn’t introduced ourselves. “I’m Alexandria.”

“It’s so nice to meet you! I’m Savannah.” She picked her cell up and held it out to me. “Just enter your digits. I’ll text

you so you can add me.”

“Thanks!” I entered my number and returned the phone to her outstretched hand. “Can you also send me the address?”

“Yup!” She nodded enthusiastically. “Thank you so much for talking to me. I’m usually pretty outgoing, but I’ve had so much on my mind lately. I appreciate it more than you know.”

“I am not outgoing at all.” I forced a laugh. “I’ve been doing quite a few things that surprise me lately. Anyway, I look forward to talking while we play with kitties.” I waved. “See you later.”

She waved back. “Bye!”

I headed toward the doorway of the lounge. Where was Everleigh? Maybe Dr. Darling was too busy. I shouldn’t have told her that I was here specifically for him. Well, at least I had mentioned her as well, and if everything went according to plan, I had even made a new friend.

Blowing out a big breath to calm my nerves, I saw Everleigh skipping into the room. She looked so happy. Yes, she was dedicated to making her guests feel seen and taken care of but there was something else. She reached me in record time and grabbed both of my hands in hers.

“Hi!”

“I just made a friend,” I blurted out. “Savannah looked so sad, and she was crying, and even though I’m not great at it, I just didn’t want her to be alone.”

“You’re so sweet. It’s very kind of you to think about others. I’m sure she appreciated it.” Her smile widened. “I’m really happy you found the courage to step outside of your comfort zone. It seems like you’ve been doing that a lot.”

“Yes, but I’m not always so great at it.”

“Dr. Darling doesn’t have any appointments until later this afternoon.” Everleigh tugged me gently. “Come on. I’ll bring you to his office.”

The nerves that had calmed earlier screamed to life, but her gentle encouragement helped me to feel a little better. She prattled on about future events and activities including cookie decorating, healthy snack options, more crafts, and board games. I didn’t say much since Everleigh was leading me closer to the handsome doctor, the one I hadn’t been able to get out of my head.

“I really appreciate you being so nice to me.”

“Of course!” She knocked three times on the door, and opened it. “Go ahead, honey. If you need anything, I’ll be in the lounge.”

“Thank you.” I stepped inside the office and she closed the door behind me. So much for turning tail and hustling out. If I had told myself yesterday that I would actually be considering a vaccine only to see Dr. Darling again, I’d have pinched myself. What a strange concept!

“Hi, Alexandria.” Darling smiled warmly and gestured to the chair opposite his desk. “Are you having fun?”

“Uh, yeah.” Setting my purse on the floor, I climbed into the comfy-looking chair. “I made a craft, and it was nice to be around other people even if I didn’t talk much. There was this one woman who was having a rough day, and we’re going to hang out later. She recently went through a breakup, and we might be friends now,” I babbled to give myself something to focus on. “I never thought in my wildest dreams I’d be here again so soon.”

“It’s nice to see you.” Darling leaned forward in his chair. “Everleigh mentioned you were curious about boosting your immunity now that you’ll be around a lot of people in an office environment.”

“Maybe.” If he weren’t so darn handsome, I would have walked right out the front door. Butterflies swarmed my tummy. “It’s not required.”

“No, but it is a good idea. The flu is pretty nasty.”

“My arm always hurts so much after it. Plus, sometimes it feels like I get sick. I’m miserable for days.” Though I’d given myself an out, I was annoyed with myself for wasting Dr. Darling’s time. Standing up, I shook my head. “I’m sorry. This was a bad idea.”

“Please don’t apologize.” Darling pushed his chair out, getting to his feet and rounding his desk faster than I could move to the door. I wouldn’t have gotten very far since my purse was sitting on the floor.

Hypnotized by his gorgeous blue eyes, I stopped in my tracks.

“I can give you the shot in your thigh,” he said. “The muscle is bigger and will absorb the medication better, and it’s away from most major nerves. Light activity and a couple of your favorite over-the-counter pain reliever is usually more than enough to deal with any pain you may experience.

He was convincing, rational, and incredibly charming.

“Do I have to go into an exam room? I’ve changed my mind a few times already,” I confessed, attempting—and failing—to look anywhere but at his handsome face. “If I have to walk somewhere else, I’ll probably stroll out the door.” *And hope that you chase me.*

“We can stay here. I’ve given quite a few in my office today.”

It shouldn’t surprise me but it did. How many others had been in the same predicament as me?

“Do you pump magical fairy dust through the vents?” I marveled at the ease at which he persuaded me to do scary things that would typically send me running.

“No.” Darling grinned from ear to ear. “No magical dust.”

“I’ve never agreed to any sort of medical thing this fast. Plus, you already convinced me of several things yesterday that I can’t believe I allowed. Not that I felt taken advantage of. Not that I wouldn’t let you if you wanted.” The thought of Darling stroking my intimate bits for fun barreled to the forefront of my mind, and heat burned through my body. I was sure my cheeks were pink with embarrassment. “Please say something before I combust.”

“I’m glad you feel comfortable in this office.” He smacked his palm against the top of his desk in a way that made me wish he had demonstrated it on my behind. “Go ahead and sit.”

The brattiest thought flitted through my brain, and I swallowed hard. Thwarting the urge to battle, I perched on the edge of the desk. “I don’t want to see it before you, um, stab me.”

“You already know I’m a good stick, sweetheart.”

Well, damn. His tone had turned deeper, like it had yesterday. I’d have agreed to whatever he told me to do. “Mm-hmm. I may have observed such a skill yesterday.”

Darling chuckled as he strode across the room, and though I said I didn’t want to see him prepare the supplies, my eyes

were fixed on him. He tugged on a pair of purple gloves, keeping the syringe out of my line of sight. Then he swaggered back to his desk and pointed to the top of it. “Lie down and lower your jeans to your knees.”

I kept my eyes on his until my head met the desk. I touched the button of my jeans but fumbled as I tried to undo it. “Uh, I don’t think my fingers are working, Dr. Dreamy.”

He didn’t snicker at my faux pas, calling him my stupid private nickname. “Would you like my professional assistance?”

“Yes, please.”

Darling nimbly undid the button, lowering them enough to give him the access he needed. He kept one hand out of my line of sight, likely to avoid showing me the needle he was about to poke me with, but gave me a small alcohol pad with the other.

“What am I supposed to do with this?” I asked, wondering if he wanted me to swab my own thigh.

“Sniff it. I know it sounds weird, but it will distract your senses.”

“Okay.” I complied with the odd request and sniffed. A sharp pungent odor hit the back of my throat and made my eyes water. It was enough to distract me from the quick pinch on my upper thigh. The needle hurt less than a mosquito bite. “Oh wow. It didn’t hurt.”

“Usually injections are uncomfortable, but not overly painful. I’ll push the liquid in slowly so your muscle doesn’t cramp as much. You just try to relax. That will help, too.”

Oh my goodness. What panties was I wearing? Racking my brain, I remembered I’d selected my frilly red panties.

Would Darling think I had worn them on purpose? No, because he was the one who'd offered to target my thigh. I hadn't offered it in any way. Seducing the sexy physician had not been on my mind, but it would be later when I was alone in my bed. I heard the cap return to the syringe, and then he affixed an adhesive bandage to my outer thigh.

"Just stay put, sweetheart. I'll help you sit up in a bit."

"Why?"

"You might get dizzy if you get up too fast."

He was smart. I'd been ready to leave with my pants undone to get away from the man who aroused me just by breathing. Darling moved around the room, giving me a moment to myself. I looked forward to seeing him again, but I wanted it to be far away from the office.

"Can I leave now?"

"Not yet." Darling returned to my side. "Do you need help fixing your pants?"

"Um, no. I can do it." Something about him watching me made me fumble a few times. I wasn't used to dressing with someone else in the room. Arching upward, I buttoned the jeans. "First day with my new hands."

"I'm not in a hurry, sweetheart." He guided me to a sitting position before assisting me to the floor. "I'm really proud of you for getting a flu shot."

Darling smiled and it was contagious. I found myself smiling right back at him. "Will you tell Everleigh? She would probably be happy to hear that."

"Sure thing. Is there anything else I can do for you today?"

"No, um, I'll try to keep the visits to a minimum."

He handed me my purse. “You’re welcome to stop by anytime.”

“Thanks.” I took my cute cross-body bag and put it on. “I really mean that. Thanks for being so patient with me.”

“You’re welcome, Alexandria.” Darling led me to the door of his office and turned the knob. “Have a good day.”

“You too.” Walking past him, I smelled his cologne and it lingered as I exited the clinic. When Dr. Dreamy told me he was proud of me, my heart practically had beamed. I shot off a message to Savannah as I skipped to my car. My thigh wasn’t even sore! Today was turning out even better than I’d hoped.

CHAPTER 3

Alexandria

I kept getting out of my car, losing my nerve and getting in it again. Finally, the pain and fear of never getting the stupid splinter out of my leg propelled me forward. I walked all the way to the front door of the clinic and froze.

I had spoken to Dr. Darling on the phone a few days ago when he went over my results. Nothing out of the ordinary. My bloodwork was perfect. His handling of the situation and of everything else was the one reason I was comfortable standing outside the door less than a week after my initial appointment with him. I didn't want to be poked and prodded even though I was in pain.

Breathing through the nervousness, I reached for the door handle. Dr. Darling opened it and I dropped my hand to my side. He glanced over my body, likely looking for some sort of noticeable injury or ailment. I returned the assessment, but I admired the way his navy scrubs stretched across his muscled thighs. Darling had a gray tee-shirt on top and it outlined muscles in his arms and torso. He also carried a bit of weight

around his stomach, not a lot but enough that I wanted to cuddle him. I hoped I wasn't drooling.

"The clinic is closed for the night. Are you sick or hurt, Alexandria?" he asked me patiently.

"I've had this bad splinter for a couple days. I thought about going to the emergency room but I'm too scared," I admitted sheepishly, wringing my hands. "Your office is so much more inviting! I didn't have to sit in my car in the parking lot crying for hours afterward.

I immediately felt like an idiot. "But I can come back tomorrow. It's no big deal."

"Everyone else has left for the day, but I can help." He gestured for me to enter and locked the door behind us. "Where is the splinter?"

"It's um..." I stopped walking. I was mortified over having to tell him exactly where it was, though he'd have to get up close and personal with my most intimate places in order to get it out.

"May-maybe I should leave," I stammered. "It's not really that bad."

"It's worth looking at."

"Okay." I sighed and followed him.

Leading me into one of the exam rooms, he motioned toward the bed. "Where is the splinter?"

He spoke in a no-nonsense fashion, almost stern and not quite the way he had the other day. No, I was projecting, because I was nervous about what Dr. Darling would need to do in order to remove the splinter. I stood near the table awkwardly watching him, hating that my inactions were

making him stay later than he'd intended. "My upper inner thigh."

"How on earth did you get a splinter there?"

"Um, I was sliding along an old wooden bench on my porch."

"On your stomach?"

"Um, yeah."

"There's clearly more to your story." He shook his head. "Is the wound hot to the touch?"

"A little." I gave a shuddering breath. He would never do anything to cause me harm even if it might be uncomfortable.

"Next time, you need to come in immediately. The longer a foreign object stays in your skin, the higher the chance it has to become infected." He handed me a gown and a thin blanket, then patted my shoulder. "Take your pants off. Sorry but I don't have any robes tonight. The blanket is for you to hold since you left your bunny at home."

"Abigail. I finally named her."

"What a beautiful name." He beamed. "I'm glad she was adopted by someone as sweet as you."

My heart soared from his declaration. "That's so nice of you to say."

"I'll be right back."

"I'll wait here."

He laughed at my attempt at humor and I watched his retreating back. I reluctantly shimmied out of my shoes and pants as Dr. Darling instructed. Suddenly heat flamed my face. No matter what pair of panties I'd selected at home, they

scraped against the wound, making it unbearable. How was I going to tell him? I climbed onto the table, panic spiraling my brain. I was mortified.

After a few minutes, a loud knock sounded. “Are you decent?” Dr. Darling asked through the door.

I knew what he meant. Yet something about his tone, and perhaps the way he’d touched me the other day, prompted me to sass, “Physically.”

Striding through the door, he shut it behind him. “Mind yourself,” he chided. “Now is not the time.”

“So, later I can act up?”

“I wouldn’t recommend it.” Dr. Darling set to washing and drying his hands at the sink before snapping on a pair of purple gloves. Rolling a small cart to the bedside, he opened up a variety of packages but I couldn’t see what they were from my vantage point.

“I couldn’t wear panties today,” I blurted out.

“What?”

“You said to only take my pants off and I didn’t want you to think that I was, like, being a smartass and taking everything off, but the fabric pressed against the splinter and—”

“Pause.” He patted my knee. “I’ve seen every single body part, sweetheart. You’re not going to embarrass me. Let’s take a breath.”

I obeyed and did as he asked.

“A few more breaths, honey.”

“I am still really anxious, and my leg really hurts.”

“I hate to hear that you are in pain. Let’s get your vitals first.”

“Okay,” I answered automatically.

Laying a cuff around my arm, he affixed it before sliding the stethoscope buds into his ears. He checked my blood pressure, pulse, as well as the pulse oximeter. “Your numbers are a little higher than they should be.”

“Yeah, I tried to calm down before I came in, but I’ve been so worried.”

“Try to relax.” He lubricated the tip of a red digital thermometer.

“Not again,” I whined. “You don’t have to take my temperature. I’m not sick!” The sight of the thermometer made my pussy clench. I knew exactly where he planned on sticking it.

“If the wound is infected and has traveled to your bloodstream, you could have a fever. Then the situation is more serious.” He moved the object out of my sight. “We’ve done this before, remember?”

I looked up at the ceiling instead of his face, happy to focus on the gorgeous artwork there. It was calming, peaceful, but I was still anxious. “I’m embarrassed.”

“Are you embarrassed because it feels good when you think it shouldn’t? Or is there something else that’s bothering you?”

“Um, maybe I like it,” I answered. At least I wasn’t looking at his face because then I’d blush from my confession.

“There’s nothing wrong with liking the way your nerves are stroked.” Setting up the stirrups at the end of the table, Dr.

Darling helped me situate my feet in them. Fiddling with something on the side caused the bottom to drop away, granting him easy access to my body.

“Easy for you to say. It’s not going up your...” I licked my tongue along my teeth.

“Go on. Finish your thought.”

“I forgot what I was going to say.”

“Uh-huh.” His tone was playful and not annoyed. “We’re going to check your temperature and then I’ll look at the mean splinter.”

His slight attempt at humor helped calm my nerves. Dr. Darling didn’t say anything else before lifting the blanket and pushing the tip of the instrument inside the ring of my tight pucker. Being panty-less saved him a step.

“Oh, it’s cold!” I did my best to stay still. “Can’t we skip this part?”

“Shh. We’ll be done in a minute.” He patted my non-injured thigh but it was soothing and not creepy. His gentle touches placed me at ease even after all the nonsense that had been in my head while I was contemplating coming in here.

“Okay.” I tried to keep my breathing quiet, or to at least not sound like I was fighting to breathe. I would never be able to look at him again if I moaned.

“You’re doing great, Alexandria,” he said.

Something about the sexy tone of his voice stroked along the seam of my body as if he’d rubbed his hand along me. My doctor had no business being so handsome. I might get bold enough to ask him out, but not while he held a device in my asshole. A swarm of butterflies flitted through my tummy as I

laid there thinking about him touching me for purposes that were not professional.

“Your muscles relaxed a little, sweetheart. Hopefully what I’m doing is more calming than you’ve let on.”

“Mmm,” I groaned. “My pleasure centers are mixed up. Like all my hotspots are bundled together in my butt instead of in my pussy.”

Too late, I realized what I’d just said and clapped my hands over my mouth. Why the hell had I started to share my personal fantasies? He was my doctor, not my boyfriend!

“If having those nerves stroked makes you relax this much, I can find something else to take the place of the thermometer,” he said sincerely. “Then while I’m poking around it might not hurt as much.”

I liked that he was honest with me. The splinter hurt when the injury happened, even though I’d been blissfully immersed at the peak of an orgasm. It wouldn’t be fun when it was removed, but if I had something else to focus on it might not be so bad.

No, we were in a medical office, not engaging in some kinky med-play fueled fantasy.

The silence had begun to feel too loud. I had to say something.

“So yeah,” I began, only to draw a complete blank when it came to what to say next. ‘I, um... It, like... um, yeah, you can, um, poke.’”

“What was that?” He twisted the thermometer once, as if reading it, but he looked up the length of my body gauging my reaction.

Why did he have to make eye contact with me? Heat prickled along the back of my neck. I tried to thwart the arousal threatening to rear its head. Darling dropped his gaze and turned the device in his hand again.

“Oh god,” I almost moaned. “Please stop doing that.”

“Huh. No wonder it’s taking so long. I forgot to turn it on.”

“Wha-what?” I squeaked in disbelief. “You forgot to turn it on!?”

“Another minute.” Darling pushed a button and I heard the instrument beep. He returned his attention in between my legs. “Was the wood damp?”

“Not as damp as me.” I cleared my throat and refused to look at him but he coughed as if covering up a laugh. “Um, sorry. I make inappropriate jokes when I’m uncomfortable.”

“I gathered as much, but you don’t have to censor yourself around me.” Several beeps sounded indicating that the measurement was done. He removed the probe. “Ninety-eight point eight.”

“Does that mean I’m okay?”

“It means your temperature is normal.” He opened a cabinet out of my line of sight before sinking in between my legs on what I assumed was a chair or rolling stool. “I have a small plug that will settle in the same spot, but it’s wider.”

I tried to glance at the object but I was not in a good position to see. Darling advanced the solid object into the tight pucker of my ass like he had with the thermometer. It went in deeper and I shivered as goosebumps flared along my skin. As predicted, I was getting aroused. “What sort of doctor has easy access to a butt plug?”

“It’s not a toy, sweetheart,” he gave a deep belly laugh. “It’s used to retain an enema.”

Oh fuck. Of all of the things he could have said, he had to pick the one that was even more arousing. If it weren’t for the huge block of wood—okay, painful sliver—in my thigh, I’d have jumped off the table.

“Not a toy,” I mumbled. “Do you, um do that here?”

“Yes, the clinic has an entire room dedicated to delivering enemas.”

He had to be joking. There was no way any medical office had some sort of procedure room for enemas. Then again, he had mentioned very patiently at my first appointment that guests sometimes made appointments when they were feeling well. Coming in for non-emergencies and well visits would encourage guests to come into the office when they were sick.

“Are you teasing me? I’ve never had an enema.”

“Would you like one?” he asked pleasantly.

“What? No! Why would I?” I tugged the gown from my lap slightly to gauge what Darling was getting at. He glanced up and his eyes were sparkling in amusement.

“There are a number of reasons why someone would need an enema,” he replied. “To relieve constipation, of course. To cleanse the colon and stimulate digestion. It’s proven very effective in relieving inflammation. And many people find it emotionally soothing. Don’t look at me like that,” he said with a laugh. “I dare you to find a five-star spa resort that doesn’t offer colonic hydrotherapy. That’s just an enema with essential oils.”

“Huh. That’s different.” I fidgeted with the gown to take my mind off the enema topic before settling into the bed. “I

don't think I'd like one, at least not while I'm here."

"I'll keep that in mind. " He lightly brushed his gloved fingers against my thigh and whistled. "Oh, sweetheart. You really did a number on yourself. Do you want me to tell you each step as I do it?"

"Yes." I nodded as if he could see me. Thinking on it, I immediately changed my mind. "On second thought, no. I trust you to take care of it." I was so happy to be talking about something else because if I kept asking questions about enema Dr. Darling might insist on administering one. Not that he would force me, but I was so intrigued by the whole idea of it.

"The wound doesn't look too deep, but the surrounding area is angry from the intrusion. I'll numb it before I start poking around. May I proceed?"

"Is it a cream or a bunch of needles?"

"An ointment. I don't plan on using anything sharp yet."

"Yes, please." I hissed as Dr. Darling dabbed something cold around the wound. "Ow. It hurts."

He blew across it, and some of the sting faded immediately. "Your skin is very sensitive there. I'm sorry for not warning you. I didn't think it would be painful."

"Thanks."

He applied more and lightly blew a breath across it. His mouth was so close to my naughty bits... If I angled slightly he could almost lick me. I wondered what would happen if his fingers brushed my clit. I knew he wouldn't touch me in that way but I was aroused all the same.

"What were you doing on the bench, sweetheart?"

“Nothing I want to share.” *That* wasn’t quite true. I’d been fantasizing about Darling himself. If we were in a relationship, it would be fun to tell him about it. We might even joke it about it after I felt better. But we were far away from a personal connection. He was my doctor. Something I kept reminding myself.

“You can tell me—I promise I’ll keep it confidential. If you’re talking, then you’re not thinking about what I’m doing.” He probed the edge and I yelped, jerking my leg out of the stirrup. “I’m so sorry for causing you additional pain.”

Darling returned my foot so he could work unencumbered by my dangling limb. “Will you be a good girl and keep your leg still?”

Holy hell. I’d do whatever he asked if he would call me a good girl. “Yes, but it hurts *so* much.”

“We’ll go slow.”

“Okay.” I nodded even though his focus was on my thigh. “I’ll do my best to stay in place.”

“I’m sure you will.”

Dr. Darling returned to his task, and I could practically feel his gaze on my skin. I thought of naughty fantasies like I had on my porch. The solid plug lodged firmly in my most private hole did a great job of letting my mind drift. I thought of him holding me across his thick thighs, feeding a slim tube up my ass in order to administer an enema. I couldn’t get the mental picture out of my brain.

“Were you moving the bench, sweetheart?”

“No, I, um, was laying on it. There’s a bunch of old tied cushions on it that sorta feel like, uh, you’re on someone’s

lap.” I blushed and squirmed slightly without moving out of place.

“You can finish the story in a minute. Go ahead and take the biggest deep breath you can and blow it out.”

I didn’t like the sound of that. Dr. Darling was likely going to do something painful.

Inhaling as instructed, I exhaled a big breath. As the air left my lungs, something sharp touched my skin and I let out a screaming sob.

Dr. Darling paused, rubbing his hand along my shin. His soothing presence allowed me to breathe through the pain. “I was able to get most of it, sweetheart. You’re doing great.”

“You could have fooled me,” I muttered.

“Tell me the next part of your story, Alexandria.”

“I was playing with myself,” I mumbled. “Obviously.”

“Mm-hmm.”

“Afterward, when the, um, happy fog in my brain faded, I saw how bad the splinter was.”

“Tell me the scene that was in your head.”

I contemplated lying to him, because how could I tell the gorgeous man in between my legs that I’d been fantasizing about him touching me? That I wanted to be held and coddled and stroked by his skilled hands? That I’d been thinking about *him* spanking me, rubbing away the burn, and trailing kisses from my mouth to the sensitive bud in between my legs.

“I may have been thinking about you.”

“Thinking about me, huh?” he asked in a bemused tone. “Tell me what I was doing to you in your fantasy.”

I'm dreaming. Dreaming since the infection had clearly gone to my brain and made me delusional. There was no way in a million years I'd openly confess my fantasy to the star of it! I lay there not saying anything for a few minutes, thinking I must have fallen asleep, but there was still a light probing at my wound. *Nope. Not asleep.*

“Um, well, maybe you were spanking me,” I finally said, as if he'd asked me to tell him about my favorite book or movie and not something so personal. “It was playful, not serious or anything.”

“Are you regularly spanked, sweetheart?”

“No, but I think about it sometimes.” Confessing my darkest fantasy to the most handsome man I'd ever seen while he had his head between my thighs made my pussy wet. I tried to send her kill signals, but the trickle of arousal was unmistakable. There was no way he wouldn't see it! No, I was jumping to conclusions. His focus was my thigh not my lady parts. And even if he did notice, he was used to being near intimate places.

“What else were you thinking about, Alexandria?”

Was it my imagination or did his tone drop to something more husky? Despite the slightly inappropriate topic of conversation, it was helping me think about all the sexy things in my head instead of was happening with my thigh, which was decidedly not sexy.

“You were, um, making me all hot from your touches.” Telling him my naughty fantasy hadn't been on my mind, but I liked it. “I couldn't stay still. Then the stupid pillow moved from all my writhing.”

“I hope you’ll consider a safer place than a wooden bench to engage in your fantasies from now on.”

“I will. I didn’t think I’d get hurt.”

“I’m also glad you shared all the details. It’s very important to be honest with your doctor.”

“It is,” I agreed, but my voice sounded squeaky and not like my usual tone. My confession and subsequent fantasy played on repeat like a movie while Dr. Dreamy took care of me. Too bad he was a professional and not my boyfriend.

“Big, deep breath, Alexandria. This time hold it until I tell you to let it out.”

I obeyed, sucking in a huge gulp of air.

“Blow it out in as many bursts as you can.”

I did as he told me, and the same sharp bite attacked my thigh. I cried, pushing the air out of my lungs.

“Good girl,” he praised. “The splinter is gone. I’m going to apply antibiotic ointment and bandage the area.” He did as he’d said but we weren’t done yet.

“May I keep the plug as a souvenir?”

“No, Alexandria.” Dr. Darling slowly slid the mentioned item out of me. “It’s disposable because there isn’t a good way to disinfect it.”

“I won’t use it,” I argued.

“The temptation will be there.”

“I said it would be a souvenir but fine, you can throw it away.”

“You need an item specifically designed for play, sweetheart. The more flared the base, the better.”

“Okay.” Suddenly a huge block of ice settled into my stomach. “Wait. I don’t want a shot!”

“No shot. You had a tetanus booster within the past five years. If you had a deep puncture wound or an animal bite, that would be a different story.”

“Oh, good.” I removed my feet from the stirrups, and sat up. I hadn’t anticipated looking him in the face so soon after talking about my naughty thoughts. Tucking a piece of my hair behind my ear as if any of the things that happened were normal and not wildly inappropriate, I forced a small smile. Oh god, his face had been all up in my personal space. Suddenly my brain played a new fantasy where Darling mouthed my clit and made me come screaming for him. Speaking of wildly inappropriate...

Clearing my throat, I said, “I didn’t know. I thought you always needed the shot.”

“Did you know I can get almost any medicine in a lollipop?”

“How can I get yummy medication?”

“Well, the flavor isn’t the same as a real treat, but it’s better than pills. I’ll prescribe a low dose antibiotic.”

“Okay, I’ll be sure to take them.”

“We need to keep an eye on it for the next two days, to make sure the area doesn’t get any worse.

“Deal.” I smiled, then realized he’d said I needed to return to have the injury looked at. *Ick. I do not want to do that.* Chewing on a stray hangnail, I fretted, “I don’t want to come back tomorrow.”

“You have a few options.” Dr. Darling fixed the bottom of the bed, smoothing the gown so I was no longer exposed. “But coming to the clinic is the easiest one.”

“Is there another option?”

“You could stay the weekend with me if you’d like. I’m able to keep an eye on it.”

“At your house?”

“Yes.”

He busied himself with throwing out the supplies he’d used and washing his hands while I stared. I did not want to return and have some stranger, doctor or otherwise, check an intimate part of my body. It could be argued that Dr. Darling was technically a stranger, but his charming bedside manner filled me with ease. What I’d said about not hiding in my car and crying after my physical was true. But I didn’t really know him. “As my doctor?”

Dr. Darling returned to the side of the exam table. “No. After our conversation tonight, it’s more appropriate to transfer your care to another doctor.”

Was he trying to ask me out? I stared at him for fifteen seconds, licking my lips. “Yeah okay.” I agreed to whatever he’d said but I didn’t listen to the words. Something about transferring. “So, you want me to come over as your friend?”

“Sure, it’s really a convenient excuse to spend more time with you. However, if that’s not something you want to explore, let me know. I’m happy to set an appointment with one of the doctors working this weekend.” He rubbed a spot on his throat. Out of all of the things he could have said in response to my question, that possibility was not in my thoughts.

“I’d like to go home with you.” My voice sounded raspy, as if I were talking about doing naughty things with him. Which I wasn’t...was I? “Er, to your house with you, for the weekend, except I’d like to meet for coffee or something first before we plan an extended, uh, thing.”

“Sure. There’s a coffee shop just outside of town called *Cozy Bean Cafe*. Have you heard of it?”

“No, but I’d love to go there. How about tonight?” I asked hopefully.

He glanced at his watch. “Why don’t we go tomorrow morning? It’s getting late and you still need to go to the pharmacy.”

“I don’t have a bedtime,” I protested, crossing my arms over my chest.

His cobalt blue eyes scanned me up and down before flicking to mine.

“Yes, but the more rest you get, the faster your wound will heal.” Dr. Darling plucked a business card from his pocket and scrawled his number on the back. He handed it to me with a smile. “Besides, I’d bet you didn’t have very restful sleep the past few nights.”

“Just ’cause you’re right doesn’t mean you’re right.”

“Hm.” He rubbed his hand over the five o’clock shadow along his chin. “So, then what does that make me?”

“Annoying.”

“Careful,” he warned but his authoritative tone increased my arousal rather than thwarted it.

“I want to go to the cafe now.” Something about his care and handling of me brought out a side of me I hadn’t indulged

in a long, long time.

“We will have plenty of time to catch up tomorrow.”

His stern glare promised in no uncertain terms that his orders were non-negotiable. Fighting the urge to catapult my brat in his direction or stomp my feet, I stewed and said nothing.

“Get dressed, Alexandria. I’ll meet you in the hallway and walk you to your car.”

“I’ll be fine. You’ve done enough for me already,” I huffed, wishing I could voice what I wanted instead of allowing my feelings to be hurt.

“You sound disappointed. Is there anything I can do to make you smile tonight?”

Lots and lots of things. I pushed those thoughts away. “Don’t worry about it.”

Firmly lodged in irritation, I didn’t know why I was so upset. Could it be that the promise of spending time with him far outside of an exam room was dashed, at least temporarily? Or was it the realization sinking in of how much I had shared with him? I didn’t think I could ever face him again after spilling my most private fantasies, and yet we were planning something far outside of professional interaction.

“Don’t forget, stay off your feet as much as possible tonight. Take two extra-strength Tylenol tonight and again in the morning if your leg is still bothering you. But I’m sure you’ll be fine”

“Sure.” I glanced upward and found myself willingly lost in two dark blue pools. Darling had the most gorgeous eyes I’d ever seen.

Leaning his arm against the exam table, he wagged his eyebrows. “What’s bothering you, sweetheart?”

“I shared things with you I had no business sharing and now I’m embarrassed.”

“Your mind was focused on other things instead of the pain. There’s no reason to be upset. Now, hurry up or you’ll miss the pharmacy.”

Glowering, I made fists with my hands and set them on my hips. “Maybe I’ll go straight home.”

“You can choose to do that. However, further delaying the medication puts you at risk for a serious infection. I doubt you want to be on the receiving end of an antibiotic shot. The medication is thick. Thicker medication equals a larger needle.”

“My leg can, um, just fall off then!” I don’t know what my problem suddenly was, but my brat screamed for attention. I laid down on the table, fuming, so I wouldn’t have to look at him anymore.

Dr. Darling cupped my chin in his hand, tilting it upward so I had to look up into his handsome face. I hadn’t heard him approach but he was inches away from me. “Do you want me to give you a shot, honey?”

No. No. A thousand times no. That wasn’t what I wanted at all. Yet, there was something about the way he looked at me that almost made me agree. Had he put a spell on me or something? Nah. It had to be the idea of him touching my intimate places and not an actual injection.

“No, thank you. I really am terrified of needles, but you know that already. I don’t know what my problem is right now.” Tears pricked the back of my eyelids and I sniffled.

“Would you like me to go to the pharmacy and pick up your prescription on your behalf?”

“No, I don’t want you to do that.” Darling had suggested my going to his house and not because he was my doctor. Something about it appealed to me.

After not speaking for a few seconds, I tugged away from him and pulled the blanket into my lap. Rubbing my fingers over the soft, furry material helped me to calm down. “I’m a big girl,” I said, though I very much wanted to be taken care of tonight and every night.

“Yes, you are an adult, but sometimes it’s nice to have someone else looking out for you. Please pick up your prescription tonight.”

“Uh-huh.”

“Will you promise me?”

“Yeah, fine, I promise.”

“Agreeing verbally while your posture says a different story is a bit concerning to me.”

“Ugh.” I rolled my eyes. “I’ll go to the pharmacy, okay? But I would very much like to leave now.”

“Make sure you pick up bandages and antibiotic cream if you don’t have any.” Darling released my chin and held out his hand.

I took it reluctantly and stood up, holding the blanket in front of me with one hand while wishing I had just handled everything myself. “I will.”

“I’ll see you in a few.”

He exited the room as I watched, and a pang of guilt shot through me. I was perfectly capable of taking care of myself. I didn't need a handsome doctor doting on me. Struggling to get my clothes on, fighting since I couldn't get my mind off of Darling, I finally stepped out into the hallway. He was leaning one foot against the wall, his arms crossed. I drank in the sight of him, paying attention to his delicious looking forearms. Though it would have been inappropriate, I sort of wished he had spanked me on the exam table. Then I wouldn't be all out of sorts.

"Hi," I said shyly, as if we hadn't spent the past half hour or so alone together.

"Hello." He bridged the gap between us, holding out his hand to me. "Though I hate the circumstances, it was nice to see you tonight."

I laced my fingers in his as if this was a totally normal interaction and allowed him to lead me out of the office. He locked the doors behind us while I watched. I longed to say something to ease the mounting sexual tension. "I haven't been able to get you off my mind."

"In a good way?" He gave me a coy smile. Was he trying to figure out what else I'd been thinking?

"Yeah, I guess." Our cars appeared to be the only ones in the parking lot, and I gestured toward my sleek and sturdy Rav-4. "Are you only asking to be my friend or something more?"

"I figured we could talk about some things and see where this leads. I'm not opposed to being your friend, but you're not the only one feeling some sort of connection."

Eeek! Butterflies swarmed my belly as I stood awkwardly staring at him, then moved to unlock my car. It wasn't one sided! I did a victory dance in my mind.

“Cool,” I lamely replied, but my hands were sweating and I pulled mine away from him.

“We don't have to do anything you're not comfortable with.”

Opening my door under his watchful eye, I tried to think of something intelligent to say but failed. What came out of my mouth was, “I want to do uncomfortable things.” Mortified, I threw both hands across my lips.

“You're adorable, Alexandria.” Darling took each of my hands, setting them at my side in turn. “We can talk later if you want.”

“Yeah, um, sure, maybe. Someone mentioned how I should go to bed early.”

“Yes, you should, but you don't always do what you're supposed to. Do you?”

I licked my lips, then made the conscious decision to do something wild. Then I stopped myself. But then I thought, *Fuck it*. I'd been living under the radar of fun for so long, never indulging in things that made me happy often enough. I might as well take a risk for the first time in a long time.

I kissed him. Full on the mouth without worrying about his reaction. I broke away quickly, but he caught my face in his hands. Darling returned the kiss with fervor as I moaned into his mouth. His tongue claimed mine, and he took my breath away. We made out in the parking lot as if we were the only two people in the whole world, and at that moment I guess we were. When we pulled away from each other, I was breathless.

“Run your errands, Alexandria. Let me know when you’re home.”

“How do you expect me to focus after you turned me into a melty pile of goo?”

“I expect you to focus because the clock is ticking.” He winked. “Go on.”

I stayed in place, making no move toward my car. “Can’t we talk for a few more minutes?”

Darling reached behind me and swatted the right side of my ass hard enough to make me jump. I’d purposefully been stalling, aching for his touch even in the form of one well-placed smack against my butt. I loved that he immediately reacted to my brat. That was new.

“You will miss the pharmacy if you don’t leave now.”

“You missed a side.”

“Such a sassy little thing.” He smacked my left ass cheek harder. “Do you have anything else to add?”

“Nope.” I loved the delicious sting from his palm. My entire behind smarted enough to make me comply. “I, uh, sort of like being told what to do sometimes, especially if it’s something that I really should be doing.” I was sucking air, trying to calm my racing heart as it beat wildly in my chest.

“I may have picked up on that, sweetheart.” Darling kissed my cheek and waited for me to get into my car. “Drive safe.”

“You too.”

He shut the door and I started the engine. I watched him walk across the parking lot because the way his scrubs cupped his muscled ass should be a sin. I pulled out of the parking lot, heading off to do as I was told. Somehow getting injured had

put me on a better path. I had no doubt that Darling and I would discuss whatever needs I had.

Glancing at the business card still clutched in my hand, I thought he'd written his name at the top. But it was just the initials R and S. *Boo!* I couldn't yell that during an orgasm. But we were getting closer to him sharing personal information. That thought drew a huge wave of heat over my body. How dare he arouse me even when he wasn't near me!

Giggling, I focused on the road. Tonight had been the start of something, and I couldn't wait to see where it led.

CHAPTER 4

Darling

What was I thinking, asking Alexandria to spend the weekend with me? We hadn't discussed anything personal, not really. She'd told me her fantasy, one that I played in my head last night when I was alone and rock hard in my bed. The fact that she'd hesitated before accepting my invitation spoke volumes. I hope she didn't think I was taking advantage of her.

No, she kissed me first. Alexandria grabbed me. I'd allowed her the first move before making out with her like she was the very air I needed to breathe, and the feeling had seemed very mutual. I hoped I made the right choice. She'd completely ignored my comment about transferring her to another physician. I'd bring it up again when I saw her.

I rubbed my temples, trying to stave off a headache. I stayed up late in case she needed me, but she hadn't reached out. Lifting my phone in my hand, I sent a 'good morning' text to the sweet woman on my mind. Surprisingly my phone rang and I answered on the first ring.

"Hello?"

“Good morning.” Alexandria sounded tired. “I didn’t sleep very well.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. Would you like me to bring you coffee and breakfast?”

“I don’t want to inconvenience you.”

“I wouldn’t offer if I didn’t want to.”

“Yes, please. May I have bacon, egg and cheese on a croissant? Oh, and I’d love a French vanilla latte with sugar.”

“Absolutely. I’ll leave in about half an hour. Does that work for you?”

“Yes.” Her sleepy voice sounded adorable. “I’ll text you my address.”

“Great. I’ll see you in a little while.”

“Okay. See you.” Alexandria giggled as she hung up and I couldn’t stop the grin.

She seemed open-minded to the possibility of the two of us connecting personally. Eventually I’d have to sit her down and explain in detail that I could no longer see her as a guest. Hopefully, she would allow me to handle the transition and we could follow our hearts to wherever they were going to lead us.

My Daddy senses were prickling even more after our interactions last night.

If Alexandria Lane wasn’t a Little, I’d shave my head.

* * *

Alexandria answered her door wearing a cute pair of pajamas in a pink-and-purple cheetah print. She’d brushed and styled

her medium brown hair into a pony-tail and swiped lip gloss across her pretty mouth. *Interesting choices for a breakfast date.*

She smiled brightly as she caught my gaze. “Hi. I wanted comfy pants, so I hope you don’t mind that I didn’t dress up. Jeans felt scratchy on my leg.”

“Hi.” I returned the smile. “Good choice.”

“Please come in.” Alexandria gestured for me to enter and locked the door behind me.

I was wondering if I should greet her with a kiss after our epic make-out session in the parking lot, but I pushed the thought away for now. Following her into her kitchen, I set the bag of food at the small but cozy table. We sat down on either side and I handed her the coffee and food. “You look better than you did last night, sweetheart. How’s your leg?”

“Much better,” she confirmed. Taking a few bites of her breakfast she murmured happily, “Oh, thank you! This is just what I wanted.”

“I’m so glad.” Sipping from the paper cup in my hand, I enjoyed the flavor along with the atmosphere.

“Did you always want to be a doctor?”

“Yes, but I played a lot of sports growing up so my teachers discouraged me. It wasn’t until I quit in the middle of the season that my father finally listened. He encouraged my guidance counselor to throw a pre-med exam at me.”

“And?” Her hazel eyes sparkled as she waited for me to continue.

Shrugging, I hoped she didn’t think my accomplishment was a brag. “I aced it.”

“I’m happy you found your passion.” Alexandria sipped from her mug thoughtfully. “What made you open your, um, special clinic?”

“*Little Darlings* has been open since the fifties.” Unwrapping the everything bagel with cream cheese, I took a bite. It was fresh and tasted amazing. I’d fallen into a bad pattern of drinking nothing but a protein shake before work in the mornings. It had been quite a while since I’d indulged in more than just health food. “It’s grown and changed over the years. I was invited to join the practice about four years ago. The previous Dr. Darling was presented with an amazing opportunity. He acquired a building that had been previously used as a medical facility and opened another clinic. There was a huge need for one in Florida.”

She chewed on her bottom lip and then stopped as if just realizing she was doing it. “Could you get transferred there?”

“No.” I chewed and swallowed before continuing. “The previous Dr. Darling still owns the property for now. I currently manage the practice and own the right to use the Darling name. I’m sure I could negotiate a change of location if I had to, but he can’t just spring one on me, and he wouldn’t even if he could. Besides, I love the small-town family we’ve built. I’m not going anywhere, sweetheart.”

“Hm.” She took a bite of her croissant and chewed thoughtfully. “So, why did you accept the invitation in the first place?”

A light pink colored her cheeks, highlighting her freckles, making her look all the more adorable. Her kisses last night had been intoxicating. I pictured myself picking her up in my arms and finding her bedroom to show her exactly how I’d handle her sassy mouth.

“I kept hearing the same awful story. Patients told me they were being shamed for asking questions. Many of them faced terrible medical anxiety after dealing with uncaring and unfriendly professionals. I love medicine and I wanted to belong to a practice that valued patient comfort over profits. Dr. Darling offered me that. I have to admit, I heard BDSM-friendly practice and...had some reservations, but all it took was one visit to see that he wasn't running anything sleazy. Little Darlings is a place where differences are welcomed, and I wanted to be part of that, too.” I tipped her a wink, adding, “Shortening my commute time from three hours to fifteen minutes helped cement my decision.”

Alexandria's eyes went wide and the color in her cheeks deepened, blooming like kissable roses. I could all but see the Little thoughts flying through her mind, but in the end, she said, “That's how medical stuff has always been for me. You and Nurse Everleigh were so good at the examination, but it still took a lot for me to drive over to the clinic last night. Your office is the first place I've ever felt comfortable.”

“That means a lot to me.” I beamed at her, letting her change the subject for now. “Why did you move to our little town?”

“Pass.”

“Well, it wasn't a job opportunity, unless you took a leap without seeing how you would land first.” I tested my theory since she didn't seem impulsive. It could be argued the kiss was out of the blue, but not necessarily. She'd confessed that I had been on her mind along with a naughty fantasy. It wasn't a huge jump.

“My Poppy left me a large chunk of money when he passed away about five years ago.” She set her croissant on the

plate. “I don’t live lavishly, but it afforded me the ability to move when I need to. He was always my biggest supporter.”

“How often do you move locations, sweetheart?”

“Often enough.” She gave me a flirty smile. “So, are you going to tell me your name?”

Hm. I wondered why she didn’t want to talk about herself or her circumstances, and I made a mental note to bring it up later. “Nah. I like the nickname you’ve come up with. It’s not a secret, but I don’t share my given name with guests.”

She bit down on her bottom lip, chewing it playfully. The gesture drove me wild. Leaning forward, I brushed my thumb across her mouth, freeing her lip.

“I can’t call you Dr. Dreamy all the time.”

“What would you rather call me?”

“It’s too easy to put my foot in my mouth. I’ll keep it to myself.” She focused on her sandwich, taking a few large bites and washing it down with coffee.

“I’m pretty open-minded,” I offered.

“You said you’re a BDSM-friendly practitioner.” Alexandria glanced up at me, her hazel eyes as wide as saucers. “Does that mean you’re looking for a specific dynamic in a relationship?”

We veered off the topic of my name, but it seemed like she wanted to talk about something more interesting. “I can’t answer that question professionally.”

“Is this a professional environment?” She pursed her lips then slyly glanced around the room. “My kitchen doesn’t *look* like a doctor’s office.”

“Someone’s got a sassy attitude,” I tsked. “No, I suppose not. If we delve into this topic, sweetheart, we can’t go back to a professional relationship. I’ll need to stop seeing you as a patient at the clinic. Do you really want to know?”

I was attempting to warn her, but she didn’t appear to be listening. I threw the word patient at her as a last ditch effort to have my words make an impact. Maybe she was hell-bent on finding out without caring how it would affect us later.

“I don’t really know what you mean.” She blew out a breath. “I thought I was pretty clear last night about what I might be wanting.”

“While I definitely enjoyed kissing you in the parking lot, I need to make sure you understand before I elaborate.”

“Yes, fine!” Alexandria leaned back in her chair. “I’ll get another physician. Answer my question now.”

“Demanding little thing.” I pushed my chair out and patted my thigh. “Come here.”

“No, thank you,” she said sweetly, as if her tone could erase the sassy attitude from a moment ago. “I’m totally fine in my seat.” She plucked the paper cup from the table and took a long, meaningful sip.

Throwing caution to the wind, I took a leap of faith. “One.”

Alexandria nearly choked on her coffee, but quickly recovered, setting it down and scrambling to get herself up and over to me. She practically leapt into my lap, nearly falling over as she hurried. I hadn’t anticipated such a quick reaction, and it took a moment not to kiss her gorgeous mouth until she writhed against my thighs.

“Please tell me?” she purred.

I inhaled the sweet vanilla perfume she'd dabbed behind her ears and on her neck. I wondered if she put it anywhere else to entice me. Clearing my throat, I forced a pause. "Have you ever been in a dominant-and-submissive style of relationship?"

"Nope." Her eyes widened as she studied mine. "Well, not in real life. But I read lots and lots of romance books."

"What *sort* of books?"

"No way."

Grasping her chin firmly in my hand, I tilted it upward, forcing her to look at me. With only an inkling and zero proof, I scanned her face. "Have you been hoping for a Daddy, sweetheart?"

"Maybe."

"Do you ever play in a younger headspace?"

"Sometimes. Er, sorta. It used to be on my own but now that I have Abigail we play together."

"Would you like to experience age-play with me?"

"Yes, Sir. I mean, Daddy. Uh, I think so." Fumbling over her word choices, she pushed out of my arms and off my lap. "Excuse me, I need to use the bathroom. I'll be right back."

Without letting me respond to the two titles that had slipped out of her mouth, she hustled up the hallway. So much for convincing myself that Alexandria wasn't into some of the things I was interested in.

Allowing her a few minutes to herself, I finished my coffee before getting to my feet. Walking along the same path as she had, I stopped when I noticed the bathroom door was open. Instead of knocking, I poked my head inside. Alexandria sat

on the edge of the tub, hunched low, clenching her fingers so tightly her knuckles had gone white. Her face managed to be both pale and flushed; her eyes, wide and unseeing.

Approaching her side, I knelt next to her and cupped the back of her head. “If you’re making yourself sick over what you said...”

“I’ve never called anyone Daddy or Sir. Please don’t be angry at me. I was wrong to call you a title without consent and it’s important,” she babbled on without giving me a chance to say anything.

“I’m not angry with you.” Moving my hand to her neck, I rubbed lightly until I reached her shoulders. Adding my other hand, I was happy to feel some of the tension in her muscles relax. “Consent is important; however, you may call me whatever title you’re comfortable with.”

“Last time we started talking, all sorts of things flew out of my mouth.”

“I appreciate you being honest with me.” I moved her away from the tub, turning her to face me. Skimming my hands down the front of her body, I wrapped them around each of her upper thighs. Squeezing and rubbing each one gently, I avoided the location of her wound.

“Fine, fine.” Alexandria gave an exasperated sigh. “But it’s virtually impossible to pretend you haven’t seen *all* of me.”

“I would never *ever* risk making a guest uneasy. I have a clinically focused mind at the office.”

“You’re turning me on without even touching my naughty bits,” she cooed when I increased the pressure.

“You were aroused before I touched you.”

“Not cool, Dr. Dreamy.” Her head lolled back on her shoulders even as she protested. “You just have a reply ready for every single thing I say to you.”

“That’s how talking works, beautiful.” I gave her thick thigh a generous squeeze. I couldn’t wait to explore the rest of her curves. “There are three rules I’d like for you to follow. Are you listening?”

“Mmmm.”

I slapped my hand against her mound twice in fast succession and watched her hips jerk.

Alexandria snapped her head up, and her mouth formed an O as she looked at me.

“Answer me with words,” I instructed.

“I did!”

“You made a sound. Try again.”

“Yeah.” She pointed at either side of her head. “My ears are working.”

“Respectfully.”

“I’m hanging on your every word, Dr. Dreamy.”

Clearly, we still had a lot to talk about. A dominant and submissive dynamic was new to her, and she hadn’t been sleeping well for at least a few days, but while I could understand where her behavior was coming from, I couldn’t ignore it. Clenching and relaxing my jaw, it took me a moment to continue. “Before we go any further, I want to establish rules with you. Three simple ones. Are you listening?”

“I guess.”

“Honesty. Obedience. Communication.”

“I’m not a pet!”

I really did not like how she masked her anxieties with sass. “You don’t have to raise your voice to get your point across,” I told her sternly. “Allow me to explain the rules before immediately balking. Will you do that, Alexandria?”

“Whatever.”

I leaned back against the tub and crossed my arms. That word bothered me on a deep level. To me, it was dismissive and deliberately rude, the equivalent of her telling me to fuck off. “I don’t appreciate that word or your tone, I warned. “Would you like to try again or would you like to see what happens when naughty girls forget their manners?”

“I’ll try it again.” Alexandria looked me straight in the eye. “Whatever, Daddy.”

Grabbing her around the waist, I quickly arranged her over my thighs. Landing several hard swats, I finished my response with one slap to each of her upper thighs. Righting her, I placed her in my lap facing me. Her enchanting hazel eyes shone with tears as she held my gaze.

“I don’t appreciate that word or your tone,” I told her again. “Adding a title afterwards does not make it respectful.”

“I apologize.” She kissed my cheek. “I should have asked you to explain obedience. I’m worried it means blindly following orders without giving it any thought.”

I was proud of her for asking for clarification. It meant she was reading in between the lines. “I don’t want you to blindly do anything. If I tell you to do something, I expect you to do it immediately. If you’re not able to, or you have questions, respectfully ask me about it, exactly like you just did. Am I clear?”

“Yes.” Nibbling on her bottom lip, she focused on my face for a full fifteen seconds before speaking again. “Are you going to spank me if I don’t follow the rules?”

“It depends.” I contemplated how far into an explanation to delve. I didn’t want to overwhelm her, but her curiosity deserved a reply. “I’d rather spank you because you enjoy it. However, if the situation is appropriate, it can be useful for correction.”

“I understand.” She swallowed hard, studying me as if contemplating how to word her next question. “Can we talk about titles for a second? I’m not sure how it works.”

“You can call me almost anything that you’re comfortable with. There will be times I’d prefer you use a title.” Not letting the moment slide, I cocked my head to the side. “How do you feel about calling me Sir?”

“I like that,” she agreed. “But I’d like to call you Daddy for real instead of for a reaction.”

“Yes, sweetheart. I’d love for you to call me Daddy.” It took a herculean amount of restraint not to claim her on the tile floor while making promises to her – to keep her safe, become her safety blanket, to give her whatever she needed to grow and succeed. Her cupid’s-bow shaped mouth had me thinking about last night. She’d taken a bold step to kiss me in the parking lot, and I’d enjoyed the moment. Alexandria had pulled away entirely too quickly for my likening. I hoped I’d read her advances and flirting correctly and returned the kiss.

“Could I be your Little girl sometimes? I don’t know exactly what I’m into regarding a younger space, but I’m willing to try it with you. For so long it was me by myself.”

“I’d love for you to be my Little girl. We can explore whatever you’d like.” My heart beamed at her declaration. The relationship style we were discussing needed a lot of communication not only to get it off the ground but throughout its course.

“Okay. I am slowly putting the pieces together.” Alexandria nodded. “Can we go to your house for the rest of the weekend?”

“We can. Tell me what changed your mind so quickly.”

She smiled up at me but her fingers fidgeted with the hem of her pajama top, showing me that she was nervous. “I didn’t want to seem desperate or reckless. I wasn’t sure what it would be like to talk to you outside of the office.”

“I think you made an informed decision, not a reckless one,” I affirmed. “Why don’t you pack a bag and I’ll text you my address?”

“Okay, Daddy.” She tested the tile on her lips and smiled. “I’d really like that.”

“Me too.”

Brushing my knuckle down her cheek, I kissed her lips once before helping her to stand.

Things were working out even better than I could have imagined. I wanted to make this experience worthwhile for Alexandria. Though I’d been thinking about her fondly since our first meeting, actually being in a relationship with her was better than I hoped.

CHAPTER 5

Alexandria

As I drove to Darling's home, I thought about everything that happened in a short amount of time. The kissing last night. Breakfast. Our talking. Rules. The quick spanking. Calling him Daddy. *Eeeek!* I could scarcely believe that he and I were in a relationship. It happened so fast but it felt so right. I gathered my bags and my wits and knocked on the door. I really needed to charm him into sharing his name so I had something else to call him. Knowing his first and last name would be the final piece. Embarking into my dream relationship with the hottest doctor on the planet wouldn't be a fantasy anymore. No, it was my new reality.

Darling opened the door and grinned, even though he had seen me a little while ago. I wanted to make him smile like that all the time.

“Hey.”

“Hi,” he responded and swept his arm toward the hallway, allowing me to enter.

I took my coat off along with my shoes and glanced around the entrance. His home was warm and inviting and

most of my concerns faded. They weren't really about him—no, it was my insecurities popping up. “You have a very nice house,” I murmured.

“Thank you, sweetheart.”

Darling led me into the den, which housed an oversized armchair, a cozy couch piled high with pillows and blankets, and a large television.

“Take your pajama bottoms off and sit down. We'll check out your leg and make sure it's still attached.”

“It's fine,” I answered quickly. “I changed the bandages this morning and everything looks great.”

“I told you to do something, Lexa girl.”

My heart felt like it did a somersault in my chest. *Oh!* I loved the term of endearment but I didn't want him poking around so close to my private parts. He had done it at the clinic, but doing it in his living room meant we could do sexier things afterward. Nerves tumbled through my belly. I was excited about broaching all the newness but a tiny bit overwhelmed. Darling was everything I'd ever wanted in a boyfriend and more.

“I already looked at it,” I repeated for his benefit.

“Does Daddy need to have you write the rules in a notebook to commit them to memory?”

Holy hell. Blinking at him, wanting to test a boundary but not wanting him to think I was having second thoughts about being here, I hustled to the couch. Second thoughts were the furthest thing from my mind. Something about the way he called himself Daddy made my entire body tremble with need. Tugging my pants down to my ankles and off, I folded them and sat down next to them. “No, thank you. I remember them.

It's just I don't want to waste fun time doing boring medical stuff, Daddy." I added the new title respectfully and sweetened my tone.

"Checking your wound might not be fun, but it is part of my ensuring your well-being. Stay here while I get my supplies."

"Yes, Daddy. Thank you for giving me the chance to behave."

"You're welcome, sweetheart. I'll be right back." Darling patted my head once before leaving the den.

His house wasn't overly large but he had space. Idly sitting on the couch, I scrolled through my phone and played a game. He wouldn't do anything painful like last night because the splinter was already handled.

A few minutes later he returned, carrying a small bag on his shoulder. I wondered what sort of things were inside. He might insist on another round of vitals or at least one in particular. One that I wanted nothing to do with. Darling was keen on accuracy, which could mean a thermometer inserted up my bottom.

Worrying about the procedure, I took several deep breaths. "You don't need to check anything but the wound."

Darling frowned, likely trying to figure out where my statement was coming from. "What did I just finish saying to you, Lexa girl?"

"My well-being is important."

"Right." He snapped on a pair of purple gloves. "I'd be a very bad doctor and a worse Daddy if I didn't make sure my Little girl is healthy."

Fighting the urge to roll my eyes, I crossed my arms over my chest. “I *am* healthy, Sir,” I reiterated for his benefit as much as my own.

“Have I done something to upset you?”

“No, not exactly.” Heat rose to my cheeks and I was probably blushing. “I don’t want you checking my temperature again.”

Darling touched the bandages and carefully removed them, inspecting the area as he worked. “Do you know what a safeword is, sweetheart?”

“Is it a word or a phrase I can say when I’m overwhelmed?”

“Yes. If you say your safeword everything stops. Then we’ll talk through whatever is bothering you. Since we are still learning boundaries and getting to know one another, you can also tell me what’s on your mind.”

“Thank you for explaining. Is pomegranate a good choice?”

Darling laughed, a hearty sound that filled up the room. “Food works well as long as it’s not something you say often in your routine conversations. Is pomegranate your safeword?”

“Yes, final answer.”

“You’re adorable.” He reached up and tapped the tip of my nose. “Getting back to the topic at hand, why don’t you want me to use the thermometer today?”

“It strokes places inside of me that no one should be stroking.”

He smiled all the way to his eyes. “Interesting. There are lots of pleasure centers a rectal thermometer can tease.”

Darling applied more ointment before covering my wound with new dressing. “I don’t have a fancy digital gadget.”

“Gadget?” I teased. “You sound like an old man.”

“Mm. I have a rather old-fashioned style. It’s made of glass with a large bulb. With the right combination of the rod in your ass, and my fingers on your clit, I bet I can bring you a screaming orgasm.”

“Reason number three hundred and seventy-two that you shouldn’t do it,” I sassed, maybe a little harder than I meant to.

Darling snapped his gloves off, and deposited them onto the coffee table. “All I’m hearing is that my girl is looking for a reason for me to warm her bottom before I check her temperature.”

Yikes. That didn’t go according to plan. Or did it? He confirmed that he would be checking no matter what I said. When he joined me on the couch, I caught a whiff of his cologne, an earthy sandalwood aroma, along with something else that was uniquely him. I was nearly drooling as he settled next to me. Darling patted his thigh expectantly. No, I couldn’t position myself over his lap. I was embarrassed. How had he read straight into the things I wanted but didn’t want to admit I wanted?

“Is that what you want, Alexandria?” Darling prompted.

“I mean, if you need another reason to spank me, Sir.”

“Lay across my lap.”

“I wasn’t trying to be rude, Daddy. I’m actually nervous.” My tummy flipped in a delicious fashion as I anticipated what it would feel like for his large hand to spank me, really spank me. The few swats he’d given me in the bathroom had been

enough to let me know the real thing was bound to be so much more than my fantasies had prepared me for. Was I ready?

Ready or not, I had to find out. Crawling over his muscled thighs, I let out a long breath. He positioned me where he wanted me without putting any pressure on my upper thigh.

“I can tell, Lexa girl.” He smacked each of my butt cheeks hard. “It’s important to do what Daddy says to do, when he tells you.”

“Yes, Daddy, but I kind of wanted a spanking.”

“Well, that’s an entirely different scenario.” Darling rubbed my ass where his hand landed. He traced a finger from one hip to the other.

I relaxed into his lap and he bounced his palm on my lower curves. But just like the spanking from earlier, I looked forward to the afterburn. Receiving a spanking from my boyfriend was quickly becoming my favorite activity. I wanted to experience the difference between a fun, sexy one and a punishment.

“I’ve wanted you over my lap since you mentioned it yesterday.” He paused his onslaught to knead his fingers into the silky cloth of my panties. I wanted him to remove them, but I was still caught up in my head. “You can always ask for what you need without resorting to rule breaking. Am I understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.” I bobbed my head up and down. “Can you spank me for fun instead?”

“If I don’t do exactly as I’ve promised, you’ll likely wind up across my knee again in a few hours.”

Damn it. He was exactly right. But I no longer wanted a punishment. I wanted him to act out my fantasies. Darling

continued warming my butt with his firm hand, smacking every inch from my full, pillowy bottom cheeks down to my sit-spots. I'd feel the aftermath long after he stopped. I tried to relax, but my mind was spinning. "I'll ask for what I want, Sir, but can you please stop?"

"I'm just getting started." He lowered my panties to my knees. "Your perky little bottom is barely blushing. Let's see if I can make it glow."

I moaned when he increased the speed and intensity. His spanking was more intimate on my bare skin, but I scarcely cared about the picture I presented to him. Over and over his hand targeted my rump until I swore it was as red as a cherry. When I thought he might not ever stop, he paused long enough to drag my panties completely off, along with my tank top. I rolled onto my back. "Oh, Daddy. I'm so close."

"I love hearing you call me Daddy." Dipping his finger into my pussy, he crooked in a come-hither motion before withdrawing it. He licked the tip, savoring my juices, and I blushed. "You're dripping wet from my attention."

"Please let me come?"

"Such a sweet little thing," he observed, his voice growly. "You'll get to come soon. In case it wasn't clear, I'm nowhere near done."

"I shouldn't love the way you said that," I practically cooed.

Darling reached for something out of my line of sight. Something plastic, likely the container holding the glass rod, opened. So much for him forgetting about it. I watched as he shook down the thermometer. He stuck it into the tube of

lubricant next to him and the knowledge of where he was going to stick made me squirm.

“I’m not sick,” I protested, but it was in vain. I had played the scene of him doing the exact same procedure in my head a hundred times since our first meeting. I’d even fantasized about Darling holding me across his muscled thighs. “We can do something else.”

“I know you’re not sick, Lexa girl. Roll onto your tummy.”

I pursed my lips defiantly, refusing to do what he told me. Darling seemed to be aware of what I was doing. He moved me into the requested position, flipping me around to land across his thighs as if he’d seen a glimpse into my fantasy. Cracking his palm against my right ass cheek several times in a row tore groans from my lips.

“Ouch!”

“Stay still for Daddy.”

Oh god. I buried my face in my arms as if I could disappear into the couch. He spread my bottom cheeks, revealing the tight pucker of my ass to him. Then he pressed the tip of the rod to my back hole and I clenched as if I could stop him.

“Relax, Alexandria.” He advanced the glass instrument as he spoke, pushing it inside of me with deliberate slowness. Once it reached its hilt, he pulled it almost all the way out, taunting the tight ring of my ass. He performed the action several times, twisting the thermometer as he teased me. Though he was medically minded, he was using the thermometer for titillation alone, and it drove me wild.

“Please, Daddy?” I whined.

“Please, what?”

He was maddening! He was going to make me say it. Maybe he would be really mean and make me beg for it.

Whimpering as he twisted the rod inside of me, I shook my head.

“Tell Daddy what you want.”

The way he kept referring to himself as Daddy lit up all the pleasure centers in my brain. After my week of fantasy-fueled daydreams, I could scarcely believe this was really happening. Darling had a seemingly innocent medical object sticking out of my most private hole in the middle of the afternoon on a random Saturday.

Finally getting the nerve, I complied with his command. “Please slide it deeper, Sir?”

Darling gave into my pleas, sliding the thermometer all the way until his fingers splayed across my butt, ensuring that I could not expel the rod. He spun it in between his fingers, bringing me to the cusp of an orgasm. “Does my girl like it when I play with her asshole?”

Holy ever-loving something. I was completely at his mercy. If I needed a break, I could call my safeword. We were an hour or so into our relationship and he was figuring out what I liked, which meant he’d likely stop if I asked. Slapping my hands onto the couch cushions, I moaned. “Don’t make me answer that.”

“Say it out loud or I’ll stop.”

I shook my head back and forth, my ponytail nearly whipping me in the face. “Nope, Sir. I can’t.”

“Is that so?” He plucked the glass rod completely out of me. “I guess you’ve had enough then.”

“Please, Daddy?” The whiniest tone I’d ever heard fell out of my lips. I couldn’t believe the way I sounded, and yet I didn’t want to cave to his authority. “Please do it again?”

“Answer my question first.”

I didn’t want to answer him. I wanted him to read my mind and keep going. Sighing, I bobbed my head up and down. “Yes, Daddy. I like when you play with me, um, there,” I admitted sheepishly. “Please keep going? I’ll be very, *very* good.”

“Good girl,” he praised, quickly rewarding me with the rod. Darling spun it in between his fingers, sliding it deeper than before.

“Mmm.” I was coming undone from the pleasure radiating through my body; he hadn’t been kidding about stroking nerves. “I’m so close, Daddy.”

Darling shifted his free hand around until he stroked my cheek, and I nuzzled against him. When he stuck his thumb into my mouth, I wrapped my lips around it obediently. “Suck on my thumb like you would my cock. You’ll get to come when I give you permission.”

Oh fuck. I teased his intruding digit, licking and sucking like it was the best thing I’d ever tasted. I did my best to keep focus on the task he’d assigned, albeit a naughty one, but I was distracted. The pumping and turning motion from the slim instrument brought me closer to the peak of an orgasm.

“Come on, baby. I can tell you’re almost there.”

If he kept teasing me with his voice as much as the instrument, I wouldn’t last much longer. I wasn’t sure how much longer I could hold back an orgasm. I tapped his hand, panicking slightly.

“Not yet,” he growled.

Oh! This was much worse than I could have imagined but in such a different way. His thumb had kept me quiet, but as he brought me closer to a release, I accidentally bit down. My teeth dug into his soft skin hard enough to make him groan.

“Daddy needs all five of his digits, Alexandria,” he chided. “Maybe I should keep you right where you are a little longer?”

Darling nearly pulled the rod completely out of me, finding a bundle of nerves right at the entrance, and I nearly sobbed as he deliberately kept the tool in place. Tears spilled out of my eyes, and I sniffled. “I really want a release,” I spoke around his thumb.

“Such beautiful tears for me. How can I possibly delay your orgasm any longer?” He seated the thermometer again, swiftly plunging it into my pucker. “Come for Daddy. Right now.”

I tumbled over the edge into a blissful free fall. Somehow I relaxed my jaw, sucking lightly as Darling swirled the tip of his thumb around my tongue. Having immense pleasure in two of my favorite places made my release even more intense than I was used to.

After I came, he removed the thermometer and then his thumb, praising me as he did it. I tried to tell him that my body was completely relaxed but he probably knew that already.

Darling wrapped me in a huge comfy blanket. “Stay here, Lexa.”

I blinked up at him, as if I could do anything else but languish in the pleasant floaty feeling, safe and warm on his couch. “May I have a nap?”

“I’m not done with you yet, baby. But yes, after a few more orgasms, I’ll consider it.”

Hearing he had more naughty plans for me renewed my arousal. “Don’t you think you’ve teased all my parts enough, Daddy?”

“Not yet.” He waggled his eyebrows. “I’ll come and get you in a few minutes.”

“Wait!”

He shot me a stern look, one likely reserved for his more challenging guests. That he was looking at me in his home in such a way sparked the seemingly never-ending arousal within me.

“What is it, Alexandria?”

“Can you please tell me your name now?”

“As adorable as you are right now, cuddled up like a burrito, you need to give me a real reason for wanting to know.”

“I’d like to fucking scream it at the top of my lungs when you make me come.”

“I’ll tell you—” He couldn’t hide the gorgeous smile that broke out across his mouth. “—as long as you promise to keep the cursing to yourself.”

“I *like* swear words, Sir. Besides, I’m an adult.”

“You can find alternatives.”

He leaned closer, kissing me until I was writhing against the couch. I pushed the blanket off my shoulders, suddenly heated from his touches. Moaning, I tasted him, loving the

way his mouth captured mine. He broke away first, and I pouted.

“Okay, I’ll do my best.” Batting my eyelashes, I attempted to appear seductive. “What’s your name?”

“Ronnie.” He gave me a coy smile before straightening to his full height. “Keep your clothes off.”

“Ronnie, what?” Though I very much wanted to poke at him, finally knowing his first name made me immensely happy.

“I gave you the first part.” He kissed my lips.

“Ugh. Fine. I’ll be here, naked and waiting.”

“Yes, you will.” He booped my nose. “I’ll be right back.” Ronnie strode out of the room as I watched him. His overall mood seemed lighter, and I wondered what it would be like to spend more time with him. I hadn’t been in a relationship in so long, but I trusted him with my body and soon my heart would follow.

That thought ignited a deep, niggling fear inside my head.

I wasn’t worthy of someone as good and kind and handsome as Ronnie. He was a doctor for crying out loud and I just started my third new job in eight months. I hadn’t opened up to him about why I constantly flitted away to a new town. Perhaps I should tell him that I had trouble settling in, that I craved excitement once things became routine. Change. New scenery. New places to explore. A rumbling pang shot through my tummy. *Don’t screw this up!* I’d met the man of my dreams—there was no time to be doubting. And yet, I couldn’t ease the mounting insecurities.

Ronnie wanted a Little girl, and I wasn’t sure I could fill that role yet.

Pulling the blanket around me, I wiggled my body deeper into the cushions. I told myself it was silly. Ronnie wasn't going to judge me, and since he was the most patient man I'd ever met, he wouldn't push me to do anything I didn't want to.

We would take baby steps, figure things out. This was everything I'd ever wanted. I didn't want to lose it before we even started.

But if I wanted this, then why was I so afraid?

CHAPTER 6

Alexandria

I'd managed to calm some of my spiraling thoughts and was growing bored. Scrolling through funny social media posts gave me something to do.

“Are you okay?”

Startled, I quickly set the phone down. I hadn't heard Ronnie return to the living room and was embarrassed for not being more enthusiastic. So many fears and insistent worries flooded my brain. I did my best to push them away and finally answered him. “Um. Yeah.”

“Tell me what you're thinking about so hard that your nose is scrunched and your eyebrows are furrowed.”

“What if I'm not good at being your Little girl?”

“Do what makes you happy and if something doesn't feel right, we'll talk about it.” Ronnie scooped me up in his arms, blanket and all. “Okay?”

“Okay, Daddy.” I linked my arms around his neck. “I trust you more than I trust the worrisome thoughts in my brain.”

“Do you want to stop what we’re doing and discuss some things now?”

“No, thank you. I have my safeword if I get overwhelmed.”

“All right. I’ll take you at your word.”

He carried me into the bathroom and set me down on an odd-looking table. It was white and covered in cushions done in a pink as light as a ballerina’s slipper. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a rubbery bag hanging on a pole. It was pretty, a pastel lavender color with a pearly kind of sheen, but that wasn’t why it caught my eye. Through the bag’s slightly translucent sides, I could see it was full of water and connected to a length of off-white tubing. Realization dawned—he was going to act out the fantasy I’d been so intrigued about in his office.

Before I could balk at the idea of him feeding the slim tube inside my tight pucker, he rolled me onto my stomach. Ronnie ran his hands along my spine, massaging away tension and helping me relax.

“You have such great hands, Daddy.”

“Thank you, sweetheart.” Moving to my hips, he continued rubbing me until I groaned. “Since you mentioned you’ve never had an enema before, we’ll go slow.” He slapped either side of my ass and I loved the sudden burn left from his palm.

“Is it going to make my kitty wet?”

Ronnie dropped the front of the table, placing my tummy lower than my bottom. He teased my pussy lips with his fingers for a moment before dropping his hand. “Since you’re already wet, I’d say your kitty is going to be weeping by the time we’re done.”

“What’s it going to feel like?”

“It’s so much better if I show you rather than describe it. If you want to stop at any time, you can just tell me.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl.” He patted my hip and walked around the back of the table. An icy gel pressed into my back hole along with something hard. “The tube doesn’t need to go very deep. Try not to clench.”

I blew out a long breath as the tube advanced a little. It felt thicker than the thermometer but not uncomfortable. “I’m okay at the moment.”

“It’s important to communicate. Thank you for the reminder.”

“You’re welcome, Sir.”

“I’m going to start the water. It should be warm but not hot.”

Though I wasn’t sure what to expect, the water filled me slowly. I arched upward, trying to get into a more comfortable position, but he kept me in place.

“Stay still, Alexandria. Another minute and all the water will be administered.”

Shivering from the slightly clinical way he spoke, knowing my entire body and all my intimate places were on display for him, I moaned. “Can we make it go faster?”

“Not this time.”

He placed his hand on my lower back, keeping me still. I loved the additional pressure since I didn’t have to fight the reactions my body was experiencing. I enjoyed the enema

even more than I thought I would. The combination of the warm water and his gentle handling of my previously taboo back passage drove me wild. A few minutes ticked by slowly. I rubbed my body along the cushions, hoping for some much-needed relief. I needed to use the bathroom soon, but as anticipated, I was aroused. Ronnie withdrew the tube, but any hope of relieving myself was dashed when he pressed an icy cold object into my back passage. *Oh no.* He wasn't done with me.

"I'd like to get off the table now." I stated firmly. He was likely going to ask me questions and the thought made me grumpy.

"Why?"

I couldn't answer that gracefully. Biting my lip, I contemplated what would get me off the table the fastest. Once I'd emptied the water, I would be ready for anything else he wanted to do. "May I please get down now, Daddy?"

"While I appreciate the change to your question and your tone, I'd still like an answer."

"Because I want to." We both knew it was a cop-out. I'd have given up a month of my naughty novels if it meant we could hurry this party along. "Please?"

Ronnie responded with several smacks to each of my full bottom cheeks, rubbing them as he built up the burn. "Are you questioning Daddy's method for handling his girl?"

"No, ugh." I shook my head.

"Is your tummy bothering you?"

"No!"

“Good. Otherwise a second enema with some... additional ingredients would be in order.” His voice seemed to drop an entire octave but it could be that he was as turned on as I was.

“Oh god, Sir,” I whispered. I knew not to skate around his questions. “Will you please let me get off the table? I want another orgasm and I don’t think it can happen like this.”

“That sounds like a challenge.”

Of course it did. Because in some deep recess of my brain, I wanted him to put me in my place. I wanted to battle knowing I wouldn’t win. It was so hard to turn off the self-defeating attitude I’d slipped into the past year or so. Ronnie giving me orders to follow and commands to obey, and enforcing immediate repercussions if I didn’t, showed me how much better my life could be with him at the helm. Though we barely knew each other, I felt an instant connection to him. He was attractive but it was more than that. Allowing him to see me at my most vulnerable, awarding me pleasure, and caring for me was everything I’d ever wanted.

“Did it?” I asked in a sultry tone. “I guess you should respond then, Ronnie.”

“Naughty little thing.” He bounced his palm off my upper thighs multiple times.

“Ow! I’m sorry.”

“Not as sorry as you’re about to be.”

He adjusted something on the table and my legs parted. What the hell sort of table was this anyway? Before I could swallow my pride and beg for forgiveness, he sank two fingers inside my pussy.

“Oh!” I clawed at the edge of the table trying to find something solid to hold on to. “Daddy!”

My protest fell on deaf ears. Ronnie continued pumping his fingers in and out of my soaked kitty, dripping with proof of my arousal. I was pretty sure I was wetter than I'd ever been in my whole life. The combination of his action, the fullness of the water, and the plug teasing the bundle of nerves housed inside my most private hole meant I had no chance. I came harder than I thought possible, wave after wave of pleasure bathing me in buckets of bliss. I don't know what I screamed, some combination of his names and titles. I was fairly certain I might have said Dr. Ronnie Dreamy but it was all a blur. My limbs felt like they weighed a hundred pounds each, but my stomach rumbled, reminding me that I needed the toilet.

"Sir?" I panted. "I have to, um, go to the bathroom."

"Sure, sweetheart." Ronnie patted my hip. "Let me help you to your feet."

I nodded, swimming in a dizzying mix of endorphins. All the feel-good centers of my body lit up in the best way possible. He lifted me off the table, setting my feet on the furry rug in front of the toilet.

"I really need to go," I said, willing him to leave so I could relieve myself. There was still a thick object inside of me. It felt similar to the plug he used in his office and it needed to come out.

"Bend over so I can remove the plug."

"I can do it," I protested halfheartedly, but I was in no position to argue. Ronnie wordlessly turned me around and cracked his palm against each of my upper thighs. I was still floating, my head spacey and light. His actions made me moan.

“I hope you’ll get it through your pretty little skull that whatever I’m telling you to do is for your benefit.” Ronnie clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. Guiding my hands onto the closed lid, he pushed against my lower back until my ass popped up, giving him the access he’d demanded. “Once you start playing *that* narrative in your head instead of fighting every command I give you, things will get easier.”

The smooth plug being plucked out of me caused a rippling sensation through my body and I almost hit another peak.

“For both of us,” he finished.

“Okay, yes, I believe you.” I glanced over my shoulder. “Please leave now?”

“I’ll be in the hallway.” He leaned to kiss my forehead. “Your legs are a bit wobbly.”

“Yes, Daddy.” Wagging my eyebrows, I shooed him with my left hand. “Please go!”

Smirking, Ronnie left the bathroom. My head was spinning from everything that he had done to me, playing out some of my naughtiest fantasies. And yet, I hadn’t done anything sexual to him at all. Could it be that he didn’t want me to? *Cut it out, Lexa!* I called myself part of the new nickname Ronnie had bestowed on me. When I was growing up, my friends had called me some version of Lexi. As I got older, I’d surrounded myself with fewer friends. Since I’d been town- and city-hopping the past few years, I hadn’t connected with anyone. My best friend of fourteen years seldom had time for me, but we stayed in touch occasionally.

Sighing, I tried to stop the spiral my brain was currently experiencing. Of course Ronnie was attracted to me. He had

been since the very moment our eyes met. At least, that's when my brain had hit overdrive and I'd been thinking about kissing him full on the mouth even in a doctor's office. I'd give anything to lick every inch of his skin while he made love to me.

I forced a moment of clarity but it faded because my entire body seemed to be made of mush. I had no tension in any of my muscles, no stress headaches like I usually woke up with. Just utter peace and serenity. All the yucky thoughts in my head finally calmed.

Finishing what I needed to do, I washed my hands and then stepped into the hall. "Hi."

"Hi, sweetheart. You look like the weight of the world has been lifted from your shoulders." Ronnie smiled. "Come here."

Opening his arms, he waited for me to hold my hands up to him. He wasn't that much taller than me, maybe six inches or so, but I felt tiny when he carried me. Burying my head into the crook of his neck, I inhaled the yummy aroma of his cologne mingled with his unique scent.

I didn't recognize the room he carried me into and I blinked when he laid me down on a small table. "Daddy?"

"I have a pair of super soft pajamas that I've been hoping someone special would want to wear." Ronnie held up a violet onesie. "Would you like them?"

My insecurities faded, at least for the moment. My brain was fuzzy, still buzzing with feel-good vibes. The garment looked warm, though it was fashioned to appear like a small child's outfit. I hesitated, then reached up and rubbed the fabric between my fingers. "Yes, please."

“Let’s clean you up first.”

I murmured approvingly but didn’t speak, slightly mortified by the thought of him intimately caring for me. Ronnie wiped the front and back of me with a warm, wet cloth. He did it tenderly, not missing one crevice. I lay there without any pushback. His touch was so soothing.

My eyes fluttered shut, and I basked in the quiet moment. It was beyond my wildest dreams to be so completely and wholly taking care of. It unnerved me when I let my insecurities run away with terrible possibilities, but it was hard to be anything other than compliant as Ronnie dressed me.

“How do you feel about wearing a diaper?”

I was sure I was hearing things. Opening my eyes, I shifted my gaze to his. “What?”

“If you’re open to the idea, you’d have extra protection. You might have the sudden urge to go again.”

“I never thought about it. Would I have to, um, *use* it?”

“Not unless you want to, babygirl. Not this time.”

I narrowed my eyes. “But you’d think about making me?”

“We haven’t discussed all your limits yet, but the threat can instantly flip a naughty little girl’s mood from bratty to downright obedient.”

I didn’t love the way the diaper crinkled underneath his hands as he held it. Something about the way he said it, forcing me to do it as a punishment gave me pause. Wait. Did I want him to punish me in such a fashion? No. Maybe? “You can wear it. I mean, wear me. I mean—oh my god.” I covered my face in my hands. “Just continue, please.”

Ronnie kissed the backs of my hands. He lowered each one to my side. “I need you to answer me specifically so that I know you understand,” he said with a smile.

It was not fair. Not fair at all. “Will you please put me in a diaper for my nap, Daddy?”

“Yes, babygirl.” Ronnie slid the diaper underneath me, fastening each side with flair. It fit me perfectly somehow, though I wasn’t a tiny twig. Had he thought about us before? Did he have a random stockpile of Little objects in multiple sizes?

“How’d you know it would fit me, and um that I’d even want you to put me in one?”

Moving up a line of snaps, he finished dressing me and helped me to sit up. “I took a chance. Bought a few things. Until you kissed me, I couldn’t express any interest in you. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Daddy.” There was more to unpack there, but I glanced around the room, which appeared to be an elaborate nursery. Classy. Gorgeous. Like he had opened up the page of a fancy parenting magazine and transported the contents straight into his home. Walls done in light and dark shades of pink, with scattered dots of gold and white, made everything appear posh. A large round bassinet or crib was showcased on the other side of the room, with a curtained canopy made of some sort of pink tulle hanging over it. It looked absolutely beautiful!

On the other side of the room, sat a wide plush chair and foot-rest had been arranged by a wall-length picture window overlooking a lovely landscape worthy of Thomas Cole: pleasant trees surrounding a still a lake mirroring a clear blue sky. I wondered what it would be like to curl up there in

Ronnie's arms. We hadn't spoken at length about all of our wants and needs, which included fantasies. It was clear my handsome doctor—my *former* doctor, I reminded myself—had an interest in things we'd never spoken out loud.

When I'd said I read a lot of books, what I hadn't shared was how incredibly curious I was about exploring a very much younger mindset. I was thoroughly curious about allowing myself to be fully cared for by Ronnie. I would love to become his babygirl and it very much seemed like he wanted me to be his. The thought left me raw and vulnerable again, but he also made it seem so natural.

When I gestured hopefully at the chair in the far corner of the room, Ronnie smiled at me. "Would you like me to brush your hair, princess? Then we can sit in the chair and snuggle."

My mouth seemed too tired and relaxed to make words so I held up my thumb.

"I'm glad you're onboard." Ronnie kissed my cheek.

He grabbed a few hair ties along with an ornate hairbrush from the top of the nearby dresser. I stayed quiet as he brushed and braided my hair, savoring his gentle attention. When he was done, he held up a small, ornate mirror to show me the finished style and I beamed at the princess smiling back at me. I held my hands into a heart shape and he smiled.

"I have something else you might like too."

He held up an unusual object, and it took me a few seconds to understand what I was looking at. A pink, sparkly base, dotted with gold and white polka dots. It was a custom pacifier.

"Did it belong to somebody else first?" I asked.

“No, princess. I bought it a few years ago.” He rubbed his chin. “I was starting to think I might not ever find another Little girl. There’s still a lot of things to cover, but if you’re willing to trust me, I’d love to explore this more with you.”

“I might hit the self-destruct button and run away,” I admitted. “This is like the fairy tale I’ve always wanted, but I don’t wanna talk about it now.” I opened my mouth and pointed, hoping he would understand without words what I needed.

“We can take this as slow or as fast as you want, princess.”

My heart beamed, but it did not help the fear prickling at the base of my neck. I continued gesturing at my mouth, grunting unhappily.

Ronnie popped the gorgeous pacifier in between my lips. “Relax. I won’t make you discuss anything right now. We can talk about anything you’d like regarding your Little space after your nap.”

I’d previously thought it might be creepy to have someone touching me so intimately and putting me in baby-style clothing, but it faded. There was no sexual tension while I sat there sucking on the plastic nipple. It was almost as if the powerful orgasm in the bathroom was enough for me to fully submit to Ronnie’s wishes. He was gentle as he finished the last braid, and then he tilted my chin up.

“You look adorable, Lexa girl.”

Lifting me onto his right hip, he carried me to a fancy embossed mirror. I beamed around the pacifier at my reflection and then rested my head on his shoulder. I was so utterly content.

“Do you still want to look out the window, sweetheart?”

I held up my thumb, signaling for him to bring us to the cozy chair.

“Such a sweet girl,” he muttered into my hair, pressing a kiss to my temple. “Come on. It’s so pretty outside today. Let’s see if we can find any birds drinking from the lake.”

Ronnie sank into the cushions and wrapped the softest pink-and-white striped blanket around me. I wasn’t going to be able to keep my eyes open. I was so blissfully relaxed.

Safe in his arms, nothing could bother me. I curled my fingers into the collar of his tee-shirt, and nuzzled against his chest. I was pretty sure this was what love felt like, but before I could overthink and stress out again, sleep took me.

CHAPTER 7

Darling

Screams reached my ears, and I ran to the nursery as fast as my legs would take me. When I was a resident in the emergency department, sometimes I'd had to sprint down the hallways to get to where I needed to go, but Alexandria's screams made me beat my fastest time. She was screaming at the top of her lungs, shaking and crying. She was curled up in a tight ball in the middle of the crib and her eyes were tightly closed.

I dropped the side railing, quickly lifting her and wrapping my arms around her.

"I'm here, princess. Shhh. I'm here." I brought us to the floor, setting her next to me in the middle of the furry white rug. "Did you have a nightmare?"

"The-the-the-thing," she stammered. "I was tra-tra-trapped!"

"Shhh." I pulled her into my lap and she clung to me. "It's okay, I've got you."

She continued to cry, not giving me anything to go on, but I let her calm down naturally, rubbing the back of her head and holding her against me.

“Easy, sweetheart. Nice even breaths.”

“Okay,” she whimpered.

After a few minutes, Alexandria let out a long shuddering breath.

“What happened, princess?”

“I don’t like small spaces.”

I felt terrible.

“I apologize for putting you in the crib without talking about it first.” I rocked her as I spoke. “You fell asleep and I didn’t want to wake you. I had to take a work call.”

“I-I didn’t think about it. My head was all floaty when you dressed me.”

“Do you want to lay in Daddy’s bed to finish your nap?”

“Yes, please.”

I stood, helping her to stand before scooping her into my arms princess style. She linked her arms around my neck, nuzzling against my chest.

Grabbing the pacifier and blanket from the crib, I strutted out of the room. Tucking her into my bed, I joined her, holding her close to me. When I offered her the pacifier this time, she opened her mouth and I popped it in between her lips.

I was so thankful that she’d readily agreed to everything we did today, though we hadn’t discussed all of our kinks in detail. Still, it meant so much to me that she trusted me. As her Daddy. As her boyfriend. It seemed like I had been searching

my entire life for her, and I was grateful she'd made the appointment at my clinic.

We were virtual strangers and yet Alexandria had become someone important to me in a short amount of time. Kissing her temple, I then relaxed into the mattress with my babygirl. A nap would do us both some good.

* * *

Alexandria

Waking up in Ronnie's arms, I stared at the side of his face, listening to him breathing as he slept. He was the most patient man I'd ever met. He hadn't gotten angry when I had a meltdown in the crib. He'd rescued me, soothed me, and let me calm down on my own without judgment. Ronnie had brought me into his bed to rest, and I wasn't ashamed of my reaction like I thought I might be.

Letting out a breath, I slowly edged off the mattress until my feet hit the floor without a sound. All those years of quietly getting out of bed on Christmas morning to peek downstairs before anyone else paid off. My parents had been okay as far as parents go, but they'd taken away a lot of my childhood magic early on by discouraging fairy tales and fanciful thinking. We had a Christmas tree in my house, but no Santa Claus to bring presents. I had plenty of chocolate eggs and jelly beans in my Easter basket, but my parents hid them, not the Easter bunny. They'd wanted me to be practical, but all it did was cause me to daydream, creating stories in my head about magical animals in the forest.

Handling what I needed to in the bathroom, I disposed of the unused diaper in the trash pail. Then I padded back to the bedroom and climbed under the covers.

Ronnie opened his eyes as I returned to his side. “Hey, princess. Are you feeling better?”

“Mm-hmm.” Plucking the pacifier out of my mouth, I reached across him and set it on the nightstand. “I really needed a nap. Thank you.”

“You don’t have to thank me, sweetheart.”

“Hm? I think I should do something to show you my gratitude, Sir.” I was in an odd mixture of Little and Big in my head. Being dressed in the onesie and having my hair in ornate pigtails should have kept me firmly planted in my younger headspace. But I wanted to know what he tasted like.

“You don’t have to show me anything, Alexandria. Let’s go eat some lunch. We can watch a movie if you’d like.”

“No, Sir.” Boldly tracing my fingers across the waistband of his lounge pants, I skated lower, stopping at his upper thigh. “I’d like to show you now.”

Ronnie wrapped his hand around mine, pausing any further action. “I’m not rejecting your advances, because I’d very much like to experience what you had in mind.”

“But?”

“It seems like you might be in-between spaces right now. Is that true?”

I didn’t want to answer questions. No, I wanted to get away because he said he wasn’t rejecting me but it felt that way. “Maybe.”

“Since you aren’t sure, we’re not going to do anything sexual right now.”

We’re not doing anything sexual? I’d finally taken a leap of faith, embarking into a relationship with him, but it was short lived because I didn’t want to be cooped up in a stupid crib. Now he wanted nothing more to do with me.

We aren’t doing anything sexual because I don’t want you.

Part of me repeated all the nonsense I’d spouted in my head and labeled it as bullshit. He may have said something important after the sexual stuff but I blocked it out.

Like all the other good things in my life, Ronnie showed his true colors when I acted up.

Scraping back layers and layers of repressed memories, wanting desperately to be cared for by more emotionally available caregivers than my logical-to-a-fault parents, brought out an uncomfortable truth. Ronnie had offered everything I’d always dreamed of on a silver platter—practically giftwrapped it—but it was more than that. He’d showed me that it was okay to be cherished in both my Little and Big mindsets. But that’s where it stopped.

Ronnie raised an eyebrow as if he were watching the wheels turn in my brain, and I hit the self-destruct button. “I knew you were just like everyone else.”

“No, Alexandria.”

Ronnie reached for my other hand, but I yanked free of his reach. Rolling out of his bed, I landed on the floor with a huge thump.

“Pomegranate, pomegranate, pomegranate!” I screamed as I tore the onesie from my body. I hadn’t meant to wreck the soft jumper but a few of the snaps popped off. I needed to

leave the room more than I needed my next breath. My heart beat wildly in my chest as I panicked.

“Alexandria.” Ronnie pushed the blankets off and got out of bed.

I rushed out of the room, needing to increase the distance between us, but I heard his heavy footfalls trailing behind me as he followed. “Pomegranate.”

“Let’s take a breath, honey.”

“Pomegranate!” I had no idea why I felt so strongly about repeating my safeword, but I used it like a battle cry as I blindly ran into the living room, determined to put my own clothes on again. I couldn’t seem to find them and tears blurred my vision. It made me even more upset and I froze in place.

“I hear you, Alexandria.” He took my face in between his hands, forcing me to focus. “Breathe in through your nose.”

Tears poured down my cheeks. I wanted to shove him away from me and run out of his house, but I was naked, shaking, and freaking out. Doing my best to inhale through my nose, which proved to be challenging while I was crying, I held it.

“Exhale through your mouth, sweetie. Blow it all the way out.”

He deserved an explanation and part of me knew it, but how could I explain when I didn’t understand it myself? Caught between the sudden rush of emotions and the glaring vulnerability, I tried to pull away. All I wanted was to be far away from him so I could figure things out. Except that wasn’t really what I wanted either. I couldn’t think. Everything was too much right now.

“Once you’ve calmed down, I’ll get your clothes. Breathe with me.”

“I’m cold!”

“I brought the blanket, but we need to calm your body down.”

Wrapping the soft fleece around me, he helped me sit on the couch. The blanket smelled like my floral perfume mixed with his warm amber and cedarwood cologne. I kept it in my hands as he stared so that I’d have something tactile to run through my fingers.

“Breathe, princess.”

I did as he instructed. After a few minutes, the ringing in my ears faded and my eyesight sharpened.

Ronnie retrieved my clothing, assisting me into my pajamas from this morning without preamble.

“I said the word,” I told him.

“Yes, I know. Everything stops when you call your safeword,” he assured me. “Please tell me what upset you.”

I folded my arms over my chest. “I don’t want to talk about it. I’m going home and you can’t stop me.”

“Yes, you can leave in a little while.” He sank into the cushions, his thigh touching mine. It was a gentle closeness without him holding me. “But first you need to get some food in your tummy and take another dose of antibiotics, since you missed it earlier.”

“No.”

“I understand your instinct is telling you to run, but it’s still important to take care of yourself. Will you do the things I

mentioned if you leave right now?”

“Nope.”

He pressed a hand to the bridge of his nose, then looked up at the ceiling for a few moments before redirecting his gaze to me. “I have a footlong Italian sub in the fridge. Would you like to split it?”

“I guess.” He was correct in his assessment of the situation—I did want to rush away from him so I wouldn’t have to explain the issues. But my stomach rumbled. It was important to get food into my system.

Ronnie held out his hand, and despite my intentions, I laced my fingers in his. I wasn’t anywhere near done with our relationship, but I couldn’t face him. I was not ready to have any conversations about the truth of what was bothering me.

Even after my tantrum, somehow he was still taking care of me. Maybe I had been too quick to jump to a false conclusion.

Leading me into the kitchen, he brought me to the table in the cozy breakfast nook. I sat, hoping he wouldn’t expect me to speak about the gross crap banging through my head. Communication and honesty were two of his three rules, but instead of just talking to him, I’d thrown a fit.

Ronnie said nothing as he gathered food and plates. I didn’t help the situation and the tension mounted until I could practically cut it with a knife.

He set the sandwich in front of me, along with a bottle of water. Joining me at the table, he sat across from me and dug into his food. I eyed the yummy-looking sandwich and took a few bites. It was tasty and I ate hungrily, occasionally sipping the water. We let the sound of our eating fill the kitchen, and

he gave me the space to meditate on the events that had happened. Still, I wasn't ready to delve into the topic.

"Thank you for the food, Ronnie."

"You're welcome."

Without fanfare, he stood and cleared our plates. Returning to the table, he held out a single antibiotic lollipop, as well as the container with the rest of my medication. I accepted them with a nod, before popping the sucker into my mouth.

"Would you like to talk about what happened?"

"You asked me to be yours this morning, but I think we should stop." I idly sucked on the medicated pop. The flavor wasn't horrible but it didn't taste like a real treat. "Shortest relationship ever," I muttered.

"I'll honor whatever decision you make. However, it will be *after* we've had a chance to discuss everything in detail. Our dynamic is about finding a balance of what you enjoy and what I enjoy." He offered his hand to me. "Deal?"

I stared at his hand but didn't accept it. "No, because I messed everything up."

"We are still learning about one another, sweetheart." Ronnie slowly dropped his hand. "We're finding boundaries. Please don't let one bad moment ruin our entire day."

"I'm good at ruining stuff," I stated matter-of-factly while simultaneously licking the pop. "Told you as much."

"Your attitude is not helping the situation." He leaned back and folded his arms over his chest. "It sounds like you'd like to open up at least a little bit."

"Nuh-uh." I sucked faster.

“Okay.” His jaw clenched and relaxed as he stared at me. “We’ll shelve it for now. Make sure you finish your medicine. You also need to get your leg looked at tomorrow.”

“I don’t technically have to listen to you anymore.”

“Do it anyway.”

“Fine.” I reached across to his hand, still folded against his chest, and shook his fingers. “I’ll take the antibiotics but I’m not going to the clinic tomorrow or ever. It’s nice of you to care even after...” Swallowing the rest of my words, I clamped my mouth shut.

“Of course I care. If you refuse to go to the clinic, text me a picture of the wound around noon. As long as it looks better than today, you don’t have to get it seen in person.”

“I’ll think about it.”

Finishing the last bit of lollipop, I stood up and washed my hands in the sink before tossing the stick in the trash. Returning to the living room, I gathered up my bag and belongings.

Ronnie followed me to the doorway. Putting my shoes on felt like the final nail in the coffin of our relationship.

I highly doubted my ability to speak to him after acting like such a distempered brat! Part of me did not want to leave under these circumstances. No, I couldn’t renege after calling my safeword. That would be much worse and make me appear to be wishy-washy. Or worse, he might think I called the safeword to cause a scene, which I definitely did not mean to do. No, he likely did not think that. I was overwhelmed because after feeling so good all day, my body seemed heavy and lethargic. It no longer seemed like I could twirl on clouds, my happy effervescence poofed away in an instant.

He looked as gutted as I felt as he opened the front door and we stepped onto the stoop. “Please get some rest, sweetheart. Call me if you need anything.”

Throwing my arms around him, I hugged him tightly. Tears pricked the back of my eyes but I wouldn’t cry again. “Sorry.”

I offered a half-assed apology because if my head and my heart hurt this much after a few hours of being together, it was no stretch of the imagination that he likely felt the same. I was childish. I was uncouth. I was awful. I never should have agreed to be in any sort of relationship, dynamic or otherwise. Even worse than all that, I’d finally found a doctor who I liked enough to go back to more than once and I’d wrecked our professional relationship too.

Despite the tumultuous emotions tumbling through me, I kissed his cheek. “Sorry,” I mumbled again.

“I’m not upset with you, Alexandria.” Ronnie kissed the crown of my head. “Be nice to my girl.”

His words broke the tiny string of resolve I had left, and I pushed out of his arms. I didn’t want him to see me cry again, but tears fell down my cheeks. “I-I can’t promise that.”

“You can stay the night if you want,” he offered. It seemed like he didn’t want me to leave any more than I wanted to stay. “I have another guest room.”

“I’ll do what you said, but I can’t stay here.” Rushing down the steps and along the path, I dared not look back at him.

“Don’t run, Alexandria.”

For some bizarre reason, I listened to what he said and slowed my steps.

“It’s absolutely insane and you’ll probably never forgive me, but I love....” I pressed my hands over my heart, forcing a breath. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw him leaning against the door jamb. “I loved all of this. It’s all me and my overthinking. I-I wasn’t lying to you this morning.”

“As much as I’d like to come down there, scoop you up, and bring you back inside, you’ve asked for distance. I’m doing my best to give you what you want.” He rubbed a hand across his chin. “But there is no part of me that thinks you haven’t been truthful. I was excited to have you here, and I went too fast. I should have read your actions instead of just listening to your words. I didn’t prepare you for the intense feelings you’re having right now. That’s on me.”

“No! No, it’s not.”

“Yes, Alexandria, it is. We should have talked more this morning.” He sighed. “While I believe your feelings are valid, I think you’ve decided to sabotage your happiness instead of allowing yourself to live it. I hope that isn’t true.”

His voice broke on the last part of his statement and it was like he’d taken a sledge hammer to my heart. Ronnie was correct, just like he’d been about everything else. I was scared to be happy. It wasn’t his fault that I couldn’t get my life sorted out. That was all on me.

“I’m not a good girl.” I said more to myself than to him. “So, it doesn’t really surprise me that I’m not good for you either.”

“You don’t get to make decisions for me, sweetheart. I know what I’m getting into. My eyes are wide open. You know what I see?”

I shook my head torn between wanting to hang on to his every word and wanting to shut him out completely.

“Right now, I see a sad, scared Little girl who thinks she’s too much of a burden.” Ronnie dropped his hand, casually placing it in his pocket. “It seems like you believe you’re placing extra stress on other people. You don’t have to manage others, Alexandria. Allow them to shoulder their own emotions, and to take care of themselves.”

Ugh. My heart hurt from his spot-on assessment. He seemed to know me better than I knew myself. “You barely know me.”

“I apologize if I’ve assumed something incorrect.”

“No, it’s, uh, you’re right, but it’s unsettling. I don’t open up to many people. I don’t have a lot of friends. My family isn’t supportive and we barely speak to each other.” I took a few steps toward my car. “You read between the lines better than anyone else who’s been in my life for years.”

“To recap, I’ve upset you because I understand you?”

“Something like that.” Crossing to my car, I unlocked it. Opening the front door, I leaned on it. Then I tossed my belongings into the passenger seat, climbed in and started the engine.

My words and my actions didn’t match, but I couldn’t face my own glaring insecurities another minute. I had to sort my problems out on my own before allowing someone else to uncover them.

Ronnie had showed me that he was paying attention to the minute details, reading between the lines as I’d said, but I wasn’t brave enough to let him see all of me.

* * *

My ride home was a blur of stoplights and streetlights. It was a good thing we lived relatively close to one another, because I drove home on muscle memory alone.

Shooting off a text as I entered my house, I let Ronnie know I was home. *Safe and sound.*

He replied immediately. *Thank you for letting me know.*

Staring at the phone, I wanted to reach through it and beg for forgiveness. Instead, I called it a night at eight o'clock and climbed into bed. But I couldn't rest. My heart was shattered from the horrible memory of the disappointment and pain splashed across Ronnie's face before I ran out of his house. Well, he'd stopped me from running but the hurt in his voice had played on repeat as I mindlessly navigated the roads. How could I have been so cruel? He cared about me.

I pressed both hands to my chest as if I could will the broken pieces back together.

Ronnie hadn't caused the heartbreak—I'd done it to myself, sabotaging my first real relationship in years, and any chance to be happy, before he could do it. Loneliness seeped from my pores as I curled into a fetal position, crying at my stupidity. He would never forgive me, and even if he could, I'd never forgive me.

CHAPTER 8

Alexandria

Pacing along the sidewalk in front of the clinic while sipping my iced mocha latte and holding onto the hazelnut espresso that I'd gotten for Ronnie, I fretted. Savannah and I had spoken at length about the situation. She was a lot like me in many different ways. She'd listened to me prattle on about every moment of my date with Ronnie and hadn't interrupted. She was quickly becoming a good friend to me. It was at her insistence that I'd taken it upon myself to be brave for the first time in my life. I ignored most of Ronnie's phone calls the past week. I only occasionally answered his text messages. But he let me know he was available the next few nights if I wanted to discuss things. His willingness to talk brought me to the clinic afterhours waiting for him.

Ronnie shouldn't be offering to give me the time of day after I broke up with him. *Attempted* to break up with him, I corrected. Technically we were still together since we hadn't gotten into the nitty gritty of why I spoke my safeword. Not that there was much of a possibility of remaining his girlfriend after I threw an epic fit and ran out of his house.

Ronnie was patient, more patient than most people, but it only extended so far. It wasn't the entire truth. When he said I believed myself to be a burden to other people, it was exactly how I felt deep down inside—a self-limiting belief that I'd formed long ago. It had no place of worth in my life, but I felt it all the same. I believed it was part of the reason why I moved around the country as well. Anytime I stayed in a place long enough to make true connections, I bailed. It was easier to brush away people who didn't know me very well instead of sticking around and having to lean on them when things went sideways. I knew I needed to change in order to make my relationships work, especially one with Ronnie. I missed him so much more than I thought I was going to.

Everything that I had been doing since I moved to town showed that I was getting more comfortable stepping outside my comfort zone, something even Everleigh had picked up on, but it was hard.

After twenty minutes of nothing but the sound of my footsteps hitting the pavement and me slurping my coffee the front doors opened. Suddenly nervous that Ronnie wouldn't speak to me at all, I almost lost my hold on both cups when he stepped onto the sidewalk.

He bridged the distance between us. His hair was wet—he must have showered in the office—and instead of his scrubs he wore a tee-shirt and jeans under a dark-brown leather jacket.

“I, uh, brought you a coffee,” I offered lamely, holding the paper cup in his direction. It had been less than a week since we laid eyes on one another, but it suddenly felt like much longer. “I've been out here for a while.”

“Thank you.” Ronnie accepted it, taking a small sip. “It’s delicious. Are you okay?”

“Um, yeah, I’m fine.” I brushed a piece of my hair out of my eyes. “Just dandy.”

He shook his head, likely reading between the lines as he always did. I was absolutely not okay.

“I can’t in good conscience continue seeing you as a guest in my office, at least not directly. There are a few other doctors here that might be a good match for you, but it’s already past closing time. So, if you needed to be seen today—”

Another doctor? *That’s* why he thought I was here? To get another doctor for me?

“Fuck you, Dr. Dreamy.”

Bile rose up into my throat. Tears pricked my eyes, but instead of allowing sadness to prevail, I let it transform into anger. He opened his mouth and before I even knew what I was doing, I threw my iced drink at his chest. The top of the container opened and liquid splashed the front of his tee-shirt. I hadn’t expected that, though I’m not sure what I thought would happen.

Ronnie’s eyes darkened and he leveled a glare at me. A week ago, the reaction would have been enough for me to poke his buttons a little harder, tease him, but today I was done.

Flipping him off, I spun on my heel and practically ran to my car instead of strutting away like the bad-ass I wished I was. I didn’t care. My doctor. He couldn’t be my doctor. Well, he’d warned me. I hadn’t realized that was all he’d been telling me then, but I’d been too Little to pay attention. And I

thought...I thought I'd had a Daddy. Not just for a date, but for...

But no. No, I didn't have a Daddy. And now I didn't have a doctor either. I wanted to laugh as much as I wanted to cry.

"Alexandria!" he called. He was following me, something else I hadn't expected. "Wait! Would you just listen?"

I covered my ears with my hands, probably looking ridiculous as I continued to my car. I could still hear every word so the gesture was pointless.

"No, you don't get to storm away from me, Alexandria."

"That's exactly what I'm doing!"

Ronnie met me at the driver's side door, pressing his hand against the top so I couldn't get in and drive off. He had already taken his jacket off and was holding it in his other hand. "You're not leaving until you hear what I have to say. Not this time."

"La, la, la," I said in a singsong voice. "I can't hear you."

Keeping his eyes on me he grabbed the back of his tee-shirt and yanked it off, revealing his chest, his stomach and slim hips. The sight made me want to lick him. As intimate as he had been with me, I hadn't seen any part of his body without clothing. I refused to give him the satisfaction of the effect his body had on me. Instead, I pretended like he wasn't shirtless in the middle of a parking lot. He gently but firmly tugged my hands away from my ears and set my arms at my sides. I was getting aroused from the smooth lines of his body taunting me.

"Are you done throwing a tantrum?"

Flustered, I bit on the inside of my cheek to stop any additional curses or nonsense—or uncensored sexual thoughts—from flying out of my mouth. Despite whatever he'd been talking about, I still wanted to be with him.

“Answer me.”

“No.”

“All right.” Ronnie calmly took my upper arm in his hand and led me to the front of the car. Glancing around the parking lot, he seemed satisfied that we were alone and away from the security cameras. Before I could process what he meant to do, he bent me over the hood. *Oh no!* His knee pressed in between my thighs, keeping me in place, and dread filled my stomach. Ronnie wouldn't actually discipline me in the middle of the parking lot!

“Is there anything you'd like to say to me?” he asked. “Perhaps the name of a certain red-skinned fruit?”

I seethed...but I stayed silent. It didn't matter. He couldn't possibly be serious about this anyway.

When he laid his jacket and wet shirt next to me, I realized he was.

“If you have nothing to add, sweetheart, I'll continue.”

A snap of leather sounded behind my shoulder and then his belt kissed my upper thighs.

“Ouch!” I wished I'd been wearing something thicker than leggings because the burn was not pleasant. I was not going to enjoy the strap. “You said you wanted nothing to do with me!”

“I said nothing of the sort.”

He was right, but I was in full-on battle mode. “You *implied* it.”

“No, I did not. Are you ready to listen yet, Lexa girl?”

“No!” Willful indifference filled me. I wanted to listen as much as I wanted to run. His rules were easy to follow, surprisingly easy, but I felt wholly out of my element. Other men in my life had stated time and time again that my needs were too much for them. If I allowed Dr. Dreamy to care for me at my most vulnerable, I wouldn’t survive the heartache he would inevitably cause. Even though I knew, heart and soul, that he would never do anything to actually hurt me. He wasn’t spanking me to hurt me...but because he cared.

Two more leather strokes landed across the full expanse of my bottom.

“Stop!”

“Are your ears working now?”

“No, Sir.”

Regardless of my reply, he was breaking down the walls I’d cemented around my heart. If he broke through, the tears would likely never cease.

After four well-placed strokes, I stopped fighting him and the dam burst inside of me. I was thankful for the tiny scrap of clothing in between my bare skin and the implement because I couldn’t imagine how much worse it could have been.

“I can’t see you as a guest because we’re in a relationship.” Ronnie rubbed the back of my head for a minute before shifting me to wrap his arms around my waist. “Doctors are not permitted to date their patients or show any romantic interest. Lucky for me you kissed me first.”

“I broke up with you,” I reminded him.

“Obviously, I’m not going to force you to be my girlfriend, so if you do want to break up, I will respect your decision, but —” He pulled back and helped me straighten up enough to see each other, eye to eye. His were warm with concern and just as blue as I remembered. “—but you never said that. You just ran away, like you’re trying to run now. We still haven’t discussed what happened.”

“And we’re not going to!”

He caught my hand as I turned away, but held it gently. I could have broken his grip easily if I wanted to. Didn’t I want to? Right now, all I wanted was him, but all I could think of to say in that moment was, “So, can I see another doctor at your office?”

“Yes, I can transfer your care to another physician.” His brows furrowed into a puzzled frown. “Is that it? You thought I was rejecting you because I can’t have you as a physician and a girlfriend?”

“No, it...it’s something else.” I took a huge breath of air, squeezing his hand for strength. “If I give you my heart you might break it into pieces.”

“I could say the same for you, but I want to try. I really care about you. I think we could have something really special.” He stroked his thumb across my fingers. “Will you trust me to be your Daddy?”

“I...I want to, but...what if...?”

“What if it doesn’t work out?” he guessed. “I can’t see the future. And I know that sometimes, no matter how hard people try, things don’t work out. But I also know you miss one hundred percent of the shots you don’t take. I want to take this one. I trust you, Lexa-girl. Do you trust me?”

“I’m scared, but I *want* to trust you.”

“Good.” He beamed. “That’s a good start. “Will you trust me enough to be your boyfriend?”

“What about all the limits I found that I didn’t know I had?” *Shoot*. I realized too late that I was delving into the reasons behind my tantrum instead of listening to what he was saying.

Ronnie cocked an eyebrow. “Do you remember what I said at my house?”

I blew out a long breath and fought the urge to roll my eyes. “Our dynamic is about finding a balance of what I like and what you like, Sir.”

“That’s right.”

I cleared my throat several times since it bothered me that he’d easily pulled the title from my lips, and he allowed me a few moments to catch my bearings. It was all about testing limits, finding things I enjoyed, and soft limits, activities I didn’t love but could tolerate because he enjoyed them so much. And maybe getting out of my comfort zone could be a good thing. The pacifier had been new, but I found it soothed me when my anxiety overwhelmed me. I could even handle being put to bed in jammies with a diaper, but the crib caused my claustrophobia to rear its ugly head. These were all things we still needed to discuss, but I wasn’t quite ready to pick it all apart.

And yet, Ronnie stroked nerves inside of me no one had ever touched. During the time we spent together, I’d had countless orgasms. He’d dedicated the entire day to my needs, my wants, and my pleasure. I’d be really silly not to be in a relationship with a man whose words matched his actions.

“Is there anything else on your mind, princess?”

“Mm.” We hadn’t broached the topic of more adult things, but our attraction to each other felt palpable. I wanted to touch him, kiss him, explore his body and find out what made him tick. Figure out what sort of things gave him pleasure. Swallowing hard, I took another moment to answer. “Are we going to have sex?”

“We haven’t talked about your naughty fantasies or any of your kinks in the bedroom. I very much want to do those things, but only when you’re ready and we both understand what that means.” He kissed my lips and ran his thumb across them, as if he wanted to claim my mouth. “What do you say?”

“With all the stuff you’ve stuck up my butt, you’ve never mentioned....” Feeling shy, I looked away. How could I ask him if he would take me in my most private place?

“Mentioned what, sweetheart?”

No fair. He was going to make me spell it out as he had done more than once. It was important to communicate, and it was one of our rules. We had barely done more than kissing. Well, no *that* wasn’t quite true. Ronnie gave me countless orgasms but I hadn’t done anything sexual to him.

“Say it.” He pulled me up into his arms, something I couldn’t seem to get enough of. It was so unusual for me to be lifted up and carried like I was a tiny princess. It made me weak in the knees and turned me into a melty pile of goo each and every time.

I rubbed along his arms and skated my hands lower to caress his abs. I liked that he carried a little bit of weight around his stomach instead of a six-pack. I was attracted to

him on multiple levels. *Ugh*. I wanted to kiss every inch of him, damning any consequences.

“I, um, want to know what it would feel like for you to take me in my naughty back hole, Sir.”

“I’m going to enjoy claiming the tight ring of your ass, but you’re going to have to wait.” Dragging his teeth across the sensitive tip of my earlobe, he continued to the sweet hollow of my neck. “After I thoroughly punish you for throwing a fit tonight, we can discuss your fantasies. Are you ready to talk about them?”

“I haven’t been able to get you out of my head, Ronnie. When I left your house, all I did was cry. I took off work the next day because I was distraught.”

“I hate that you were upset. Believe me, you weren’t the only one.”

“You can’t possibly dedicate so much time to pampering me, Sir.”

“Still avoiding the question.” He clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth and adjusted me slightly. “I will spend as much time spoiling you as I want. That includes taking care of you and providing you a safe place to be yourself in whatever way you’d like. Whether you’re in a Big or Little mindset, Alexandria, it doesn’t matter to me. I want to be with you.”

“I like you,” I admitted, though my confession likely didn’t come as a surprise. Or maybe it did, considering how I’d acted.

“I like you, Lexa girl.”

“I sorta think that I love you, Daddy.”

“I love you, Alexandria. It’s been a long time since I’ve heard those words or said them to anyone.”

“I’m so sorry for getting all caught in my head.” I sucked in a breath and let it out slowly. He’d confessed that he loved me too! “Will you please be both my boyfriend and my Daddy?”

“Yes, baby. I’d love that.” Ronnie kissed my lips gently. “But tonight you’re going to see a side of Daddy you haven’t seen yet.”

Heart racing, I nodded. My palms were sweaty and I was uncomfortable in a frustrated way. Pushing out of his arms, he slowly lowered me until I was standing on my own two feet. “I know you’re serious, Sir, but I’m so fucking aroused.”

Ronnie reached behind me and slapped both sides of my ass hard. “What did I say about cursing?”

Ridiculously turned on and with proof of my arousal pooling into the gusset of my panties, I licked my tongue across his bottom lip and nipped it once. “It’s not a rule.”

“Careful, Lexa girl. You’re playing with fire.”

“Good thing you know how to treat burns, Daddy.”

“I’ll make your ass burn so hot, it will make your kitty weep.” He kissed me passionately, possessively laying claim to my mouth until I could scarcely breathe. Ronnie broke away far too early for my likening and I pouted. “Then you’ll be begging Daddy to put out the fire.”

“Yes, please.”

“Oh, baby. You don’t know what you’re asking for.”

“Yes, Daddy, I do.”

“Get in your car and follow me to my house,” he nearly growled.

The thought of him punishing me thoroughly and then fucking me senseless brought heat to my face. I stood awkwardly looking up at him without moving, lost in his blue eyes.

“If I have to repeat myself, Alexandria, you’re going to be truly sore.”

“Sorry, Daddy.” I hugged him tightly. “I’ll see you in a few minutes.”

“I’ll see you in a few. Drive safe.”

“I will.” I let go, getting into my car and starting the engine. I couldn’t stop the thoughts barreling through my head at a million miles an hour. We were together. Ronnie wasn’t mad at me and he was taking the time to correct my behavior while strengthening our relationship.

He shut the driver’s side, and I watched him grab his clothing before striding to his own vehicle.

The scene had played out much like I had the night I’d kissed him in the same parking lot, like a strange déjà vu but it wasn’t quite the same. There was no more questioning my thoughts or feelings. Ronnie loved me. And I was going to prove to him without a shadow of a doubt how willing I was to be everything he wanted me to be. I was going to be myself for once and allow him to catch me. The thought thrilled and frightened me both, but I was ready to take the leap.

CHAPTER 9

Darling

I could still taste Alexandria on my lips, her delicious strawberry flavored lip gloss combined with the iced coffee she'd been drinking, and I craved more. I wanted to put my mouth to work on her sweet sex until she screamed my name, begging me to fuck her. *Damn it.* She wasn't the only one who'd been reduced to tears after she called her safeword and hightailed it out of my house. She was physically okay, but watching my Little girl flounce out of my house, with the forlorn expression hiding just under the fake anger, had left me hollow. She wasn't angry at me. No, she wasn't even upset with the way I'd treated her.

I'd stroked the one part of her that she held so tightly away from everyone else as well as herself: her heart. I'd hoped that in time I would help her heal some of the trauma she'd been holding onto. I believed my caring of her left her feeling raw and vulnerable. Alexandria needed me to be the Daddy she'd always dreamed of, handling her gentle heart with a softer touch than the way I handled the rest of her body.

We made it to my house in record time, though it still seemed to be a long time since I'd seen her. My girl parked next to me in the driveway, casually shutting and locking the car as if I hadn't promised to punish her disobedient little ass for throwing half a cup of ice-coffee in my direction. No, it was more than that. She'd thought for one brief moment that I was abandoning her, that in telling her that she needed to find another doctor at my clinic, I was doing the same thing so many others had done to her. That I didn't want her anymore and she was too much.

Getting out of my car, I stared at her for a moment, drinking in the sweet curve of her hips, her round tummy and up to her voluptuous breasts. I tore my gaze away from her body and settled on her face. She was sucking on her bottom lip, chewing on it as she studied my expression.

"Hi, Daddy," she said playfully, but there was no time for games. She had a hell of a punishment coming. I didn't look forward to disciplining her, but we both needed it.

"Let's go inside, sweetheart." I nodded toward the front door. Something about my tone, or perhaps the resolve on my face, caused her to slow down her steps. She was taking her sweet time and I resisted the urge to strip her bare on my sidewalk. Reaching for her, I lifted her up and over my shoulder. Fumbling with my keys, it took longer than usual to locate the one I wanted and even longer to unlock my own front door.

"Do you need help, Sir?" There was an amused edge to her voice. I slapped the palm of my free hand against each of her thighs playfully until she groaned. "I was offering to *help* you, Daddy."

“I’ve got it,” I muttered before finally unlocking the door and shutting it behind us. Carrying her to my bedroom, I set her on her feet. Taking an extra moment, I hung up my leather jacket and threw my dirty shirt in the wash. “Take your clothes off.”

“We’re not even in your office,” she sassed.

I believed her gentle teasing came from the reality of the situation closing in on her and I gave her a moment. I undid the laces of my sneakers, removing them as I kept my eyes on her, stopping only to take off my socks and shuck out of my jeans. By some miracle, her ice-coffee bath hadn’t left me sticky. Otherwise she’d be spending time with her nose in the corner while I showered.

“If Daddy needs to strip you bare, it’s going to be much worse for you.”

My growled threat with a hint of promise finally moved her into action. She took off her clothing as fast as I’d ever witnessed, until she wore nothing but a purple lacy garment that I supposed counted as panties, but the tiny scrap of fabric didn’t cover much.

“What did I tell you to do, Alexandria?”

“Str-strip,” she stammered, then quickly danced the last piece of fabric off her body. She went to cover her mound with her hands, but I anticipated it and took her hands in mine.

“Bend over the bed.”

“Do I have my safeword?”

“Yes.” Satisfied that she wouldn’t bolt, I released her hands. “No matter what we are doing you can always say ‘red’ or your safeword.” I pointed at the center of the mattress.

“Push your bottom out for my correction. Take it like the good girl I know you are, and you’ll get rewarded.”

“Yes, Daddy.” She let out a long breath then placed herself into position.

When I spanked her while she was over my lap, I enjoyed teasing her, but we were in a different mindset. I drank in the sight of her pale bottom cheeks, and I ran my hand over each of them. Warming her ass with my palm, I slapped from the top of her rump all the way to her sit-spots. “Why am I spanking you?”

“I interrupted you. Instead of asking clarifying questions or letting you finish, I threw my coffee at you.” She sniffled.

“Yes, you did.” I finished the warmup by landing one last smack against the full expanse of her ass. “Do you think it was nice to douse me in ice-cold liquid because you were angry?”

“No, Sir.”

I left her for a moment, but only long enough to select a purple heartwood paddle from my collection. I tested it in my hands a few times. It was not much bigger than a hairbrush, and it did not have a lot of give. Returning to her side, I showed her the implement. “I’m going to call this Alexandria’s correction paddle.”

She visibly shuddered. “I’ve never been spanked with a paddle. Is it going to hurt a lot more than your belt?”

“Yes, because I’m targeting the same spots.” I brought it down on her upturned bottom cheeks and she squeaked. “But once we’re done, you have a clean slate. No more dwelling on the past.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“We can have a conversation about it, so that I don’t wind up doing something that will trigger you in the future, but then it’s over.”

“I understand, Sir.”

“Good girl,” I praised, running my free hand along her spine. “You’ll get twenty on each side. I won’t make you count them this time.”

“Thank you, Daddy.” She gathered a bit of the comforter in her hands. “I’m ready.”

She was incredible, so trusting of our connection and of me. My heart beamed with pride for my sweet girl. Eyeing the fullest curves of her butt, I slapped the paddle hard against either side several times in fast succession. She groaned but did not move out of place. I continued paddling her ass building the heat from my earlier correction. It did not take much for her skin to blush into a hot pink.

“Ouch!” She arched upward, but immediately dropped down to the mattress. “That one hurt worse than the others.”

“It’s going to get worse before it gets better,” I assured her. We would come out the other side stronger and in a better place overall, but I wished we were doing fun things. I spanked her with the wicked implement knowing she was not enjoying the pain.

Alexandria sobbed with the next round, letting out a long string of promises. She said she would talk to me instead of running away like she was so quick to do. She mentioned her lacking the ability to stay in one place too long and how she didn’t want to lead me into a false sense of security. As the punishment continued, she babbled on about how she hadn’t meant to hurt me. She didn’t want to share the feelings I’d

brought to the surface and she chose to stuff them away instead of dealing with them.

Finally, I set the pretty heart shaped paddle on the bed next to her and slowly turned her onto her back.

Seeing her tear-stained face, puffy from crying, made me want to kiss the tracks away. Joining her on the bed, I pulled her into my lap. Kissing her cheeks, her forehead, the crown of her head, I let the last of her cries fade into shuddering breaths. “It’s over, baby. You took your punishment so well.”

“Can we stay like this for a while?”

“Yes. I’ll hold you for as long as you want me to.”

“And do you really forgive me for all the stuff that I did?”

“Yes, sweetheart. I forgive you.” I kissed the crown of her head. “Here’s the real question I have for you. Can you forgive yourself?”

Nuzzling her head into the crook of my neck, she blew out a long breath. She seemed lost in thought, deeply pondering her response. “Not yet, but I really want to work on it.”

“Will you work on it for me as much as for yourself, Alexandria?”

“Yes, Daddy. I’ll do my best.”

“I’m sure you will.” Lying down with her in my arms was the best feeling in the entire world. I was sure she was dripping wet with need after everything we’d done, but there would be time for that later. If and when she was ready, I would claim whatever part of her body she wanted me to, but not a moment before.

* * *

Alexandria

As I rocked in his arms, I savored the feeling of sitting on his lap while my bottom burned from his punishment. I didn't enjoy being spanked with the paddle, especially not after receiving several strokes with his belt in the parking lot, but it cleared away so many intrusive thoughts that were stuck in my head. I'd shared a lot with him during and after his correction. I told him things I'd never even thought of sharing with another person.

Letting out a breath, I realized my pussy ached to be filled by him. Since I'd purged so much gunk from my head and my heart, I was raw and vulnerable but hornier than ever.

Raising my head to catch his eyes, I admired how handsome he looked as he stared into my eyes. "Will you claim my dripping wet kitty, Daddy?" I almost purred. "I *need* you inside of me."

"Is that so?" Ronnie carefully set me on the bed next to him. "I intend to give you exactly what you need, baby, but we're going to go at my pace."

"What if I want it fast?"

"You need to learn some patience."

I didn't love the sound of that. He tsked as he straddled me, moving down the length of my body. Ronnie dipped his head in between my legs, capturing my clit in his mouth.

“Oh, Sir,” I moaned and dug my hands into his thick, black hair. “No one has kissed me there in a long time.” He licked and sucked, teasing me with his tongue. Waves of pleasure crashed through me. I’d forgotten how much I enjoyed this, and he did it better than I ever imagined possible.

I writhed against the mattress as Ronnie mouthed my clit. “I’m gonna come,” I panted, then tugged on his hair when he paused. “Don’t stop!”

Untangling my hair from his fingers, he propped up on an elbow and cocked an eyebrow at me. “That sounded an awful lot like a demand. You can do better.”

Ronnie slapped his hand against my folds, the sting deliciously painful.

“Daddy!”

“Beg me.”

Whimpering, I shook my head. “I was so close.”

He landed three more smacks, each one slightly more intense than the last.

“Please?”

“Please what?”

“Please make me come, Daddy?” I begged, shamelessly and painfully aroused. “I’ll return the favor.”

“Much better.”

Ronnie returned his mouth to my clit. He brought me to the edge of an orgasm, but when I was about to come, he thrust two fingers inside my dripping wet pussy. The movement of his digits in a come-hither motion, along with

the stimulation from his mouth, brought me over the edge. I needed no additional encouragement and hit my climax.

Floating in the blissful afterglow, I barely realized he withdrew his fingers and climbed upward on the bed to join me.

“I love the way you taste, babygirl.”

Previously if someone said that to me after such an intimate experience, I might have been embarrassed, but instead his sexy words drove me wild. I was ready to keep my promise. “May I suck you off, Daddy?”

“Yes, I’d love to see your pretty lips wrapped around my cock.” He slowly removed his boxers, teasing the waistband with his fingers.

His cock was thick, and I wanted to play with it. I impatiently shifted around into a better position. Suddenly remembering what happened the last time I’d try to give him a blow job, I paused and sat back on my haunches. “Sir.”

“We don’t have to do anything you don’t want to, baby.”

“No, it’s just that last time...” I shook my head.

“Look at me, Alexandria.”

I did as he commanded, though heat rushed to my cheeks.

“You were in between head spaces last time. Right?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“You’re not anymore.” He ran a knuckle across my cheek. “Suck on Daddy’s cock like it’s the best thing you’ve ever put in your mouth. Do it until I tell you to stop.”

Oh hell. I needed no further encouragement. Getting back into my previous position, I wasted no more time. Wrapping

my hand around his shaft, I licked along it before sliding him into my mouth. Sucking on him like he ordered me to do, I glanced up the line of his body. Ronnie tangled his hand in my hair, occasionally pulling it, but it felt good. I loved the weight of his hand against my scalp. Pleasuring him with my mouth while I rubbed along the length brought me immense satisfaction. I continued going down on him, working my tongue around the tip. Dedicating my focus to the task, I missed his growled command. I paused, looking up to catch his gaze.

“Stop, baby.”

Freeing him from my lips reluctantly, I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand. “Will you please fuck me now?”

“Mm.” Ronnie tugged my hair. The sharp bite of pain was hard enough to make me wince. “What did I say about cursing?”

“I apologize, Daddy. All I want is you.” I batted my eyes innocently. “I won’t curse anymore tonight.”

He gave my hair another tug, and I laughed. It was like everything he did felt good. Pain mingled into pleasure effortlessly.

“You’re such a naughty little thing when you’re hungry for Daddy’s cock, aren’t you?”

“Yes, Sir,” I agreed, waggling my eyebrows. “So naughty. Guess your little lesson in patience didn’t work so well.”

“Hm. I guess Daddy will have to teach you.” Ronnie released my hair. “Be careful what you wish for, baby.”

He gave me a coy smile, one that brought heat rushing to my cheeks. Every single thing this man did turned me into a

wild vixen begging for more. “I didn’t know you were a genie!”

“So sassy.” He brought me to the middle of the bed. When he lifted my right leg, I thought he was going to enter me, but he slapped my upper thigh hard. “How do you ask for what you want?”

“I don’t just want something, Sir,” I protested. “I need it.”

He landed two more harsh smacks to the same spot. “What do you need?”

“You. I need you. Please Daddy?”

“Oh, my girl does know how to ask politely.” Ronnie thrust inside my pussy, stretching me and filling me in a way no one else ever had. He took his time, slowly plunging in and out of my heated core as I moaned.

“Yes, Daddy. Yes!”

He increased his speed, taking me to the cusp of an orgasm before moving us slightly. My peak was out of reach. Before I could turn up the sweetness factor and beg for more, Ronnie set both of my legs on his shoulders. I wasn’t entirely sure if the new angle would hit all my pleasure spots, but he slid himself into me again and my doubts faded. The position and his length more than reached my deepest places. He thrust faster, our bodies somehow in sync, though he had all the control.

I reached a hand out to him, to give myself something to hold onto, and Ronnie slowed his pace, but the intensity never waned. I tumbled headfirst into an incredible orgasm. He came inside of me as I screamed his name, bucking from the powerful waves of pleasure crashing through my body.

“Oh, you gave me *exactly* what you promised, Daddy.” My muscles released any remaining tension and white bursts of light danced behind my eyes. I was swimming in utter bliss. “I feel so good.”

“Good.” Ronnie ran a knuckle down my cheek. “I’m happy you’re in a better mood, babygirl.” His withdrawal from my pussy sent delicious aftershocks pinging through my body. Deeply sated, I could barely lift a finger. Setting me by the headboard, he wrapped his arms around me, pulling me to his side. “Do you need anything else tonight?”

“No thank you, Daddy. I have everything I could possibly want right here with you.”

“I’m so happy to hear you say that.” Ronnie planted a kiss on my temple. “I’m off tomorrow. Will you stay here with me?”

“Tonight or forever?”

“Lexa...”

“It’s a valid question!”

“Either. Both.” He kissed my lips softly, sliding his tongue into my mouth. We made out for a few minutes and I never wanted him to stop.

“Please explain,” I said when he pulled away.

“We’ll take this as slow or as fast as you want to, Lexa girl.”

“This is the first time, perhaps ever, that I’ve felt comfortable enough to share things that have been worrying me. For me to say it out loud says a lot. I know we have a long way to go.” I swallowed hard. It felt scary to voice it, but I

trusted him. “We have lots of things to talk about still.” I gave him a sly smile. “What’s your last name?”

“Why do you want to know it now?”

“Because you’re the first man I’ve ever considered marrying.”

“Hearing those words from your lips mean so much to me.” He pulled the blankets up to our chins. “Shepard.”

“I like it.”

“So do I,” he agreed.

“Now I can say it properly.” I beamed at him. “Ahem. I love you, Ronnie Shepard.”

“Silly little thing.” He kissed my lips. “I love you, Alexandria Lane.”

Snuggling into his side, I let myself relax completely. We were equally silly, love-struck for each other and everything else faded away.

There was plenty to talk about in the morning, but it could wait. Tonight I belonged to Ronnie, as his girlfriend and his Little girl, and we would figure out the rest of it together. After so many years of hoping and running and pushing my needs away, I’d finally found my Daddy. And it was in the most unexpected place. It wasn’t just a physical place—the clinic—but a place in my mind and heart that I hadn’t known existed. It was a place that I knew I’d never want to leave.

The End.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adaline Raine is a USA Today Bestselling Author. Her favorite stories to write are contemporary Daddy Doms, age-play, Alpha heroes and bratty heroines. She lives in upstate NY with her two teenage sons. Follow Adaline to be notified about her next release!

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