

COURTING
Curves

DEFENDING *her heart*

CASSI HART

Defending Her Heart

Courting Curves

Cassi Hart

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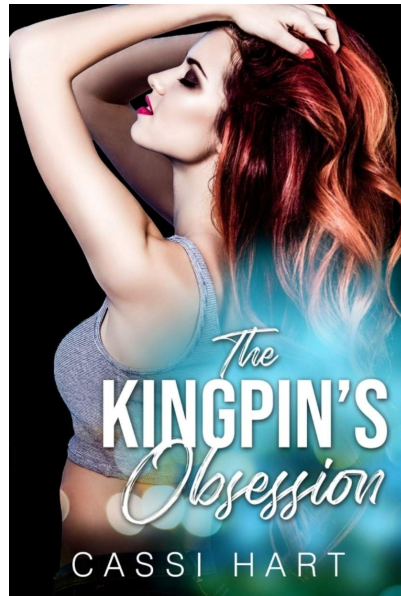
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*Dedicated to the men that fight for the one they love. Thank
you for your support, enjoy!*



Cassi H   rt

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Prologue

Nora

Strawberries!

Damnit! I curse as I lean into the backseat of my car to grab the shopping bag. I loop it over one arm, so I can shut the car door with my free hand before heading for the small black gate.

I can't believe I forgot to grab the strawberries. *They're his favorite.*

I knew I was forgetting something when I left the convenience store, and now, I'm afraid the surprise won't be complete without the dessert I'd planned. Strawberries are Mike's favorite, and I was so excited to make him chocolate covered strawberries for dessert. I can't believe I forgot to buy one of the most important ingredients for the surprise date I'd planned.

Ugh, I don't have time to go back and grab them. I barely have time to prepare dinner before Mike gets home from work.

My phone starts ringing in my back pocket as I make my way past the small gate. I switch the grocery bag from one arm to the other and reach into my pocket. I'm surprised to see my best friend's name, Willow, flash on the screen, since she should be working at the café right now.

“Willow, I'm in the middle of something, can I call you ___”

“Nora,” she cuts me off, her voice panicked. “I know it’s your day off, and I swore I wouldn’t call, but we need your help.”

“What happened?” I ask, taking the steps to the front porch, my breathing picking up as I immediately begin to worry about what could have happened to cause my normally calm friend to panic. I let out a relieved sigh when I stop in front of the door and lean down to place the heavy grocery bag on the ground, careful not to tip the bag and spill anything.

“It’s the espresso machine. It’s making this weird noise, and we can’t get it to work. We tried to unplug it and let it cool off, but that didn’t help. I know how important this machine is to you and Rowan, since it was a gift from your grandfather. I’m so sor—”

“Willow!” I shout to interrupt her babbling. “It’s okay. Relax. That machine is so old, it gives us trouble all the time. Try taking the small hammer under the counter and tapping it on the left side, near the middle. Sometimes, it just needs a little love tap to get it going. I’ll talk to Rowan tomorrow about getting it repaired or replaced this week.”

The line is silent for a couple minutes as Willow does as I suggested. I hear a hiss followed by a triumphant cry over the line before she returns. “It worked! I can’t believe that actually worked!” She pauses for a minute, then asks, “Wait, what are you doing? Didn’t you say you had a date or something?”

“Huh?” I mutter absent-mindedly, digging my hand under the doormat for the spare key. “Oh, I do.”

“Nora, where are you?”

“Oh, I’m at Mike’s place. I’m going to make him...”
My voice trails off when my fingers come back empty. “That’s strange.”

“What?”

“I can’t find the spare key. He always leaves it under the doormat, but it’s not here.”

“Wait, is Mike the guy you have a date with? When did that happen? I thought you guys were just friends. And why isn’t he home for your date?”

“He knew I’d be dropping by tonight to make him dinner,” I mutter as I straighten up and look around. I contemplate calling Mike to ask him where he put the key but decide against it. It won’t be much of a surprise, if he knew I was waiting, would it?

“Why don’t you call him?” Willow asks, echoing my thoughts.

“It’s a surprise, he’s not supposed to...oh, wait!”

I jump in excitement when it dawns on me. A few weeks ago, when Mike had asked me to water his plants and feed his cat while he was out of town, I’d noticed the locks on his living room window were broken. I remember texting him about it, but the thought that he may not have fixed it gives me an idea of an alternative way into his house.

“Nora?” Willow calls over the line.

I run down the steps, my heart hammering in my chest as I round the house to the broken living room window.

“Nora, what’s happening?” Willow’s excited voice snaps me back to the present.

“I think I just found a way in, give me a sec,” I say, gently pulling at the window and letting out an excited squeal when it opens. I push back the curtains to reveal Mike’s typical messy living room. I make a note to clean up once I’m done with his dinner.

“What are you talking about? I thought you couldn’t find the key?”

“Well, yeah, but he has a window with a broken lock. I told him about it, but he must have forgotten to get it fixed.”

Willow pauses. “Surely, you’re not going to get into his house through a window, right? Even you have to know that’s crazy?”

I stop at her words, one leg suspended through the opening. “What do you mean?”

“Nora!”

“This is the only way in.”

“It sure sounds like you’re breaking into the guy’s house. I think you should wait for him to get home and let you in. He’ll still be surprised to see you.”

I roll my eyes at her words. It’s times like this that I am reminded of the fact that, despite our close relationship, Willow and I have completely different personalities that often clash. She is the careful, rule-following friend, and I am the reckless one, or so I’ve been told. Even so, for a twenty-year-old, she sure acts more like my big brother, Rowan, than my best friend.

As much as I appreciate her concern, I know that Mike will understand. He and I have been seeing each other for a little over three months, and this is not the first time I've come over to his place. When I'd called him earlier this week to suggest I stop by tonight, he'd been distracted. He's been so busy with work, I know he'll appreciate a night to relax and be pampered a bit.

I listen to my best friend's worried rant as I walk through the house, sidestepping a pair of muddy boots on my way to the front door to grab the groceries.

"...I mean, the guy could call the cops on you."

"Willow, you're overthinking this," I say, placing the bag on the counter. I wrinkle my nose at the dirty dishes in the sink as I unpack the groceries.

"Fine, but promise me you'll be careful."

"Yes, Mom. I promise," I say, overwhelmed by her concern. "Shouldn't you be getting ready for the dinner rush anyway?"

"Oh, yeah, right. God, I'm nervous about closing tonight. You've never left me in charge like this before."

"It'll be fine. You've been working at the shop for six months now. You know what to do, and I trust you."

"Okay," Willow relents. "Enjoy your night. God knows you've earned it with how hard you work. Maybe Mike will turn out to be your Prince Charming."

Willow's not wrong, I do deserve this night off. I've been working almost non-stop for the past year to prove to my brother, who owns the coffee shop where I work as the

manager, that I'm not the immature, reckless kid he thinks I am. My brother isn't one for romance, and he thinks that my own dreams of finding a happily-ever-after with the perfect man are a waste of time. It's yet another reason why I'm so desperate for this dinner with Mike to go well. If things go according to plan, I might just prove Rowan wrong about love.

We've known each other for a while now, and I'm ready to take things to the next level. He'd seemed on board with the idea when I'd mentioned it to him, and I can't wait to see the look on his face when he walks in later. Another image pops into my head as I think about what the night might bring. But as I imagine him kissing and holding me, instead of Mike's pale green eyes and round face, I see sharp, blue eyes and a strong jaw line. I quickly shake my head to clear it of those thoughts. No way, do I want to be thinking about *him* right now.

I hang up with Willow after she gives me one final warning about letting myself into Mike's house. I strip off my jacket and sling it over the dining table, rolling my sleeves and getting ready to start chopping the vegetables. I'm lost in my thoughts when I hear the unmistakable sound of police sirens coming down the street.

What the hell?

Minutes later, my heart jumps to my throat as the front door is thrown open and three police officers rush in with guns drawn. I scream and throw my hands into the air, unsure what to do. Then, Mike appears in the hallway wearing only a pair of sweatpants, his hair wet and plastered to his forehead.

“Nora?” he sputters. “What the hell! What are you doing here?”

I chew at my lips, darting my eyes from Mike to the police officers, who have lowered their weapons, thank God. Everyone has a confused look on their face.

Mike’s eyes shift from mine to the items lined on his counter.

“What are you doing here? How did you get in?” he demands.

“I came to make you dinner. We made plans, remember?” I say, confused by his reaction. “I told you I would drop by tonight and cook for you.”

“I don’t remember that. I never agreed to this,” he whispers, looking around the place before settling on the open window. “D-did you break in through the window?”

My brows wrinkle in confusion when he takes a step back as though scared. Wait, is he afraid *of me*?

“I-I couldn’t find the key, so I...”

One of the police officers steps forward, placing himself between Mike and me. “Sir, could you step outside with me please?”

As he leads Mike outside, the other two officers approach me, and before I can even process what’s happening, I’m handcuffed and led to one of the cruisers waiting outside. I can’t believe this is happening.

CHAPTER 1

Lucian

As I walk into the police precinct, several pairs of eyes swivel to follow my movement, but I ignore them. I've always drawn attention to myself, it's nothing I can control. It doesn't bother me as much as it used to when I was younger. Not now, that I've made a name for myself in my own right.

From a young age, people have told me that I remind them of Judge Fredrick Cohen, one of the most ruthless judges the state has ever seen before his retirement five years ago. Well, if I remind them of the cruel man, it's because I am his son. I guess the apple doesn't fall far from the tree after all, as I am every bit as ruthless as my old man, if not more so, though I draw the line at cruelty.

Not much has changed over the years as my mere presence in the station has the room falling into silence. I don't pay them any mind, though. I have one goal: reaching *her*.

Nora Wilde. The twenty-one-year-old manager of the Fine Taste coffee shop.

And my best friend's younger sister.

I find her seated next to a police officer's desk. Her strawberry blonde hair is pushed to one side, and her glaring eyes are fixed on mine, as if I am the reason that she is in the police station to begin with. The sight of her cuffed hands resting in her lap makes my blood boil with barely controlled rage.

She lets out an annoyed huff and looks away as I approach her.

“Nora,” I say curtly.

“Lucifer.”

“It’s Lucian.” Unfortunately, this is a familiar exchange. Nora loves nothing more than to push my buttons. She’s the only woman I’ve ever met capable of frustrating me and turning me on in the same breath.

“That’s what I said,” she snarks, briefly lifting her pale blue eyes to mine before quickly looking away. “I can’t believe Rowan sent you.”

“He wanted to come, but I convinced him to send me instead. I am your attorney, after all. But your brother is worried about you, Nora.”

She huffs, lifting her chin stubbornly, and I fight the urge to grab it, so she’s focused on me. I want her pretty eyes, the color of a clear sky, staring up at me, but she does not afford me such courtesy.

Despite my close relationship with her brother, Nora and I are usually at odds. I never fail to get a rise out of her and vice versa. Where I am reserved, Nora is wild. Her relationship with her brother is complicated. Very few people actually know that the two are related, but I don’t blame her for wanting to stay away from the spotlight her brother’s life attracts. Fortunately, few people in our small town care about Rowan’s celebrity and pay little attention to who he spends time with. It’s one of the reasons he was drawn to this area from the city in the first place.

Rowan practically raised Nora due their parents' disinterest in their own children. He likes to think he's tough with her, but really, he spoils her to make up for the love she didn't get from their parents. And since Rowan dotes on his sister, it often falls to me to rein her in.

I've tried to keep a distance from Nora as much as possible, but the older she gets, the harder it is to stay away. Now, as I take her in, I wonder if that had been a mistake. Despite the defiance she greeted me with, I can see beyond her façade to the scared, hurt woman she's trying to hide. Her shoulders are slumped, and the usual fire in her eyes has dimmed. Irritation rolls through me. I need to find out what happened and get her out of here. Then, it's time I finally claim her as mine the way I should have when I'd first met her at her brother's office two years ago.

I step to her side and fight the need to lean down and inhale her sweet jasmine scent. The swell of her breasts rises and falls as she fights to contain her displeasure about being here, and my cock swells just from being this close to her.

I shake my head and force my thoughts away from my desires, choosing instead to focus on the matter at hand. An officer approaches, and without another word to Nora, I ask him to take me to his sergeant. Ten minutes later, I'm back at Nora's side.

"They are going to let you go for now, but the person whose house you broke into is still considering pressing charges against you."

"I-I didn't break in," she huffs. "It's all a misunderstanding."

“We’ll talk about it later,” I say firmly, studying her.

Nora is quiet, and when she looks up to meet my eyes, I’m surprised to find them clouded with tears.

I clench my fists around my briefcase, my fingers digging into the hard leather as I fight to get a hold of my own emotions. I want to find the man who put that look on her face and pummel his face with my fists.

“Get these cuffs off her,” I bark at the officer, harsher than I’d intended. The young cop jumps forward and quickly releases Nora’s wrists. There are faint red marks around them, and she rubs at the tender skin. The sight has my rage ready to boil over again. We need to get out of here before I do something I’ll regret.

When the sergeant told me the details of her arrest, jealousy landed on me like hot asphalt. The thought of Nora being with someone else made it hard to draw air into my lungs, and it’d taken everything in me to respond to the officer and secure her release.

It doesn’t matter that I hate the circumstances. Nora needs me, and I have to put my own feelings aside for now to help her.

The process goes as smoothly as one can expect, and Nora is quiet through it all. I’m grateful for her silence, but it unnerves me at the same time. I don’t hear her speak again until we’re walking out of the station and she bumps into a drunk man being led in by two officers.

“Shit,” she curses. “How the hell is he drunk, when it’s not even seven yet?”

“You’re one to judge.”

“Hey,” she calls out, exasperated, and hurries after me to my car. “I told you it was a misunderstanding. I did not break into the house.”

“You broke his window and—”

“The window was already broken, and, hey, will you stop and listen to me?”

Nora grabs my wrist and stops, forcing me to turn around and face her. The anger on her face dissolves when she gets a good look at mine. It’s getting harder to contain my feelings on the matter, and she must read the barely restrained anger on my face because her brows furrow when her eyes meet mine.

“Wait, are you...are you mad at me?”

Yes.

No!

I’m mad at myself, but I don’t tell her that. I am mad for keeping the distance between us and letting it get to this point. I’ve used all the excuses in the book from our fourteen year age difference to the fact that she’s my best friend’s younger sister to stay away. And all for what!

To drive her into the arms of another man?

No, I’m not mad. *I’m infuriated.*

“Let’s get you home,” I say between clenched teeth, but she doesn’t let go of my hand. Her fingers dig into my wrist, and her eyes run over my face.

“Lucifer—I mean, Lucian,” her cheeks heat, but she doesn’t take her eyes off me, “I’m sorry that you had to come all this way, but can you tell me what happens now?”

All my anger dissipates as I stare into her innocent, fearful eyes. They’re staring up at me with so much trust, that I find myself taking a step forward and closing the distance between us.

Against my better judgment, I lift a hand and cup her jaw, and the air between us fizzles with electrifying heat.

“Nothing,” I whisper softly, biting back the endearment that almost slips out. The need to lean in and take her plump lips with mine grows by the second. “Nothing is going to happen to you. I’ll make sure of it.”

Her eyes don’t shift from mine, and neither of us makes a move to break the contact between us.

It’s wrong to act this way with my client in broad daylight, but I can’t bring myself to care—or move.

It’s not until we hear the deep vibration of her phone that she snaps into motion and drops my wrist, stepping back and forcing my hand to drop from her face.

“I—it’s probably Rowan,” she stammers, frantically patting her pockets for her phone. She doesn’t meet my eyes as she receives the call and speaks to her brother, but I don’t take my eyes off her.

She’s perfect, and whether she realizes it or not, this time, I’m not leaving her side until Nora Wilde is mine.

CHAPTER 2

Nora

“Hey, Nora, do you want to go out for drinks later?” Willow calls.

I look up from where I am wiping down tables to find Willow watching me with a hopeful look on her face, but she must read the answer in my eyes because her face falls.

“Raincheck?”

“C’mon,” she whines, snatching the rag from my fingers and leaning against the counter to study me. “You’ve been like this for days. I thought you were satisfied with how the Anti-Valentine’s Day event went. We made a solid profit, and even Rowan had to admit to you that it was a success.”

I nod at her words and smile as I recall my brother grudgingly admitting to me that he’d been wrong when he’d initially turned down my idea. When Willow had first mentioned hosting an Anti-Valentine’s Day theme for the coffee shop as a joke to help me get over Mike, I’d been excited by the idea. It had started as something to take my thoughts off everything that was happening in my life, but it had gone above and beyond all that. The day itself had been more successful than any of us could have expected.

Still, it hadn’t managed to take my mind off a certain lawyer. And not just because he hadn’t given me a moment’s peace since he’d picked me up from the police station.

Willow is convinced that I am still sulking over Mike, but that couldn’t be further from the truth. I haven’t dared

correct her assumptions because that would mean admitting that thoughts of my brother's lawyer have been a permanent fixture in my head.

Technically, he is my lawyer too, but that's beside the point. Speaking of the devil... My phone vibrates in my pocket with an incoming text, and I know who it is without looking. Lucian has texted me constantly since picking me up from the station and taking me home. Most of his texts are check-ins to make sure I'm staying out of trouble. I pretend it's annoying, but each one sends a little thrill through me with the knowledge that, if he's texting me, he's thinking about me.

It's been over a week since I've seen Lucian in person, and I'm growing increasingly frustrated. He cares enough to text, but he hasn't actually called or come to see me. So, I've been ignoring his messages all day. If he wants to know that I'm staying out of trouble that badly, he can come see for himself. He knows where to find me. Somehow, Lucian has always known where to find me.

Still, it's all I can do to stop myself from immediately pulling my phone out and reading the message, if only to see how close to losing it he is over my continued silence, but I don't want to raise Willow's suspicions.

"I'm not in the mood to go out," I say to Willow, reaching over to grab the rag from her hands, but she leans away. "Willow!"

"How long are you going to sulk over the douchebag that called the cops on you? Huh?"

Her anger has me breaking into a small smile. It's quite rare to see Willow pissed off at something, and I look up to

comment on it when I notice someone walk into the coffee shop, and just like that, I am transported to the afternoon in the police station's parking lot when Lucian caressed my cheek with his hand. Not for the first time, I wonder what might have happened if my brother's call hadn't interrupted us.

Willow follows my gaze to the entrance, and she lets out a low whistle. I don't blame her, or any of the other women in the coffee shop with their eyes glued to the man in the doorway.

At six foot five, Lucian towers over everyone in the shop, but it's not just his height that has everyone staring. It's the air around him as he steps into the room wearing a tan, tweed three-piece suit and a determined scowl.

Really, would it kill him to smile?

He has dark scruff on his jaw that matches his slicked-back raven hair, and his intense blue eyes are narrowed as he scans the room for me.

"Who is *that* and what is he doing in our small town and...why is he walking towards us?"

I don't respond to Willow, my eyes fixed on the man whom I've tried and failed to get out of my head for the last week.

I don't get it. For years, I've found Lucian nothing but annoying. Since meeting him two years ago, Lucian seems to have made it his personal mission to stop me from ever having fun. He thinks I'm reckless, but I'd be lying if I didn't admit that half of my crazy antics are things I've done just to get a rise out of him. I smile as I recall one particular memory.

Last summer, I'd gone to a dinner party at my brother's house where Lucian had also been in attendance. He'd arrived with a shapely redhead hanging on his arm, and the sight had driven me crazy, though I'd refused to think about why at the time. Because I knew it would make him angry, I'd loudly told my brother's assistant that I had lunch plans the following day to go skydiving for the first time with a man I'd met on a dating app. I'd kept one eye on Lucian as I told the poor woman all about the sexy skydiving instructor I'd started chatting with. I'd watched with satisfaction as his jaw grew tight and he ignored his date's attempts to get his attention.

The next day, I'd pulled into the local skydiving place to find Lucian waiting for me in the parking lot. He'd demanded that I cancel my plans, spouting off all kinds of reasons why it would be unsafe to skydive with someone I'd never actually met. I'd defiantly told him that I would be skydiving regardless of what he thought, and if he was so worried, he could come too. Of course, the date I'd claimed to have had been a ruse, but my interest in skydiving was very much real—and had been ever since I'd learned from Rowan that it was one of Lucian's favorite hobbies. And that's how I'd found myself, a week later, jumping from a plane, strapped to a Lucian-approved instructor, and the man himself by my side. It'd been one of the best days of my life.

I still don't like him though. *I swear.*

Lucian is the kind of man who always has eyes on him. To be fair, he does look like a real-life Superman, and he's one of the most successful corporate attorneys in the state. I'd often wondered how my brother had managed to lure him away from his firm in the city to come to our small town and

work exclusively for Rowan. But despite his good looks and commanding air, the man is as taciturn as they come. He almost never smiles, and I don't think he even has a sense of humor.

Still, my mouth runs dry, and I swallow hard when he stops in front of the counter and his cold blue eyes soften just a little when they meet mine.

"Nora," he says, his voice deep and velvety. "Is there somewhere we can speak privately?"

"I—" I flush red when my voice breaks. "Is this about the case?"

I almost smack myself. Of course, he's here to talk about the case. Why else would he leave his flashy office to come to see me at this little coffee shop? He never has before.

"Yes, which you would know if you bothered to respond to my messages," he says, and I roll my eyes at his clipped words, ignoring how my heart hammers at the sound of his voice. *Has his voice always been that deep?*

I turn to Willow to find her staring at us with a curious look in her eyes. "Willow, this is my lawyer, Lucian Cohen, the one I told you about."

Willow flashes me a mischievous smile, but I narrow my eyes in warning. She's heard me complain enough times about Lucian to know all about him.

"Yes, but you forgot to mention that Lucian looks like Henry Cavill," she teases.

Lucian laughs at that, and the sound sends a wave of arousal through me at the same time my skin prickles with

irritation at having not been the one to illicit it.

“It’s nice to meet you, Willow. I’ve heard all about you too. Rowan is a lucky man,” he says, offering his hand to her.

My best friend blushes as she shakes his hand, and my frustration grows.

There’s no question that Lucian knows he’s hot, but that doesn’t mean he needs to flirt with every woman he meets. A voice in the back of my mind tells me I’m being ridiculous, that he’s only being friendly to his best friend’s girlfriend, but I shush it fiercely.

“We’ll be in my office,” I say a little too sharply and circle the counter, grabbing Lucian’s arm and dragging him to my small office.

I push him into the room and gently close the door behind me before looking up to meet his dark, intense eyes. There is something in them that reminds me of ocean waves on a cold afternoon.

Threatening to sweep me up into their chaos.

I don’t even like him, and yet, as we stand silently in my small office, there is no denying the sizzling heat building between us.

“Where have you been?” My tone is accusatory and a little needy when the words slip out, and I visibly wince.

Damnit!

Did I sound desperate? *Because I am not.*

“I had a few commitments I needed to attend to. But it’s not like I’ve ignored you, I have texted you every day, several

times a day, in fact.”

He takes a step closer to me, backing me up until I’m leaning against my desk. “You haven’t answered a single one of my messages today, so I was forced to make the trip down here to check on you in person.”

His words make sense. To be fair, I am not his only client, and I’m sure Rowan keeps him busy. I bet he has a million better things to do than to come see me.

“Well, if you were too busy, then you should have called instead. You didn’t have to come all this way,” I say petulantly, confused by my behavior.

He raises a single brow at my tone before taking another step forward. My heart flutters in my chest, and the skin beneath my top turns clammy with every step he closes between us.

“Did you miss me?” he asks gruffly, his voice sending a hot pulse between my legs. His eyes drop to my lips briefly before looking back to my eyes.

“Lucian.” My eyes jump to his in panic, and I swallow audibly. “You—I—You should…”

This close, he makes it hard for me to think.

“Would you have preferred I called you instead of coming?”

“Y-Yes.”

No.

Christ, I don’t know.

“If I had, then I would have missed seeing your face,” he rasps, cupping my cheek. I suck in a sharp breath when his warm, rough hands touch my skin.

“Lucian, I...”

Christ, I can’t focus long enough to get my thoughts straight.

“Nora,” he says thickly, his thumb rubbing circles on my cheek. “I told you I’d take care of everything, take care of you.”

I lift my hand to his and grab his wrist to draw his hand off my cheek, but I find it hard to pull his touch from me when he watches me like he is now.

With so much raw need.

He leans down, and I lick at my lips in anticipation of the feel of his against mine when the loud shrill of his cell phone snaps me into the present and I jump back.

Oh, God. What am I doing? Am I out of my mind?

Was I about to kiss Lucian? I don’t even like him.
Right?

“Yes,” he speaks into the phone, his voice clipped. I walk past him to my seat behind the desk and pretend to look at something on my computer, but I can hardly focus on anything aside from the man standing a few feet away from me.

His presence is hard to ignore, and when I look up from my computer, it’s to find his eyes on me as he speaks into his phone.

“I’ll be there,” he says before hanging up.

“Nora...”

“You can go,” I hurry to say, looking away, anticipating and dreading his departure. “Just text me the details of my case later.”

When Lucian doesn’t speak, I lift my eyes to find him watching me blankly, and just like that I am reminded of my dislike for him.

He is so goddamned hard to read, and I guess it comes in handy what with him being a lawyer and all, but I hate that I can’t tell what he’s thinking.

“Tonight,” he says gruffly. “I’ve invited Rowan to dinner at my place. We can discuss your case then.”

“No need. I’m not free tonight,” I say hastily, pressing aimlessly on the keys of my keyboard. “I have a lot of work to do, but you can update Rowan, and he’ll let me know what you two discuss.”

Lucian is silent for a while before making a low humming sound that sends a shiver down my spine. When his phone starts ringing again, I expect him to pick it up immediately, and when he doesn’t, I force my gaze back to his.

He dips his hands into his pockets, and I follow the movement, my eyes widening when I notice the fly of his slacks is strained, which he makes no effort to hide.

I don’t dare look up to meet his gaze. The shrill ringing of his phone is the only sound that fills the room. That is, if I don’t take into account the loud hammering of my heart.

Slowly, Lucian approaches my desk and leans forward, placing a hand on either side of my keyboard and coming close enough that I can feel his breath on my lips. “I’ll see you tonight, Nora,” he rasps, his lips curving into a slight smirk. “Don’t keep me waiting.”

He’s gone before I can protest his words.

It’s so typical of him to show up at my coffee shop and assume that I’ll do whatever it is he demands.

There is no way in hell I will be going over to his place tonight.

No way.

CHAPTER 3

Lucian

I tuck my hands into the pockets of my slacks as I watch the black Mercedes pull into my large driveway.

The two front doors open to reveal Rowan and the auburn-haired girl I'd met earlier at the shop. Even if Rowan hadn't already told me about this woman himself, there'd be no doubt that they're in a relationship with the hungry way he watches her.

"Lucian," he calls out, his face breaking into a wide grin. "Thank you for inviting us. I don't believe you've met my girlfriend."

Rowan smiles softly at his partner, extending his hand for her which she eagerly takes.

"We have, actually," I say, watching them. "Willow, right?"

"That's right." To Rowan, she adds, "Nora introduced us when he stopped by the café earlier."

I read the question in Rowan's eyes, but before he can ask, the low rumble of a car turning into my long driveway draws our attention.

We all watch as Nora's red '68 Mustang Fastback tears down the drive before parking next to Rowan's car. Nora's love for classic muscle cars never ceases to amuse me. It's an interest that we both share, though she isn't aware of that fact. The driver door opens, and Nora slips out, wearing a short, sexy dress in the same shade as her car and black heels.

“You’re late,” Rowan gently scolds his sister, but she waves him off, gathering her strawberry blonde hair and pushing it to one side.

“Only by a few minutes, lighten up, Rowe.”

My eyes stay glued to her as she leans across the driver’s seat to retrieve what looks like a wine bottle, and my cock fills in an instant when her dress rides up to reveal more of her perfect, creamy thighs and the barest glimpse of her supple ass.

Fuck, I want her.

I must be out of my goddamned mind to let my desire show so openly with her brother less than five feet away, but my brain seems to short-circuit when she’s around. It had nearly killed me to stay away from her for the past week, but I’d needed the time to make some necessary arrangements. Now, how am I supposed to hold onto my sanity for the duration of dinner with her looking like this?

Christ, she’s perfect, I think as she makes her way to us.

I fight the need to meet her halfway and claim her supple lips with my own.

“Nice place you have here,” she says once she’s stopped before me, extending her hand for me to take the wine bottle. “For the host.”

My eyes stay on hers as I reach for it, brushing our fingers as I grab the bottle. “I thought you couldn’t make it?”

Her cheeks flush a pretty, rosy hue, as though embarrassed at being called out on her lie in front of her brother and friend.

“Yeah, well, I moved things around to make time for this.”

“What thin—” Rowan starts to ask, but his words are cut short when Willow elbows his side.

I hold back a smirk as I move aside for my guests to enter the house. Something tells me that dinner will not be dull.

I’m soon proven correct. Between the wine and the company, dinner proves to be one of the best things I could have planned. They are all pleasantly surprised to learn that I made dinner from scratch, which is a luxury for me. I rarely have time to make anything for myself, settling for take-out which is often had back at the office.

I’m just about to get coffee, so we can talk about Nora’s case, when Willow yawns widely. I stare in confusion as she lays her head on Rowan’s shoulder and snuggles into his side. Until a few minutes ago, she’d been energetic and talkative, swapping stories with Nora about the various reactions they’d gotten to their Anti-Valentine’s Day theme at the café.

“Wow, Willow, you look exhausted. Did you get enough sleep last night?” Nora asks her friend. “I know you had an early morning opening the shop today, but you’re not usually this exhausted right after dinner.”

“I may have stayed up later than I should have,” Willow responds with a sly smile at Rowan. He responds with a knowing smirk of his own.

“Ew! Ew, ew, ew! TMI!” Nora shrieks. “Stop that right now, both of you!”

Her antics illicit a laugh from all of us, but Willow's is interrupted again by an over-the-top yawn. It's then that I notice the mischievous twinkle in her eye.

With such an impressive act, I am surprised the woman is not an actress. If I wasn't a lawyer and didn't have to deal with liars for a living, I probably wouldn't have been able to tell that Rowan's partner is lying.

She's that good.

It's no surprise Nora and Rowan haven't clocked on that yet.

What baffles me, however, is the reason for the whole act. I don't understand it until Rowan suggests that they head home before she falls asleep at the table, and she eagerly agrees.

"I'll head out, too. Lucifer and I can discuss my case another time," Nora says, using the nickname she gave me shortly after we met. I notice there's less of an edge to it now though.

"Stay. You two need to talk," Willow insists, smiling reassuringly at Nora, who eyes her suspiciously.

"Walk us out, Lucian?" Rowan says, his expression distant as he watches Willow stand from the table and stretch.

"Of course," I respond, following them out. Nora walks with Willow to the car, and Rowan lags behind, clearly intent on speaking to me privately.

"You'll fill me in on what's going on at the office tomorrow?" he asks, eyes on the women ahead of us.

“I will,” I say, reassuringly.

Rowan hesitates a moment before meeting my eyes. “I’m glad you’re finally coming to your senses,” he says, shocking me.

“What do you mean?” I ask cautiously.

“Nora.”

“Rowan, I—”

Rowan interrupts my protests. “Don’t try to tell me I’m wrong, Lucian. I’ve seen the way you look at her. The only reason I never said anything was because it was obvious you didn’t intend to act on your feelings, and she was clearly oblivious. I can only assume that something’s changed since you’ve finally told HR you’re ready to hire a junior associate.” He claps me on the shoulder and looks me in the eye before continuing, “I want you to know that there’s no one I’d trust more with my sister. Whatever happens, I know you’ll take care of her.”

All I can do is nod, too stunned by what he’s said to form words of my own. Of course, Rowan is aware that I’d started the process of hiring another staff attorney. If—no, *when* I make Nora mine, I want to be able to step back and work fewer hours, spend more time with her. My best friend doesn’t say anything else, just helps Willow into the car before taking the driver’s seat.

“Get some rest, you two,” she calls through the open car window.

I spy the small, mischievous smile on Willow’s face as they drive off, and there is no way Nora missed it.

“That sneaky little bit—”

“Coffee?” I ask, cutting her off. I place my hand on the small of her back, and she doesn’t argue as I lead us back into the house and to the kitchen.

Nora huffs as she hops onto the stool, resting her bare arms on the cold black marble. I would find the whole situation humorous if my blood wasn’t boiling with the need to touch her.

I want to turn her stool around, step between her parted legs, and slide my hardness into her wet heat, rutting her into oblivion.

I ignore my growing erection as I make my way around the granite island countertop to make us coffee.

“How do you like your coffee?” I ask, my back to her, but when she doesn’t respond, I turn around to find her staring at me. “Nora?”

“What?” she mutters, her eyes dazed. “D-did you say something?”

“Your coffee, how would you like it?”

“Uhm...” her eyes run down my face to the open collar of my shirt, and she visibly swallows.

Her gaze is like a caress, and to have her stare at me so blatantly only adds to the ache in my balls.

“Nora?”

Her eyes snap to mine, and her cheeks grow rosy from being caught staring. “No, I-I don’t want coffee. I’m strung too tight for caffeine.”

“Is that so?”

She wets her lips, winding a finger through her hair, and there’s no hiding the desire in her eyes. *Or the nerves.*

I round the counter, and she follows me with her body, turning around to face me when I stop in front of her.

Mine.

Christ. She’s perfect, and I want to make her mine.

We’ve been dancing around our desire every time we are close like this, and when I lift my hand to her cheek, I know there’s no stopping this time.

“The case...” she breathes, her eyes crashing into mine and hands going to my chest.

I wait for her to snap out of this lust-filled stupor and push me away, but instead, her fingers close around the fabric of my shirt, fisting the soft material in her grip as she stares at me, wide-eyed.

The need in her eyes is a clear reflection of what is going on in my own body.

“Lucian,” she tries again, parting her legs for me to step between them. I hold back a groan when her dress rides up, revealing more of her smooth, creamy thighs. “I—about the case.”

“I’ll take care of it,” I rasp, leaning in, but I don’t give into the suffocating need to kiss her. “Tell me, princess, have you ever been touched by a man before?”

The thought of anyone touching her—touching what belongs to me—has murderous thoughts surfacing, but I push

them back.

“No,” she pants, her grip tightening on my shirt.

“What about Mike?”

“Who?” she asks, her eyes meeting mine in confusion.

“Good,” I growl, possessiveness clawing at my chest. The need to claim her grows by the second. “You’re mine now, princess.”

I lean down and capture her mouth with mine. Her lips part, and it’s nothing and everything I’d imagined. She whimpers into the kiss when our tongues slide together, feeding into the need we’ve both been denying ourselves, and *fuck*, does she taste amazing.

“Lucian,” she whimpers, letting go of my shirt and snaking her arms around my neck, drawing me closer as her tongue rubs against mine with more intensity. The move draws her flush against me, and the press of her tits against my chest has my swollen dick dripping behind my zipper.

“Fuck, princess,” I breathe harshly against her lips before trailing kisses down her chin and along the curve of her neck.

She dips her fingers into my hair, rubbing her sex over my thigh as I kiss a trail down her neck. “You taste amazing, princess,” I rasp against her skin. “I can’t wait to taste the rest of you. You want that, right?”

“Hmm, yeah.”

I almost shoot in my pants at how well she responds to my touch.

Christ, I should have done this sooner. I should have kissed Nora the second I saw her two years ago because I can't get enough of her. I should have made her mine and saved us both the trouble and frustration, but I guess I'll have to make up for the lost time.

There is no accounting for the time we've missed, but I'm damn well going to try.

CHAPTER 4

Nora

I've always dreamt of my first time, what woman hasn't? I've read so many books about it to prepare for when it happens.

I had everything mapped out.

Everything.

Right down to the sounds I would make when I finally decided to share that part of myself, but this close to Lucian, my pulse is in a frenzy, and quite frankly, so is the rest of me. My blood is pounding so hard in my ears, that I can hardly remember any of the things I'd planned.

I've always prided myself on being in control, but lately, I've been slipping, and with Lucian, I just want to let go.

To relinquish the control I've clung to for so long. To give him everything and let him take care of me.

My head falls back as he trails his mouth over my neck, my lips part in a moan when he brushes a finger over my nipples through the fabric of my dress.

"Damn it, baby, you feel amazing," he says, his breath hot against my skin. I lean closer, gasping when my sex rubs against his muscled thigh. The sensation is so intense that it has my sex pulsing with need...but for what?

I have no idea, but I hope Lucian does. I hope he knows what to do with my body because it's begging for his touch.

For more of him.

More of everything.

“Fuck, princess, you’re perfect,” he says, lifting his lips to meet mine, and I open up for him. I cry out when he hooks an arm around my lower back and lifts me off the stool up to the kitchen counter, placing me at eye level with him.

He steps between my thighs, and I wind my legs around his hips, pressing my pulsing core to his erection. His lips drop to mine even as his hands splay over my back, blindly searching for the zipper before letting out a frustrated sound when he doesn’t find it.

“It doesn’t have one,” I chuckle, seeking his lips needily.

“I guess then you won’t mind if I do this.” He grabs the neckline and tears the dress apart to reveal my bare tits. I’ll probably care about the fact that he tore my dress when my lust-infused haze clears, but for now, all I can think about is how hot that was.

“Princess, I’m going to take your virginity tonight, you know that right?” he asks, cupping my tits and brushing the sensitive buds with the pads of his thumbs. “Right?”

I nod eagerly, leaning into his touch, but he pulls away, forcing a whine out of my lips.

“Answer me, Nora. You need to know that this is going to end only when I am balls deep inside of you, loving and worshipping your body like no one ever has. You understand that, right?”

“Yes,” I whisper eagerly, my body practically vibrating with need.

Lucian makes a ragged noise before leaning in and crashing his lips down on mine. His kiss is possessive as he plunges his tongue into my mouth. I gasp into the kiss when he reaches back and grasps my ass, his punishing grip sending heat pulsing between my legs.

“You have no idea, do you?” he snarls against my lips, thrusting his erection up against my aching sex. “You have no idea how long I’ve thought about this, do you?”

“Lucian?” I ask, confused.

“Two years,” he growls, his kiss turning punishing when he brushes his lips against mine. “Two fucking years, I had to sit back and pretend I didn’t care. Pretend that I didn’t keep tabs on you like some obsessed stalker. God, I can’t believe Rowan didn’t kick my ass.”

It’s important.

The words coming out of his mouth are anything but senseless, and I know I should pay attention to them, but I can hardly focus on anything but the taste of his lips or his warm, woody scent.

“I’ll make up for all of it,” he growls, his fingers digging into my skin with a punishing grip. “I will make up for all the time we’ve lost.”

There is something different about him. Something *feral* when he draws me into his arms, and carries me out of the kitchen. I wrap my arms around him, tucking my face into his

neck as he ferries me upstairs and to what I assume is the master bedroom.

I don't get to see much of the room when he sets me down on the bed without breaking eye contact. He drops his lips, brushing them roughly against mine before kissing a trail down my jaw and my neck. I push back, granting him more access to the sensitive parts of my body.

"My perfect princess," he rasps, his breath hot and heavy against my skin. I cry out, and my back arches off the bed when he takes a pebbled nipple between his lips, sucking gently at the sensitive bud. He moves on to the next, giving it the same attention, and with every tug, sends a fresh wave of need rocking through my core.

"Please," I whimper, begging him to ease the searing ache between my legs.

He said he would take care of me. *Of everything.*

"I've got you, baby," he growls, dropping his finger to my thong and pushing it aside. I jump when his finger brushes against my wetness. "Fuck, you're soaked, baby."

I gasp when he parts my folds with his thumb, gently sawing it against my wetness. A loud moan slips out when his thumb brushes against my clit, shooting heat through my abdomen and up my spine.

"Oh, Lucian!"

His thumb rubs in slow circles against the sensitive bud of nerves, and I grasp his wrist, closing my legs around our hands, terrified of the intense feeling building up within me.

Despite my reckless ways, sex is the one thing I drew a line at because I wanted—craved—to share it with a special person, but I didn't think it would feel this intense.

“It's okay, baby,” he soothes, brushing his lips over my stomach. “Trust me, okay?”

I shudder at his deep voice before nodding. He draws his hand completely away before dragging my thong down and off my legs, then parting my thighs and pulling my knees up, leaving me more exposed than I've ever felt in my life.

Without breaking eye contact, Lucian leans down and brushes his lips over my inner thigh. My body tenses up in anticipation, but when he drags his tongue along my folds, I become a ragdoll.

My head falls against the pillows as his tongue strokes my sex hungrily. My knees tremble with the need.

“Lucian, please...” I whimper when he rubs the pad of his thumb over across my entrance.

“I know, sweetheart,” he says. “I can't wait to lick your ripe, virgin pussy until you come on my tongue.”

“Oh, God!”

My sex clenches in need when he dips his tongue between my folds and laps at my entrance.

“Fuck, princess,” he growls, “you have no idea just how long I've waited to do this. You taste better than anything I've ever had on my tongue.”

My back arches, and I cry out as he laps at my swollen clit. My head spins, and my heart threatens to beat out of my

chest.

“Oh, God! Lucian!”

I dig my fingers into his thick hair as he laps at my sex with the desperation of a starved man, drawing me closer and closer to the edge.

The orgasm that tears through me is violent and sends my body convulsing into rippling, toe-curling pleasure. My eyes look up, unseeing, as pleasure rocks my body, coming in waves, each bigger than the last. Lucian doesn't withdraw his tongue until I push back when it all becomes too sensitive.

“Lucian...”

My mouth goes dry in mortification at what just happened, but Lucian doesn't let me focus on it, crushing his lips against mine instead, and then we're kissing. He angles his head to the side, deepening the kiss and stroking his tongue over mine hungrily.

“Can you taste yourself on my lips, princess?”

His breath is jagged against my lips, his finger playing with my nipples and reigniting the pleasure I'd been so sure was gone.

“I want you,” I rasp against his lips. “I need you, Lucian.”

“Do you have any idea what you're asking for?”

“Yes! Oh, God!” I whimper against his lips when he tugs at my nipple, twisting it gently between his thumb and index finger, sending an ache to my sensitive sex. “I want it... you. Everything.”

Lucian leans up, searching my eyes, but he must see what he's looking for because he leans down and presses his lips to the column of my neck.

“Then, you'll have it, princess,” he rasps. “I'll give you everything.”

CHAPTER 5

Lucian

Perfect.

Nora is perfect now, just as perfect as she had been the first time I ran into her at her brother's office on that Wednesday afternoon, two years ago. She and Rowan had been in the middle of a sibling spat, and I remember standing in the office, watching them, fully mesmerized by her beauty and her fiery spirit, but I'd kept my distance.

I'd figured it was for the best that I did so. Nora had only been nineteen at the time, and she had such big dreams of someday finding a grand romance, dreams I didn't think I could give her. At over a decade older and already set in my ways, any lustrous feelings I'd carried for her had felt taboo. Not to mention she was my boss's sister. But being with her like this now...it feels right.

For two years, I've thought—fantasized—about this very moment. About touching her, claiming her for myself. I'd worked so hard to keep her at an emotional distance, though I hadn't been strong enough to stay away. Instead, I teased and picked on her, pushing any button I knew would get a rise out of her and have her hissing at me like an angry kitten. But now, with her laid bare before me and all the walls I'd so carefully constructed torn down, it takes everything in me not to lose my control.

She watches me under her lashes, the desire reflected in her eyes threatening to let go of the little control I'm clinging to.

“You’re so perfect,” I grind out, running my tongue over my lips, chasing the lingering taste of her wet pussy, and *goddamn* does she taste amazing. I want to bury my head between her legs once more just to watch her come apart.

I want to lap her up just to hear her sob out my name in pleasure. I’ve imagined it in my head about a thousand times over, but the real thing is so much better.

I don’t remember ever wanting anyone as much as I do Nora. She’s perfect. *She’s mine*, I think as I lean down and kiss her, swallowing her moans as I explore her mouth with my tongue. Her little mewling sounds have me growing even more desperate to pull down my zipper and shove my cock into her wetness with the intensity of a sex-starved man. Fuck her deep and hard until she’s sobbing my name.

Until she’s addicted to my touch.

“Lucian,” she whimpers in my arms. “Please. Fuck me. I want it to be you who takes my virginity.”

“Fuck, baby,” I hiss, pushing back, her words almost sending me to the edge. I need to be inside of her now.

She watches me with dazed eyes as I climb from the bed and strip off my shirt. She runs her eyes shamelessly over my body, her breath coming out in short pants with every bit of skin I expose. I run my hands over my rock-hard stomach, watching closely as she licks at her lips, the desire in her eyes clear. Her eyes follow my fingers as I undo my fly and lower the zipper of my slacks before pulling them down, along with my underwear. My hard cock springs out, heavy and leaking precum.

“Oh!”

Nora freezes, her eyes springing from my cock to my hungry eyes. She watches me, wide-eyed, and I read the nerves there. I step out of my pants and underwear before kneeling on the bed.

“Lucian...” she whispers again, her eyes on my cock. “It’s—that’s...huge.”

Flattered as I am by her reaction to my hard cock, I can hardly focus on anything but the need to be inside of her. I crawl my way to her, feeling like a predator as I close the distance between us before settling a knee between her parted thighs.

“It’s okay, sweetheart,” I whisper, leaning down and kissing her. Her lips part for me immediately, and I plunge into her mouth with my tongue, the kiss both erotic and downright dirty. I grab her right hand and draw it to my cock. I moan, and she gasps against my lips when her fingers close around the head of my thick erection.

My breath grows shallow, and I almost come on the spot when her fingers tighten around my length. I thrust into her firm grip, jacking myself against her soft hand. I let go of her hand and drop my fingers between her legs to her wetness, swallowing her cries as I rub the pad of my thumb over her swollen clit.

“I’ve thought about this for a long time, sweetheart,” I rasp, my breathing growing ragged as I work her over with my fingers. “Thought about fucking your ripe cunt in so many ways that it’s become an addiction.”

“W-what do you mean?” her words morph into a moan when I rub a circle against her clit. I run my eyes hungrily over her face, taking in her reaction to my touch. *Craving more.*

“Do you have no idea just how long I’ve wanted you?”

She blinks up at me for a second before her eyes widen in shock. “But...all this time?”

“Every second of it,” I say hoarsely, working my middle finger into her virgin hole, letting out a groan when she clenches around the tip of my finger. She’s tighter than I expected, and I almost spill in her hands. “Relax for me, sweetheart.”

Christ, she’s deliciously wet but tight, so fucking tight, as I gently push my finger into her. Nora grabs my shoulder with her free hand as I push my finger past the second knuckle, fucking her with it before adding a second finger.

It’s torture, but I refuse to hurt her.

Holding back like this is killing me with the need to thrust into her, but I need to prepare her for my cock. I thrust two fingers into her tight entrance, rubbing at her clit with my thumb, and she relaxes in my arms, her body trembling underneath mine, and her cries growing louder with every stroke.

“*Lucian!*” she sobs, hips rising to meet me as I finger fuck her, thrusting faster into her tight entrance, eyes glued on her face and soaking up her reaction to my touch.

Beautiful. My God, she’s the most breathtaking thing I have laid my eyes on, and I can’t seem to get enough. Her

back raises from the mattress, and her head falls back against the pillows as she comes, screaming out my name as she clenches tightly against my fingers.

“Oh, God,” she sobs, riding the waves of pleasure on my fingers. “Lucian, Oh!”

“That’s it, sweetheart, cum for me,” I croon as she falls apart, letting her ride out the sensations until she’s a trembling mess in my arms, her tits heaving as she struggles to catch her breath. I withdraw my fingers from her tight entrance and replace them with the head of my cock.

“Baby,” I grit out between clenched teeth, pushing the head of my cock into her tight entrance. “Fuck, you’re so tight, baby. Tell me you want my cock in your virgin pussy.”

“Please,” she whimpers.

“Please what, sweetheart? I want to hear you say it.”

Her cheeks flush a deeper shade of pink, but she doesn’t shift her glazed eyes from mine when she speaks. “Please, fuck me, Lucian. I want your cock in me. Please.”

My eyes are on her when I drive my hips forward and plunge my cock into her drenched hole, my loud groan drowning out her scream of my name.

“Christ,” I bellow, fighting not to come and spill my seed into her. She’s so fucking tight, her hot pussy squeezing around my shaft like a vise. I clench my jaw and hold still in her before looking down to search her face. “Are you okay, sweetheart? Does it hurt too badly?”

“It’s...it’s so big,” she whimpers, lifting her hands to my shoulders and digging her fingernails into my skin. “It

hurts a little, but it feels good too. Please, don't stop."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, please, don't stop." She writhes beneath me, gasping at the sensation. I grab her hip and lift it to my thigh, and her mouth parts in a pleased 'O' when the position sinks more of my cock into her.

"Fuck, princess," I rasp, grinding my cock into her tight entrance, watching like a love-sick fool as her eyes flutter to a close, and she tucks her face into my neck, whimpering against my skin. "Tonight, I could barely hold back the need to fuck you. I was desperate for everyone to leave, so I could have you for myself."

"Oh, God..."

"You like that, don't you? Knowing that just the mere scent of your perfume is enough to push me to the edge."

My fingers tighten around her thigh as I pound into her hard, rocking the bed with every thrust.

"Christ, Lucian...more...please."

I fuck her harder into the mattress, my thrusts growing fevered as I work her over with my cock. I reach down and tease her clit with my thumb, my eyes on her face, eager to see her come apart again.

"You're mine now, Nora," I rasp, exerting more pressure on her clit, running my hungry eyes over her bouncing tits.

Fuck! She's amazing. Her cries, the way she responds to my touch, everything about her is just perfect.

“Faster...please,” she cries out, her fingers closing around the sheets as I pound into her. A sob breaks out in her throat, and her hips jerk around me as I slam my cock harder and faster into her. I’m so damn close, my balls hurt with the need for release.

I watch hungrily as her back arches again when another orgasm wracks her body, her muscles tightening around my hardness and pushing me over the edge. I bellow as I spend my seed into her cunt, her pussy seizing up rhythmically and milking me for every drop. Sweat drips down my face as I fuck her through the orgasm, pounding hard into her until there’s nothing left.

Mine.

There is no way I am going to let her go after this. I brush a hand over her face, pushing back her hair as I study her. *She looks beautiful.* Well and truly fucked, and she belongs to me now.

I love you.

It’s at the tip of my tongue to say the words out loud, but I can tell she’s not ready for them yet. I’ve had two years to prepare and acknowledge my feelings, so I can’t expect her to be on the same page as me yet.

“Are you okay?” I ask instead.

“Hmm,” she murmurs, flashing me a tired smile that breaks into a yawn. “Never felt better, but I’m so tired.”

“I’ll clean us up, and then you can rest,” I whisper, kissing her forehead before pulling back to run my eyes over

the woman I've forced myself to stay away from until this moment. *No more.*

“Okay,” she says, nodding, but her eyes flutter to a close. I pull away from her and climb off the bed before reaching down and lifting her into my arms. She lets out a little sigh, her head falling against my shoulder as I carry her to the ensuite.

“You're mine now,” I whisper, tightening my grip on her.

Mine.

CHAPTER 6

Nora

I wake up to the sound of running water. The first things I notice are the soreness of my body and the softness of the sheets I'm lying on.

My eyes flutter open, thankful for the minimal light in the room, but I still find myself blinking the room into focus. The first thing that registers is the fact that this is not my room, and my brows wrinkle in confusion before everything comes flooding back.

"Oh, Christ," I moan in mortification, drawing the covers over my head. I remember everything about last night, down to the smallest dirty detail. Speaking of which...

I push the covers off and sit up, my eyes searching around for Lucian, and catch him just as he's leaving the ensuite.

"You're up," he says in his deep voice, but I can hardly focus on that. He's fully dressed in a tailored black suit and a crisp white shirt. His tie hangs loosely around his neck, and two of his buttons are undone, hinting at the delicious muscles beneath the fabric.

Snap out of it!

"What time is it?" I ask with a yawn, looking at anything but the man who rocked my body so hard I can still feel him inside me.

"A quarter past five," he says, and I hear him walk closer to the bed. I don't look up until he lowers himself to the

bed next to me. “You should get some sleep. It’s still early for you to be up.”

“What, you think I don’t get up at the crack of dawn too?” I ask, narrowing my eyes at him.

He flashes me an easy smile, reaching over and pushing a strand behind my ear. A shiver wracks my body from the mere touch of his skin, and that has me leaning away a little.

“You should get some rest, Nora. There is nothing I would like more than to spend the morning with you, but I need to be at the office early to prepare for a meeting.”

I chew my lips at his words, biting back the question I’ve had since last night. This man is a paradox. I don’t understand why he would choose to live and work in our little town when he could surely make so much more money working in the city.

“Why did you move here? Didn’t you have a job at some fancy firm in the city?” I ask, curiosity winning over.

“I found the position with your brother’s company suited me better than my life in the city,” he says, but I feel like he’s not telling me something.

What are you doing with me? That is what I really want to ask.

“Why did you buy this house instead of commuting from the city?” I ask instead. Until last night, I’d only ever seen Lucian at my brother’s house, the office, or around town.

“I bought it two years ago. The house was on sale, and I needed to move here so I could be closer to...”

His voice trails off, and I raise a single brow in confusion. “Closer to Rowan? Is it because you’re his lawyer? He must be generous with his pay for you to decide to move here.”

“Sure,” Lucian whispers, leaning in and brushing his lips over my forehead. “Get some rest. I set the alarm to wake you up at seven.”

“Wait,” I say hastily, grabbing his wrist when he gets up to leave. I swallow hard when he turns those piercing blue eyes back to me. “Um, last night, you said...I mean, you kept asking if I had any idea how long you’d waited. What did you mean by that?”

He doesn’t say a word, opting instead to stare intensely at me, which unnerves me. I almost breathe out a sigh of relief when the ring of his phone snaps his focus away.

“It seems that we have a lot to talk about,” he says, entirely ignoring the shrill noise coming from the phone in his hand. “We didn’t exactly do much talking last night.”

“Lucian—”

“We’ll talk tonight. I don’t know when your shift ends, so text me when you’re done with work, and I’ll come to pick you up.”

I stare up at him in confusion, trying to make sense of Lucian’s words. They’re clear and easy enough to understand, but it’s hard to associate this man with the villain I’d made him out to be in my head. Until my arrest, I’d only ever seen him as my brother’s annoying, bossy friend. I’d always

assumed him to be cold and unfeeling, something I got from the way he carried himself.

Watching him, I get the feeling that I have been wrong. It's a little bit foggy, but I remember bits of Lucian's aftercare last night. The warmth of his arms as he hugged me all night.

I lean back against the pillows and watch him go about the rest of his morning routine, and when he leans down to kiss me goodbye, my heart flutters in my chest, but my head is a storm.

What's changed?

Other than the fact that I just slept with my lawyer, I can't help but feel that something has changed between us, and I'm the only one in the dark because I can't tell what it is. It's close to six when I finally drag myself out of bed. I text Willow before going to take a shower.

My body is sore as I move around the house, wearing a robe that smells strongly of Lucian. It's about thirty minutes later when I hear the doorbell ring and go to the door to let my best friend into the house.

"Nora!" Willow says, studying me wearily. She's watching me to see what mood I am in, and as much as I want to be mad at her for her ruse last night, it's hard to be angry with Willow when she's partly the reason I got to have the most amazing night I could have ever hoped for.

"How mad was Rowan when he found out you were lying?" I ask, moving to the side to let her in.

"Oh, he wasn't mad at all. He was just as ready to go home as I was. We'd barely even made it through the door

when—”

“Hush, hush, I don’t want to know about you and my brother’s bedroom business. Ew! Respect the rules, Willow. No bedroom talk. Ever.”

Willow flashes me a mischievous grin. “You didn’t let me finish, I was going to say he rubbed my feet.”

“I bet you were.”

I grab the bag from her hand and peek inside to see she brought me the clothes I’d requested.

“So, how did it go with Henry Cavill?”

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” I say, rolling my eyes at her, unwilling to share what happened last night between Lucian and me. Part of me wants to see her stew in her curiosity a bit for what she pulled last night. “Why don’t you make us some coffee while I get dressed.”

“Fine, don’t tell me about your hot night. I can see all the red spots on your neck, so I’ll fill the blank spaces for myself.”

I flash her a glare, pulling the robe tighter around myself as I make my way to the master bedroom, but I stop at the foot of the stairs. I chew my lips, contemplating sharing with her what’s weighing on me. She and my brother got together pretty fast and fell in love in a short amount of time. I can’t help but wonder if the sex was part of it, and if everything changed for Lucian after last night.

Do you have no idea just how long I’ve wanted you?
he’d asked.

“Nora, are you okay?”

I look up to find my best friend staring up at me with a look of concern in her eyes, so I flash her a smile. “Yeah, I’m okay.”

“You seem a little lost there, is it about Lucian? Did he do something?” she asks, her eyes narrowing to slits, and I chuckle at how fast she shifted into protective mode.

“No, he didn’t do anything I didn’t want, but...hmm, I’ll tell you about it later, okay?”

She nods at my words, and I leave to get dressed. Grateful that she took the time to grab my clothes from my apartment. I walk out a few minutes later to find a full breakfast of eggs, bacon, and toast on the dining room table.

“You made this in just a couple of minutes?”

“I just made the coffee, but it seems your Superman made you breakfast before he left.”

My heart flutters at her words, and I try to hide just how much this gesture affects me. No, this is not whom I pictured Lucian to be. Had years of bickering with him and doing our best to get on each other’s nerves blinded me to who he really is?

“So, are we going to talk about it?” Willow asks once we are settled at the table for breakfast. “Lucian didn’t hurt you, did he?”

“Nothing like that.” I raise my coffee cup to my nose and inhale the strong scent, letting the steam calm me a bit. “He just said some stuff that left me confused.”

“Like what?” she asks around a mouthful of eggs.

“Last night, he kept asking if I had any idea how long he’s been waiting for me.”

“Haven’t you guys always argued? Rowan said the two of you get along like a lit match and gasoline.”

“Yeah. He’s been Rowan’s lawyer for two years. The first time I met him was actually when he’d come into the office for his interview. Now that I think about it, Rowe told me he’d had to practically beg Lucian to take the interview, and he was sure he would turn down the job, but Lucian accepted it almost immediately. Even from the first day, Lucian and I did nothing but argue. He’s always picking on me about my ‘romantic fantasies,’ as he calls them. He thinks my standards are unreasonable.”

“Hmm,” Willow mutters, stuffing her face with the food. “Do you think that, perhaps, he fell in love with you at first sight, and every time he’s teased you has been to keep you from realizing how he feels?”

“That’s ridiculous,” I say, lifting the cup to my lips and ignoring the burn from the hot beverage, it’s easier to ignore than her words.

They stay with me during breakfast and on the drive to work. It’s ridiculous to think that a man like Lucian, perfect in almost every way, would harbor feelings for me for two years and not do a thing about it.

Would I have let him?

Thoughts of him cycle through my mind, and when I get his text later in the day asking when I get off work, I find

myself responding right away. There are so many questions I have for him, and it's for that reason I agree to let him pick me up.

Liar.

Okay, so maybe I want to see him, too. I have questions I want answered, and part of me wants to make sure that what happened last night wasn't a fluke.

"Hey, boss." There is a knock on my office door a second before it's pushed open, and Kim, one of my baristas peeks in. "We have a problem."

"Do you need my help with the customers?" I ask, getting up. It is a few minutes past four, and I didn't think the staff needed my help, so I'd closed myself in my office.

"No, well, not exactly. It's Willow."

Her words have me rushing out of my office and stumbling to a stop when I see what she'd meant. There are a fair number of customers, and everything is running smoothly, but for the eye glaring contest holding up the line.

"Leave," Willow growls at Mike, her hands clenching around a rag.

"I'm not here to cause trouble. I just want to speak to her, Willow. Where is she?"

"You've got some nerve showing up here!"

When Willow starts to round the counter, I take that as my cue to cut in. I step between the two and grab Mike's arm, dragging him from the line.

“I’ll handle this, sorry,” I say, flashing the customers my best smile as I pull Mike away from everyone and towards my office. I look back and shake my head at Willow when she attempts to follow us. I can tell she wants to protect me, and as much as I appreciate her, I can’t have my issues affect my business more than it has already.

I let go of Mike, and he follows me back to my office. I close it behind me before turning to look at the man I’d convinced myself I could love, but looking at him now, I can’t help but question what about him I’d even been drawn to in the first place. He is dressed in dirty blue jeans and a white shirt that, for some reason, had seemed attractive to me only a week ago. He has a baby face that would have people assuming he is younger than his twenty-six years.

I can’t help but compare him with Lucian and find him lacking.

“What are you doing here, Mike?” I ask, walking around my desk and settling down.

“I—” he starts, his eyes shifting around the room before finally meeting mine. “I wanted to clear things up. I know I told the cops that you broke my window to get in, but I was going through our texts, and I saw the one where you told me about it and to get it fixed. I could see you sent it when I was out of town and had asked you to take care of my cat and the plants, but I...I guess I didn’t really read it at the time.”

I remain silent for a moment, watching him. Then, I say, “You said you don’t remember making plans with me.”

“And I still don’t,” Mike cuts in, his eyes on me, and I can tell he’s sincere. “All I know is we spoke on the phone a

few nights before, and I'd been distracted during the phone call. I've had time to think about it, and I don't believe you were lying when you said we made plans. I just...I'm sorry, Nora. I wasn't listening to you."

"Mike..."

"I'm sorry for leading you on and leaving you to believe that we were dating. I just—It never occurred to me that you were serious."

His words have my stomach sinking. This isn't the first time this has happened. I always seem to read too much into things. My heart aches as I begin to wonder if I'm doing the same thing now with Lucian.

No.

With sudden clarity, I know that I wasn't imagining anything with Lucian. Mike never once looked at me the way Lucian does or touched me the way he did. He loves me, I'm sure of it. What's even more shocking, is the realization that I love him too.

"It's okay," I say finally, proud that my voice comes out strong and even. My sudden epiphany has me feeling magnanimous. "I guess a part of me suspected things were not going well between us, and that's why I sort of pushed the dinner thing. I just never expected things would escalate to this level."

Mike nods at my words, his facial features easing up a bit. "I'm sorry, Nora. I didn't mean to call the cops on you, but when I got out of the shower and heard noise coming from

kitchen, I thought it was a break-in. I panicked and called the cops before coming out to see what was going on.”

“Fair enough,” I concede, “I should have called first, I’m sorry.”

“It’s not your fault,” Mike says, shrugging his hands into his jeans. “I guess, I’ll—”

His words are cut short when the door bursts open and a red-faced Lucian walks in. His eyes are dark and cold as he studies the room before stepping in and shutting the door behind him.

“Hey, do you mind? We’re having a private meeting here!” Mike says, glaring at Lucian, but his voice wavers and carries a bit of tremble to it.

“Considering that you threatened to press charges against her, I don’t think it would be wise to meet Nora without her lawyer.”

The silence in the room grows even more stifled when Lucian drops his briefcase on the desk with a loud slam before walking around to stand next to me. He places a hand on my shoulder, which doesn’t go unnoticed by Mike, whose eyes widen.

“Now, say your piece and get the fuck out.”

CHAPTER 7

Lucian

I'm never one to lose my cool. In fact, I'm quite famous in my field for my cool demeanor and have even been called cold, which quite frankly, is the case more often than not, but not where Nora is concerned.

When it comes to Nora, there is no controlling my feelings. Everything about her pushes me to be irrational. To break everything that tries to get in my way, and right now, it's this lanky kid who, for some reason, seemed to have attracted Nora's attention.

It's beyond unprofessional to speak to him like I just did or even maintain anything but a professional cool between me and Nora, but he needs to see whom she belongs to.

When Rowan had come into my office after receiving a call from Willow telling him that Mike was at the café and Nora was speaking with him alone, I'd flown out of the office like a bat out of hell. I'd arrived at the coffee shop within minutes and was greeted by a frantic Willow.

"I'm so relieved you're here," she said, rushing to me with a worried look on her face. "Please get him to leave. This is the last thing Nora needs."

I'd hurried past the tables and almost wrenched her office door off its hinges, fighting—and failing—to hold back the scalding jealousy that filled me when I walked in to find the woman I am madly in love with in the company of her

former love interest, a man who had betrayed her feelings, no less. There was just no hiding my heavy dislike for the man.

“We’re done here anyway, I said what I came to say,” the lanky kid says. Then, turning to Nora, he says, “I’m sorry again, Nora.”

“Thank you for stopping by, Mike. I appreciate your apology,” Nora says, her tone softer than I would prefer it to be when talking to the man who’d literally called the cops on her.

“Stop,” I say when he goes to the door to leave. Nora tenses beside me, but my eyes stay on the kid who looks like he’d like to be anywhere else but in this room with me. “You need to tell the police that you won’t be pressing charges, or I will do everything in my power to—”

“All right, Jesus Christ!” the kid says, glaring at me. “I’ll go there and take care of it now.” Then, he storms out of the office.

We watch him leave, and Nora waits until the door has swung closed before getting up to face me. “That wasn’t very nice of you.”

“I had no intention of being nice to that punk.”

“You know what I mean, Lucian,” she whispers, her voice soft as she runs her fingers over my chest and plays with the buttons. “Your jealousy is showing.”

I suck in a sharp breath at her words, but I don’t bother denying the fact that I hated meeting the man that held her affection, however briefly. It’s only natural that I would be jealous at seeing them together. “Nora...”

“I don’t love him, you know,” she says, as though reading my mind, her eyes drop to her fingers, but only for a second. “We hung out for months, and we never once kissed or touched, not like what happened between you and me.”

“You broke into his house.”

Nora rolls her eyes at my words. “For goodness’ sake, Lucian, I did not break into his house. Let it go, okay? Besides, I don’t want to talk about Mike anymore. I would rather talk about what’s going on between us.”

I run my eyes over her face, searching for...I have no idea what I’m hoping to find. She must be confused by my sudden display of affection, but how the hell do I even begin to tell her that I’ve had feelings for her for years without scaring her off?

Will it come off as creepy if I tell her the lengths I’ve gone to, to stay close to her? Hell, I took the job with Rowan and moved to this small town just to be near her. Sure, Rowan came to be my best friend, and I love my job, but that doesn’t change the fact that she’s the reason for all of it.

“Nora—” I try to put my feelings into words, but my throat clogs up. From a young age, I’d found myself pushed into powerful circles. Much of my job has relied on my way with words, and yet, I find myself tongue-tied in front of this twenty-one-year-old woman, who’s watching me with her beautiful, ocean-blue eyes.

“I figured it out, you know,” she whispers, her fingers playing with my tie. “I’ve always thought myself to be smart, but it took me all day, and I think I finally figured it out.”

“That I am in love with you?”

Her eyes widen, and her lips part so prettily.

“You said you’d figured it out.”

“Yeah, but I thought...like, I figured you did, but part of me thought I might be imagining it. I didn’t expect you to say it. You really love me?”

“Are you asking if I’m sure?” I ask, tilting my head to the side to study her. She seems shocked by my words but doesn’t pull away, so I lift a hand and cup her cheek. “I’ve had two years to think about it, and I am sure. I am in love with you, Nora Wilde. I have been for a long time now.”

She lets out a shaky breath, but her eyes don’t waver from mine, and she doesn’t pull away. Hope rises in my throat at the thought that she may harbor some kind of feelings for me. I don’t expect too much from her so soon, but I can’t help but hope that she gives me a chance to show her just how much I love her.

How well I can take care of her.

“I—” she stammers, breaking the silence. She licks at her lips, and lust flares within me. I am finally overwhelmed by the need to see her fall apart in my arms as she did last night.

Does she feel this too? I wonder if her body is humming with need like mine is.

I need to be inside her again.

I need to feel her soft pants and whimpers against my lips as I bring her body to orgasm. My cock throbs behind my

fly, and it takes everything in me not to push her against the desk, lift her dress, and pound my hard cock into her warmth.

Is she wet for me? Dripping like she was last night when I'd lapped her cunt until she screamed my name?

Fuck! I need her so badly. I want her, but there are so many people here. There is no way I can have her without everyone in the coffee shop hearing our cries, and I have no intention of sharing her beautiful sounds.

I drop my touch from her cheek and grab her hand. "Let's get out of here," I say, grabbing my briefcase with my free hand.

"B-but my shift isn't over for another hour," she protests, though she's already following me toward the door, making no effort to detach my grip.

I don't respond as we make our way out of the office and through the coffee shop. My strides are long as we cross the dining room. I open the door for her, but someone calls out, stopping her before she passes through the doorway.

Nora turns around to see Willow hurrying towards us. "Hey, you forgot your phone."

"Oh," Nora's cheeks flush into a pretty, rosy hue as she grabs her phone from her friend. "I'm sorry, I—"

"Don't worry about the shop. It's close to closing time anyway. I've got you covered," Willow says, winking at Nora before turning back into the coffee shop.

"I shouldn't be leaving work early," Nora whispers, looking up to meet my eyes, but there is no mistaking the desire in them.

I should probably do the right thing and not interfere with her day, but I can't bring myself to do it.

"I want you," I say, letting her read the desire in my eyes.

"Okay," she whispers. "Let's go then."

CHAPTER 8

Nora

This is an out-of-body experience.

I stare out the window, my hand firmly grasped in Lucian's as he navigates through traffic. The traffic is light, and my heart hammers in my chest as we navigate closer to Lucian's house.

I'm nervous.

I've felt his lips on mine, hell, his lips have touched nearly every part of my body, and I'm still a little sore from last night, but that does not change much. I am so nervous, I wonder if he can feel my hand grow clammy in his.

Everything has changed between us. Last night, I gave in to my desires, so sure that what we were doing was going to be a one-time thing, but now...now that Lucian has confessed his love for me, *everything* is different.

I turn my head to the man who, in a matter of days, has managed to turn my life upside down, and with it, my head. He has a short, sexy beard that begs for me to run my fingers through it. I clench my thighs together at the memory of it tickling at my sensitive skin when he went down on me the night before.

"We're close," Lucian says, his voice deep and rumbly.

My gaze skates over his handsome face, along his sturdy neck, and down his toned, muscular body. His shoulders are broad and strong, and the memory of his firm pecs against my breasts has my pulse fluttering in my neck.

My nipples stiffen behind my bra, and a hot pulse spreads between my thighs the longer I run my eyes over his body. I shift in my seat to ease the discomfort but have to bite back a moan when my aching pussy rubs against the seat.

“How much longer?” The words slip out, my brain-to-mouth filter clearly malfunctioning.

“Fifteen more minutes,” he rasps deeply, his hand tightening around mine.

I don't think I can wait fifteen minutes.

I try to think of something to say, *anything* to shift my focus to something other than the need vibrating in my body, but I come up blank. I look over at Lucian's face to find his eyes focused on the road. Other than his tense expression, he seems to be holding on much better than me.

My eyes skirt to his lap to find the crotch of his slacks tented. My thighs squeeze tighter together at the memory of his cock inside of me. I look back at his eyes and then at his fly, and part of me wants to see him as hot and bothered as I am, so I draw my hand from his grip and drop it on his thigh.

Lucian throws me a confused glance before shifting his attention back to the traffic. I wait until we pull to a stop before running my hand over his arousal. Lucian jolts at my touch, and I am glad I waited, or he would have crashed the car.

“Nora, what are you doing?” he asks thickly.

“I need to feel you,” I breathe, my hands shaking as I reach for his zipper and pull it down.

“*Christ*,” he growls, his breath jagged. His head falls back against the headrest when I draw his cock from his pants. “Fuck, princess.”

“Just keep driving,” I whisper, my eyes shifting from his leaking cock to his face. He sucks in a sharp hiss and licks his lips when I use his precum to jerk him off, tightening my grip when it becomes slippery.

The loud honk of the car behind us has him driving forward, but I don’t remove my fingers from his cock. I watch in fascination as his jaw flexes, and his breath comes in short pants as I stroke his erection.

“Fuck,” he pants, his hands tightening on the sterling wheel. “Five more minutes.”

“I want to taste you,” I tell him, my words drawing a pained groan from his throat.

He grabs my hand with his own and stills my movements.

“Baby, you’ve got to stop, or I’ll get us both killed.” He leaves his hand over mine, not allowing me to stroke him, but not forcing me to release him, either. I can feel his cock pulsing with need.

Finally, we pull into his driveway, and Lucian throws the car into park. He drops his hold on my hand, and I immediately release his cock from my grip, smiling at the low whine that escapes his throat at the move. I sit up and push my hair back before leaning down and taking his thick cock into my mouth. I don’t know what the hell I am doing, but with the

way he's growling and his hips are bucking in short, aborted thrusts, I must be doing something right.

Even so, his cock is too big to fit the entire thing in my mouth. I run my tongue over the head, licking the salty precum from the tip, then tracing the thick vein that runs from the root to his tip with my tongue, listening to hear what he likes and doing more of that. I close my mouth over the tip and use my hand to stroke the rest of him.

"Fuck, baby," he says hoarsely, his hips jerk, and just the low rumble of his voice has my sex clenching with need. "I need to be inside of you, sweetheart. Need to come in you."

He grabs my shoulders and pulls me up from his cock. Lucian reaches for the car door to get out, but I grab his hand and stop him.

The thought of closing the distance to get into his house feels like a long, unnecessary journey. I can't wait, not when my body is vibrating with need.

"Nora..." He searches my eyes, and he must read the need there because he doesn't protest when I climb over to his side and straddle his lap.

"Here," I whimper. "I need it right now, please."

"Fuck, princess, how badly do you want my cock in your tight cunt?" he growls, leaning in to nuzzle the sensitive skin behind my ear; his hot breath sends liquid heat pooling between my thighs. "Tell me."

"Please," I whimper, rocking in his arms and rubbing my aching sex against his hardness. "I want it so bad."

“Show me,” he murmurs, lifting his eyes to meet mine. I lean back and grab his erection, sending up a quick prayer of thanks that I’d worn a dress that day, and spread my thighs further, using his hardness to push aside my thong and part my wet folds. A low whine slips out when I nudge his cock against my entrance, and we both groan when the tip slips inside.

“*Lucian*,” I whine when another inch presses inside of me, my eyes almost crossing from the sensation.

He grabs my ass and pulls me down on his cock, pressing his inches deep inside of me, and my sob mixes with his groan as he bottoms out inside me. I grab the headrest and begin a slow grind of my hips on his cock, enjoying the friction the movement creates.

“I’ve been thinking about this all day, sweetheart,” he says through clenched teeth, his hand tightening around my ass as I slowly grind on his lap. “I couldn’t wait to be inside of you and fuck you again, pump my cock into your horny cunt and fill you up until you’re carrying my baby.”

“Oh, God!”

My pussy clenches around his cock at his words. I could get pregnant from him fucking me raw. The thought of carrying his seed in me sends a sharp pang of *want* through me, and I pick up speed, riding his cock harder, faster.

“*Yes*, baby,” he groans, holding me tightly as his hardness swells inside of me, pushing against my walls. “Mine, you’re mine, and so is this sweet little cunt.”

“Yours,” I cry out, my palms scraping against the headrest as desire takes over. All the nerves I’d had earlier disappear and affection takes their place. Affection for this man who has loved me from a distance for two years. “I’ve only ever been yours.”

With a loud growl, Lucian yanks my hips down as he thrusts hard into me. I cry out, holding on for dear life as he grinds the thick base of his shaft against my clit, causing my back to arch at the friction.

“I’m close sweetheart,” he grunts, pounding into my flesh with an animalistic speed. “I’m going to make you cream on my dick, and after this, I’ll carry you inside, clean you up with my tongue in the foyer...”

“Oh, God!”

“...and finger fuck you against the staircase until you clench around my fingers.”

“Lucian—”

“Then, I’ll then take you to my bedroom and fuck you against the wall. I’ll pound into you until your vision goes dark, your knees buckle, and you’re dripping with my cum.”

My climax tears through me with the intensity of a hurricane. My muscles draw tight before releasing in a shudder, and a scream rips from my throat, as a tremor runs down my back and to the tips of my toes. I clench tightly around his hardness as my body trembles through the orgasm, triggering his own.

He comes with a harsh groan, emptying his warm seed into my womb as his body shakes beneath mine.

“I love you,” he whispers, burying his face in my hair as he lazily fucks himself through his orgasm. “I love you so much, Nora.”

I wrap my arms around him and draw him closer, kissing the top of his head and swallowing back the affection threatening to choke me. I have never felt this way about a person before, and to think I missed it for two years...

I belong to him now. I don't want to fight the feeling anymore.

He makes me happy, and that's enough.

It's more than enough.

EPILOGUE

Lucian

Three years later

I stand rooted to the ground as my wife attempts to climb through our kitchen window. I watch her, confused and trying to understand why she wouldn't simply use the door.

I run my eyes over the perfect mold of her ass through the beautiful red sundress she's wearing. My cock hardens in an instant, but before I can step closer and give in to my need to fuck her against the wall, laughter from the pool reminds me that we have guests.

It's our daughter's second birthday, and since our Allie and Rowan's daughter were born a week apart, we've made it a tradition to celebrate their birthdays together.

"Nora," I call out when she attempts to jump, but the window is too high for her to reach. "Do I even want to know?"

"Jesus, Lucian!" she startles, throwing me a glare. "You scared me."

"I've been here a while. What are you doing?"

"Trying to get into the house, duh," she says, rolling her eyes as if I am the crazy one of the two of us. "Now hurry up and give me a boost."

"You want me to help you break into our own home? You've heard about doors, right?"

“Lucian, are you going to help me or not?” she snarks. “I accidentally locked my keys inside, and now, I can’t get in. I would’ve asked for your keys, but you and Rowan were busy having the “dad talk,” and I didn’t want to interrupt it.”

Well, when she puts it like that...yeah, it still makes no sense at all.

“So, breaking in through the window was easier than interrupting our “dad talk” to ask for my set of house keys? What about using the key pad on the garage door? Or, I don’t know, asking me for my keys now?”

“I can’t remember the code. Now less talking and more helping. If you could only push me up, then I’d be able to reach the pane and—” As if a light bulb has gone off above her head, she turns to look at me sheepishly. “Can I, um, have your keys, please?” she asks.

It’s all I can do to hold back my laughter as I step forward and sweep her into my arms.

“What are you doing?” she demands. “I need to get inside to get the lighter for the candles. The kids want cake!”

I pull her tighter against me and carry her toward the garage door. “I don’t have my keys on me, but luckily for you, I do remember the garage code. It’s the day we met.” I punch the code in and wait for the door to lift. Once we’re inside the dark, cool space, I hit the button to close the door, then set Nora on her feet with her back to me, but I don’t let her go. I wrap my arms around her waist, pulling her flush against me. A low groan slips out of my lips when her ass brushes against the tent in my shorts.

“Have you learned nothing about breaking in through windows?”

“Lucian,” she huffs without heat. “For the thousandth time, I did not break in. You know what, you’re doing this just to rile me up.”

My wife knows me well. Riling her up is one of my favorite hobbies. Her chest heaves, and her body vibrates beneath mine in annoyance and arousal. Arguing with me never fails to turn her on.

“Relax, sweetheart,” I breathe into her hair. “I love it when you get into trouble because you have me to get you out of it.”

“Lucian...”

“Be quiet now, sweetheart,” I whisper, rubbing my erection against her ass. “We have guests over, and you don’t want them to hear me fuck you, now do you?” There’s no real danger of us being caught alone in the garage like this, but I know the idea of it will turn her on further.

“No,” her voice breaks on a whimper when I lift her dress and swat her ass.

“Good, don’t make a sound and attract attention, okay?”

She eagerly nods, her body shuddering against mine when I draw my cock from my shorts and rub it against the crotch of her thong. I move my lips to her neck, biting gently into the skin as I tease her clit through her panties.

“Fuck me,” she begs, “I need you, please.”

“How much?” I whisper against her neck, moaning softly into her ear at the friction her warm pussy creates, riding my cock through the thin material of her thong. “Just how much do you want me to fuck your little cunt.”

“Please...please, Lucian.”

I gently nip at the back of her ear, kissing my way down her neck as I grab her thong and push it to the side. I poise my hard cock at her wet entrance, rubbing against her sensitive skin, teasing until I feel her body tremble.

When I finally sink into her cunt, I have to bury my face in her neck and cover her mouth with my palm to mute our pleased cries. Being inside of her is the most incredible feeling, and each time is like our first time all over again. Her pussy clenches hard around my shaft, her pulsating walls milking me of everything I have, and I bite my lip to the point of bruising to stop myself from coming on the spot.

“Goddamn, sweetheart,” I breathe hoarsely against her skin. “Your wet, dripping pussy is searing. Give me a sec, baby.”

I drag in long gasps of air, but it doesn't help much as I take in her strong, sensual jasmine scent, and it almost pushes me over the edge.

“Christ,” I pant, digging my fingertips into her hips.

“Lucian, please, I need it,” she whispers. “I need to feel your cum in me.”

Mine

Nora is mine, has been for a while now, and I intend to keep it that way. She's the mother of my only child and,

hopefully, more in the future.

I start to pound into her harder, faster, and she bucks in my arms as I fuck her against the wall. Her cries are muted as I grind into her tight pussy, filling her with my cock over and over again until she's screaming and I have to hold her up.

"I love you, Nora," I whisper into her hair as I thrust into her. I drop my hand to her front and rub at her clit roughly when I feel my balls draw up.

Her thighs tremble as I fuck my cock deep inside of her, snarling low when her body tenses a second before her pussy clamps down on me, and then, I'm coming too. She shudders under me, her little tremors and the pulsating of her pussy drawing out my orgasm and milking me of every drop until I am left boneless.

"Love you," she breathes once I let go of her mouth. "I love you so much, Lucian."

"Mine." I drop my forehead to the back of her neck, my breathing harsh as I take deep gulps of her familiar scent and let it calm me.

"Yes, Lucian," she whispers. "Only yours."

~The End

Up Next...



Nathan Browsers, international soccer superstar and playboy, is our new coach. I should be excited! He's a phenomenal player and we could learn so much from him. Instead, he's a total jerk, and for some reason he hates me specifically. All I want to do is keep my head down and play the sport, so why does he keep making my life miserable?

The moment I first saw Maya, I knew she was going to be trouble. And I don't mean that she was going to be a difficult player to coach, either. Far from it, actually; she's incredibly driven and talented. On top of that, she's gorgeous, which makes it that much harder to keep myself away. I'm supposed to be reforming my public image and lying low, not pursuing a student and giving the tabloids more to talk about. Will I be able to keep myself on the straight and narrow?

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The Kingpin's Obsession

Alice

I saw something I shouldn't have, and my life is in danger.

The police won't listen, and I have no choice but to seek help at Benedetti's, a bar known for its criminal clientele. But I'm barely inside the door before a dark eyed devil drags me back out and demands to know why I'm there. I shouldn't trust him, but I don't have a choice when he's the only one willing to help me.

Too late, I learn who he really is, and now I'm left to wonder... when this is all over, will he save my life only to break my heart?

About the Author

Cassi lives to write brazen OTT, insta-love, short stories, about possessive alphas and the women they love. Stories that will leave you satisfied, and maybe blushing a little. Cassie loves pedicures, being pampered in any way possible, her darling golden Princess, amazing coffee, and traveling to anywhere warm.



Cassi H   nt