

A woman with long blonde hair is sitting on a dark wood, ornate chair with gold patterned upholstery. She is wearing a black, off-the-shoulder, lace-trimmed dress. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows a window with curtains.

leaving

with

her

JENNA ROSE

LEAVING WITH HER

JENNA ROSE



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Night after night I've had my eyes on her. She's an angel with a goddess's beauty, but she's never once even looked in my direction. And why would she? I'm just a lowly security guard and she's the boss's girl. The last guy who made a move on her was never seen again. But I found her crying, and she made a confession to me, one that will change everything. One that means I'll be putting my life on the line for her, because that's what a man like me does for a girl he's loved in secret for so long.

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MAGNUS

“LET ME GO, DICKHEAD!” Tonight’s first kick-out screams, tossing futile fists back at me as I haul him out of the front door by his collar and toss him head over heels onto the sidewalk. “You’ll pay for that!”

He’s drunk off his ass and decided to grope one of the girls tending bar. That’s a can’t happen, so I dealt with him quickly. It’s the first disturbance of the night, but it won’t be the last.

That’s my job here at the club: security. My name’s Magnus, aka Big Magnus on account of my size. I’m six-foot-six and enough muscle that I’ve been asked more times than I can count if I do fitness competition.

The truth is I’m just a naturally big guy. The only time I’ve even seen the inside of a gym was when I was helping my employer, Vincent Romano, setup his home fitness center at his new house that is fit for a celebrity and makes my apartment look like a closet he keeps his suits in. He owns this club as well as a few others, and I go back and forth where I’m needed. I don’t know precisely how Vincent makes his money, but let’s just say I’m smart enough not to ask.

I’m about to head back inside to check on the girl when I see Vincent’s car pull up around the block, a brand new, all-black Rolls Royce. I nod to Jimmy, the other guy working the

door with me tonight, and we both take our positions as the luxurious ride pulls up in front of us.

The driver gets out and goes around to open the door for Vincent, who steps out wearing a fitted charcoal-black with a blood-red tie. We're familiar enough that he nods to me. I nod back, but my attention isn't really on him; my attention is on who I know is going to be stepping out of the car next.

I see her shoe first—black with a red bottom that matches his tie. And then her calf, so slim and delicate, draped with the fabric of a flowing red dress with a slit up the side that shows off the most utterly incredible leg as she stands and goes to her husband's side.

Josie Romano, the most beautiful, sexy, incredible woman in the world. There isn't a single flaw on her.

I've seen her so many times at the club, and yet every time I see her, the effect she has on me is the same. Every muscle tightens in my body, my pulse quickens, and I forget to breathe as I watch her glide through the world like a goddess. Blood rushes to my cock as everything starts to move in slow motion, every single one of her movements accentuated as though I'm seeing it through a zoom lens. I do everything possible not to make it obvious that I'm staring at the boss' girl. The consequences for that would be disastrous.

I'd do anything to speak with her. I'd go up to her with a terrible pickup line just to start a conversation. Hell, I'd trip all over myself and fall in front of her just to hear her ask me if I was all right.

But Josie Romano doesn't even know I exist. Her boss will give me a nod when he sees me, when he passes, but Josie won't even look at me. Every single time I've seen her, she

does exactly what she's doing right now—she walks right by with her head held high, not even glancing at me.

And why would she?

Why would a queen like her, with a trail of flowing gold hair behind her and a body that men would paint and carve statues of, *ever* acknowledge a big bruising beast like me? I'm just a nobody. A blue collar brute who makes a living with his fists. Her man has given her the keys to the kingdom. What the hell do I have to offer her?

I hold the door for her, and she passes, so close that I can smell her perfume. It's the same one she always wears, and I've become so accustomed to it by now that it awakens something inside me every time it hits my nostrils. I wait until both she and Vincent have passed before closing my eyes and taking a deep breath.

Fuck, the things I would do to her.

She's so unbelievable. So delicate, so sexy, and fuck if she isn't eighteen or nineteen years old. That would put her about half my age. I'm a dirty son of a bitch for even thinking about it. But it's her fault for looking as good as she does and putting these thoughts in my mind.

“Don't even think about it, man.” Jimmy's voice tears me out of my fantasy, and I open my eyes to his scolding expression.

“Think about what?” I retort.

Jimmy chuckles. “You know I heard about a guy who put a move on the boss's *last* girlfriend? They found him dead, naked in the park with his willie cut off and stuffed in his mouth.”

“I’m not putting a move on anybody,” I reply, stuffing my hands in my pockets. I like my willie and my life, and besides, I know I’d have a better shot at winning the lottery than I would at getting with Josie Romano.

My life is standing outside this club for high-rollers, watching them pull up in their cars that cost more than the building I live in, dressed in clothes that cost more than my rent, and providing security for their lives I could only ever dream of living. I don’t even know why I let myself fantasize about what it would be like to run my hands over Josie’s perfect body...to untie the tie on the back of that red dress and peel it off of her until she stood in front of me naked...to drag my tongue up the inside of her thighs and apply pressure to her most sensitive places until her back was arched and she was crying out my name in ecstasy.

Because after all, that’s never going to happen.

It’s been almost two hours of standing out in the cold before I hear a ruckus inside. Jimmy’s about to head in to take care of it, but I hold out a hand to him. “I’ve got it,” I tell him. He nods, a grin forming on his lips.

“Watch out for yourself in there,” he tells me. We both know what he means. I can handle whatever needs handling inside, but we both know why I volunteered to do so.

Josie.

Just the chance to see her is motivation enough. Hell, I’d trudge through the worst blizzard in ten years just for a glimpse of her beauty.

The problem inside turns out to be two drunk dickheads at the bar about to start throwing blows at each other. I step

between them, but I can see by the glazed-over eyes that the man staring at me doesn't get who I am.

"What, you want some too?" He tries to push past me, but I block him with both hands. He stinks like sweat and booze.

"One chance," I tell him. "I'm giving you one chance to get out of here before I remove you."

I look back over my shoulder at the other man, but he's already gotten the message and is heading somewhere else, drink in hand.

"Tough guy, huh?" he snarks. "What, do you think you own the place?"

"No. But I know the guy who does." I drag my hand across the big "security" letters printed across my shirt. The man takes a second to focus on them, and then finally gets the message.

"All right, all right," he groans. "I guess I can let that guy off the hook. I'll just take my drink over there." He points to a booth in the corner. "And uh...enjoy myself."

I nod. "Yeah, you do that."

Just to make sure things go smoothly, I wait and watch until the man is fully on the other side of the room and seated before I relax.

"Thanks, Magnus," the girl tending bar says.

"No problem," I reply, raising my hands to my nose. "Think I'll just go wash that man's stink off my hands before heading back to work."

I hear her laugh as I make my way toward the bathrooms in the back. I'm not the kind of guy who's afraid of getting his

hands dirty, but another man's body odor on my palms for the rest of the night? Yeah, I'll pass on that.

There's a long hallway that leads to the bathrooms, and as I approach it, I hear voices engaged in an argument. One is a girl I don't recognize, but I recognize the other immediately; it's Vincent, and he's yelling.

"You know how this works! You think holding out is going to change things?"

"I...I don't..." Whoever she is, she's terrified. Her voice sounds like a pane of glass on the verge of shattering. Must be one of the servers or bartenders about to lose her job.

"There are consequences, and you know what those are, don't you?"

"Vincent, please, honey! Please, don't!"

Honey? My gut tightens as I instantly realize what's happening. Vincent isn't screaming at one of the girls in his employ. He's screaming at Josie.

I know what I *should* do. As one of Vincent's employees, as an employee of this club, I *should* mind my own business, turn around, and walk back outside. But I can't. Maybe if he was disciplining one of his men, I could do that, but not her. Not my Josie.

I may be making one of the biggest mistakes of my life, one that Jimmy would absolutely warn me against making, but instead of turning around and leaving, I round the corner and step into the hallway.

There she is. Josie. And she looks terrified.

Vincent has her backed up against a wall, one hand holding her by the wrist and his other hand pulled back in a threatening

manner like he's ready to slap her or hit her.

"All the things I've given you and you still think that you —" Vincent stops when he sees me and stands up straight. He may be the boss, but I guess even the boss wants to save face sometimes. "Yeah? Magnus, right? You got a problem, boy?"

"Nope," I reply, my eyes darting to Josie as she quickly wipes her tears. "Just heading to the men's room."

"We were just having a discussion," Vincent replies, straightening his tie. He leans in and whispers something to Josie. His voice is low, but I can still make it out. "Clean yourself up and meet me back at our table."

I act completely normal and walk past both of them toward the men's room, keeping my head down and my eyes averted the entire way. This seems to work as Vincent says nothing to me and just storms past me down the hall. I stop at the door to the men's room and turn back to Josie, who is drying her eyes with the fabric of her dress.

Seeing her like this feels like a punch to the gut. I already want to storm back into the club, find Vincent, and break his fucking face. But I know I can't do that. Not right now. There are more men than just me working security tonight. I'd be a dead man after I struck the first blow. But more than that, what the hell do I know about these two? Maybe this is how their relationship functions. Maybe it's one of those dysfunctional one's that people from the outside can never understand. Or maybe she's a gold-digger and just takes his abuse because she's in it for the lifestyle.

Jesus Christ, what am I saying? Josie isn't like that. How could I even think something like that? What is wrong with me? She's right there in front of me, crying, trying to put

herself back together, and I'm questioning her integrity as a woman.

I clench my fist so tight that my nails start to bite into the skin of my palm, and then I do something that I know is the most dangerous thing I've ever done.

I walk right over to Josie's side and put my hand on her shoulder.

"Are you all right?"

She sniffles and turns to me. Our eyes meet, and I feel like I've been struck by a bolt of lightning. "Hi. My name is Magnus."

The feeling goes straight down through me until it touches my toes. There it is. She finally looked at me. I finally get a glimpse into her eyes, and all I can say is it feels like heaven.

"I...I'm fine," she whimpers, but anyone with half a brain could tell she's lying her cute little ass off.

"No. No, you're not fine, Josie," I reply. "Tell me what's wrong. Is Vincent hurting you? Because that didn't look good back there."

She looks like a scared little rabbit. She wants to tell me something, but she's also afraid of me.

"Don't worry, Josie. I work for Vincent, but you can tell me anything. I'm here to help you. You can trust me. A wife shouldn't be afraid of her husband."

My heart is pounding with desire. My lungs are filled with the scent of her perfume, but being this close, I can also smell *her*. I'm nearly ready to explode. All the times she walked past me, never looking, never seeing, and now she's staring me dead in the eye with those big blue globes...I'm overflowing

with a hunger so raw that all I want is her naked and wet, writhing around beneath me in the throes of ecstasy.

“I...I’m not his wife.” I blink twice as she looks up at me, waiting for my reaction.

“What are you talking about?”

“I’m his captive. His prisoner,” Josie replies. “Vincent has been holding me hostage now for months, trying to get me to...to give him something...”

She drops her head in shame. She can’t say what Vincent wants, but she doesn’t have to. It doesn’t take a genius to figure that one out.

Rage boils up inside me. Yeah, I want to tear this whole club down to the foundation now. *Right* now. But I’m not prepared for that tonight. I’m prepared for something else though.

I take her hand and lead her toward the back door. “Come on. I’m getting you out of here.”

“No!” she protests as I shoulder open the door to the back parking lot. “Vincent! He-he’s got my mother!”

“Well, I’ll deal with that too,” I growl as I open the door to my truck and hoist Josie into the passenger seat. “But for now, we’re getting *you* to safety.”

I shut the door and go around to the driver’s seat. Josie is practically shaking as I give it gas and pull out of the lot. I reach over and put my hand on her thigh to calm her. Just a few hours ago, I never would have dreamt of being able to do such a thing. Putting a hand on the boss’s girl? No way in hell.

But Josie isn’t the boss’s girl anymore. Hell, she never was. She was the boss’s prisoner, and tonight, that’s all over

with.

JOSIE

I FEEL SAFE. I feel *actually* safe for the first time in a long time. I can't even remember the last time I felt safe around a man. But *this* man—this absolute hulk of a man—makes me feel like nothing in the world can harm me.

He's a giant.

I can't even imagine how tall he is, and he's so muscled he's about to rip out of that security shirt he's wearing. There's something off about his face...like he's oddly ugly and incredibly handsome at the same time. The strange combination has me feeling flush and wanting to just bury myself under his enormous body and stay there.

Parts of me that Vincent has said are absolutely off-limits to everyone but him are now pulsing with energies I've never felt before. My nipples are hard beneath my dress, and my body is nearly scorching with heat. His hands that grip the steering wheel as he drives us away from the club are massive and callused, and I can't stop thinking about what it would be like to have them all over me.

Why is this man, Magnus, putting his life on the line for me? I've seen him outside the club night after night, working as another loyal soldier for Vincent. Does he have a death wish?

“Why are you doing this?” I ask him. “You know how dangerous this is.”

He turns and glances at me and again places a hand on my thigh and squeezes. Again, my body comes alight.

“Dangerous for who?” he replies with a cocky smile. “Me or Vincent?”

I laugh. “Oh, yeah? You’re that tough, huh?”

“What do you think?” Jokingly, he squeezes my leg just enough until it hurts, and then lets go. “Josie, I would *never* let anything happen to you. I don’t care how dangerous it may be to me.”

I’m getting hotter, like I may have a fever. Magnus is like this giant protector seated beside me making me feel safe, making me feel valued, making me think thoughts I’ve never thought before. I’ve been holding out against Vincent for so long, yet suddenly all I can think about is giving myself to this man.

Magnus pulls the truck into a driveway of a rundown apartment building and turns off the engine.

“I know it’s less than what you’re used to,” he says. “But it will have to do for now.”

“It’s fine,” I tell him, seeing the obvious look of shame on his face. “I’ve lived in much worse, trust me.”

Magnus doesn’t respond. He just gets out of the truck and as I’m doing my best to negotiate the dirt driveway in my heels comes around to my side to help me. Without warning, he lifts me into his arms and carries me to the door.

“Those shoes weren’t really made for this driveway,” he says. I giggle as my heart rate quickly rises. He nods to his

right pocket. “Keys. Would you mind getting the door for me?”

“Oh, s-sure,” I stammer. “No problem.”

But it is a problem. I’m nearly on the brink of a heart attack as I reach into his pants pocket. He’s so warm, and his leg muscle is so firm and so strong. But that’s not the only thing I feel down there that’s firm...

Is that his...his penis?

I’ve never touched a man there before, but I’m pretty sure it’s not supposed to be so big. Trying not to make it so obvious that I just touched it, I quickly grab his keys, and as Magnus holds me to the lock, I use them to open the door to his apartment.

“Home sweet home,” he says as he carries me inside and sets me carefully down on the couch. Without even thinking, I throw my arms around his neck and pull him down on top of me.

The feeling of his body on top of mine is indescribable. He’s completely irresistible. His muscles, his size...I feel the heat pulsing between my thighs as I trace the muscles of his strong, broad shoulders. I’ve done everything I can to keep Vincent off of me, and now all I want is Magnus all over me.

In fact, I want more than that...

“I want you inside of me,” I whisper into his ear, pulling him closer. “Take me, Magnus. Put that big thing I felt in me now.”

I don’t even know what I’m saying or how these words are coming out of my mouth. I’ve never said anything like this before in my life. But I can feel Magnus’s bulge pressed

against me. He likes it. He's hard. He wants me. But what happens next is not what I expect.

He pulls away from me.

"No." He shakes his head. "Not like this."

I freeze.

Shame soaks over me, sending a chill through my bones. At the same time, I blush painfully and curl up into a ball. I want to run for the door or hide under a big pile of blankets, but there are no blankets in here, and I'd be a fool to run.

"W-what?" I whimper. "What do you mean *not like this*?"

Magnus draws a deep, difficult breath. "You barely know me, Josie. I've seen you so many times at the club, and you've walked right past me without a single glance. And now...now you want me just because you want to get back at Vincent."

"That's not true!" I cry out, but Magnus shakes his head. I can see from the look on his face that he doesn't believe me.

"You're the most gorgeous girl I've ever laid eyes on, Josie," he says with a sigh, as if pained by his own words. "But until tonight, you never even gave me a single glance, let alone a second."

"I couldn't, Magnus!" I protest, feeling the tears from my last horrible months of captivity swelling up inside me. "Those were Vincent's rules. I couldn't speak to any man. I couldn't even *look* at them! It had nothing to do with you!"

Magnus shakes his head. He saw what happened tonight. He has to believe me.

"Even if that's true, Josie...I'm still not good enough for you."

“What!?” I gasp, rising to my feet. “Magnus, what are you talking about?”

Slowly, he raises one of his massive hands to his face. “Look at me,” he says. “And look at you, beautiful. Josie, you deserve so much better.”

Tears spill from my eyes. What could have possibly happened in this man’s life to make him think this way about himself? I take a step forward and reach my hand up to his cheek, gently tracing it down his jaw.

“Magnus,” I whisper. “You couldn’t be more wrong. You think I don’t find you handsome—?”

Suddenly, there’s a pounding at the door. Magnus’s hand instantly covers my mouth to silence me. His eyes turn dangerous as a male voice shouts from the other side.

“Yo, Big Mag! We know you’re in there, buddy! Come let us in. We wouldn’t want you to have to replace your door.”

“Under the couch *now*,” he hisses in my ear as he rises. As quickly as I can, I drop to the floor and scurry under the couch, a cramped space filled with dust and lint.

“Come on, Mag!”

“Yeah, yeah,” Magnus calls out in response. “Let me get my pants on. Unless you boys want a show, but I *do* charge for those.”

I’m just pulling my left foot under the couch when I hear Magnus unlock the lock and open the door. From where I’m hiding, I can see two sets of black boots step into the living room. Vincent’s men.

“What’s going on, fellas?” Magnus asks.

“Looking for Josie.” I recognize the voice as Hank’s, one of Vincent’s regular dogs hired to do his dirt for him.

“And you thought you would find her here because...?” Magnus asks.

“You were the last one seen with her at the club,” a voice I don’t recognize chimes in.

“And you cut out on work early,” Hank adds.

“Food poisoning,” Magnus lies, taking a seat on the couch above me. The cushion sinks down just above the section where my feet are. “You really think I’m dumb enough to take the boss’s girl home with me, fellas? You think she’d even go with me?”

The men’s boots continue to patrol the living room as my heart rate rises. The dust and lint is invading my nose. I can feel a sneeze coming on and do everything I can to fight it.

“Food poisoning, eh?” Hank asks, clearly not buying it. “Jimmy said you seemed fine earlier.”

“Well, you know food poisoning,” Magnus replies. “Just hits you out of nowhere, doesn’t it?”

The pressure in my nose is building. It’s absolutely killing me. I pinch my nostrils together with my fingers, but I just don’t know if I’m going to be able to hold back.

“All right, Magnus,” Hank says. “You let us know if you see her, all right—?”

And then it happens.

A sneeze forces its way out of my nose.

It’s muffled, tiny, and barely audible, but it *is* audible. The black boots in the living room stop moving, and Hank stops

speaking.

I've just blown it.

"Magnus," Hank says slowly, his voice taut like a bowstring. "Is there somebody under your couch?"

What happens next, I can only speculate. Magnus leaps off the couch, I know that because I can see it shift from where he was sitting, and then there's a sound of someone getting hit. Voices cry out, but I can only watch the struggle from where I am as three sets of boots all shift for position around the living room.

"You son of a—" someone gasps.

There's a blunt, fleshy sound, and Hank's partner goes down hard on his back, knocked out, eyes open, staring vacantly into space. I gasp and clasp a hand over my mouth so I don't scream. Not that it would matter at this point.

I want to help Magnus, but what help could I really be at this point? Still, this is all my fault, so I quickly roll out from under the couch to see him facing off with Hank, who is clutching a knife so long it could practically count as a sword. He lunges at Magnus with it, but Magnus simply sidesteps the attack and drives his elbow straight into Hank's nose.

Hank's legs give out from under him, and he hits the floor beside his companion. I don't even have a second to recover from what I've just seen before Magnus is lifting me into his arms and carrying me out the door.

"W-wait," I stammer. "Where are we going?"

"We have to get out of here now," he replies as he carries me back over to his truck. With one swift motion, he sets me into the passenger seat. I'm blinking my eyes, trying to bat away the reality of what just happened as he gets in beside me.

“They know about us now. They’ll send more men to the apartment. We have to get to somewhere they don’t know about.”

The truck tires squeal, and I’m pushed back into my seat as Magnus hits the gas and we speed away from his apartment.

“I-I’m so sorry,” I sigh. “About the sneeze.”

Magnus smiles and takes my hand in his. “Don’t blame yourself, gorgeous. Blame that son of a bitch Vincent for everything he’s done to you. But don’t worry. I’m gonna take care of him, and then you’ll be safe forever.”

MAGNUS

I SHOULD HAVE KILLED THEM.

That's thought has been plaguing me for the entire drive away from my apartment. My *old* apartment. I'll never be able to go back there now. Not unless I find a way to take down Vincent and his entire organization, and believe me, I would do that for Josie. But that will take a lot of planning and more resources than I have. For now, the best I can do is make sure she's safe and that nothing like what happened back at my apartment ever happens again.

I look over at her, curled up beside me in the passenger seat, looking absolutely gorgeous in her red dress with her blond hair spilling over her shoulders like a waterfall of gold. She's the sexiest goddamn girl in existence, and she's in *my* truck, and that makes me the luckiest goddamn man in existence. The way she's sitting, and the way her dress is cut has the top of her left thigh exposed and even some of her ass, which I can see is perfectly sculpted and firm, just like the rest of her. Yeah, that's a young woman's body for sure. My testosterone is absolutely flowing through me after that fight, and all I can think about is being balls deep inside her right now.

How tiny she is compared to me...how easily I could just throw her around...Christ, what her slim little waist would feel like between my hands.

She glances back over her shoulder and catches me looking at her. I quickly look back at the road and try not to make it too obvious what I was doing, but she's no dummy. She knows what I was doing. She's drop-dead gorgeous. She must be used to men checking her out her entire life. The corners of her mouth twist into a tiny smile.

"Where are we going, Magnus?"

"It ain't the Hilton, I'll tell you that," I reply. "And it ain't my old apartment either."

"I told you I don't mind, Magnus," she replies.

"Yeah, well when you see *this* place, you just might," I laugh. "We're almost there."

A few minutes later I take a turn I haven't taken in years, but still it feels like I took it yesterday. I remember the familiar old bump on the left side as the road turns from paved to gravel and pull right to avoid the large rock that popped my front left tire when I was seventeen. I take a deep breath as the old house comes into view through the trees.

"This was my pops' old place," I say to Josie as I pull up in front of the porch, which looks dangerously close to collapse. "Only thing he left me when he died."

I hop out of the truck and walk up to the stairs and test them with my foot. They seem to support my weight, so I make my way up onto the porch, which also thankfully doesn't give way into a pile of rotted-out lumber. I turn around just in time to see Josie take her heels off and hop out of the truck barefooted into the dirt.

“Don’t do that, gorgeous!” I protest, reaching for her to pick her up. But she puts out a hand to stop me.

“You grew up here?” she asks, walking past me up the stairs to the front door.

“I...yes I did.” I join her at the door. The house key is still on my keychain, although it hasn’t been used in years. I slide it into the lock. “But I haven’t been back in a while. No one but me even knows about it.”

“Well, let’s go inside.” Josie smiles.

This is insane. A girl as beautiful as Josie in a place like this? It’s like eating caviar while sitting on a dumpster on a street corner in the worst part of town. This girl deserves the best, and I’m taking her here. It’s the only way to keep her safe, and I know she’s just doing her best to be nice to me by acting like it’s no big deal, but she deserves the princess treatment, and I’m treating her like somebody’s side piece.

With a deep sigh, I turn the key in the lock and open the door.

The place is just how I remember it. The old couch is still there, my dad’s chair in the corner, the coffee table, the fireplace, and the door leading out back. Sometime in my absence, the door to the kitchen came off its hinges and is lying on the floor in the middle of the doorway. There’s a musty smell too, like an old bookstore.

Josie walks to the back window and looks out at the sun setting through the trees. “It must have been nice growing up here.”

“Stop that,” I say.

“What?” She turns and looks at me.

“I know you’re just trying to be nice. You don’t have to do that.”

“Magnus, I’m not—”

“My dad was a con artist,” I say through gritted teeth. “Always working one scam or the next. The only valuable thing he ever taught me was how to fight. And one could argue if that’s the best thing you ever taught your son then you failed miserably as a father.”

I can see us both standing in the back yard, him holding up his hands, shouting at me to swing, cuffing me in the side of the head when I was too timid to go on.

“Magnus...”

“My mother was what you might call a ‘working girl’ these days,” I go on. “She had me, and I guess when she saw me, she decided she didn’t want me. I never met her. All I have is a vague image in my mind of a woman I think is her.”

I almost feel it slipping in again—that pain I’ve done such a good job of pushing down all these years. I reached a point in my life where I told myself that the fact that my mother never wanted me would never bother me again, but for some reason, explaining it all to Josie has those feelings coming back, like the opening of an old wound.

Of course, I’ve never spoken about this to anyone before. I guess that could have something to do with it.

She approaches me, a pained look in her eyes, but a look also filled with empathy. It makes me want to turn away or change the subject, but I can’t. It’s like my feet are stuck in concrete, and all I can do is watch as she moves in and reaches up and touches a hand to my cheek.

“I know what you’re feeling, Magnus.”

Her words shock me like a bullet to the chest.

“Do you?” I almost scoff. I want to believe her, but how could she? Her mother is still alive. She has the beauty of a goddess.

Josie nods. “I grew up in a place not much different than this. Our hot water never worked because we never had money for the bills because my dad was a degenerate gambler. His debt caught up to him when I was twelve and...” She looks away. “He went out one night, and we never saw him again.”

“Jesus, Josie, I’m sorry.”

“I’ve learned to deal with it, but it’s one of those things you never *really* come to terms with, you know?” I nod and take her hand in mine. It’s so small and so soft, so tender. Every protective instinct in me is brought out by her presence.

“It was just my mom and me after that. I thought things were going all right, but my mom just couldn’t handle things, I guess. She got...well...”

“Drugs?”

Josie nods. “Vincent got her hooked on them. Pretty soon she was...well, she just wanted to be around him all the time. But she couldn’t afford her addiction, so she started *working* for him.”

“Christ,” I growl, clenching my fist at my side. I knew Vincent was a real son of a bitch, but I never thought he would stoop to that level.

“Vincent came and asked me if I was ‘untouched,’” Josie says. “He told me the only way I could ever get my mother back was if I married him. Gave him my...cherry.”

I growl, wrap my arm around her, and pull her close to me. She's so tiny and warm. If only I'd met her earlier, I never would have let any of this happen to her.

"That's what he was yelling at you about at the club," I say. "You holding out on him..."

"Yes." She nods, her voice soft. "I just can't bring myself to do it."

The only thing I should be thinking about right now is the terrible tale Josie just told me. I should be coming up with a plan on how to free her mother and end this once and for all. But all I can focus on right now is the feel of Josie's body against mine.

Her warmth has me completely disarmed. I'd guess by the feel that she has two perfect c-cups under her dress, and she's definitely not wearing a bra tonight. I let my hand drift down to her back, following her natural curves to the top of her firm little ass that I caught a glimpse of earlier. She doesn't stop me, so I stop myself.

"I...I shouldn't, Josie." I start to pull away, but Josie grabs me with both hands and holds us together.

"Why, Magnus? Why?"

"I'm not good enough for you, Josie."

"Don't be stupid, Magnus!" she says in a tone that sounds like she's almost scolding me. "We're just like each other, you and me."

I turn my head from her. It's impossible to gaze at her beauty.

"Maybe..." I admit. "But *look* at me, Josie."

“Stop that,” Josie whispers, turning my face back to hers with the tender palm of her hand. “Your mom may not have wanted you, Magnus, but *I do*.”

She takes a few steps back from me, holding her eyes to mine. A feeling of tenderness sweeps over me like nothing I’ve ever felt before. I’m completely disarmed by this girl. She’s like magic.

Then, without warning, she reaches up behind her neck with both hands and undoes the strap on her dress. It falls off her like water, exposing her body, leaving her standing completely naked before me.

“*I do*, Magnus,” she repeats. “Now what are you going to do about it?”

MAGNUS

MY URGE TO claim Josie has been there every time I've seen her, but I've suppressed it every single time. But now, that urge has reached a crescendo that I can no longer ignore. Now my blood is a torrent of fire as it rushes straight to my cock. My heart is pounding in my chest, sounding in my ears, and every muscle in my body feels tight as I stare at the sexiest little thing to ever exist.

This can't be happening. She shouldn't want you.

That's all I can think as she stands there naked, staring at me with starry eyes filled with lust. But the sound of my beating heart and the raging desire pouring through me overpowers that doubt in my mind, and I take two steps forward and snatch her tiny body into my arms.

Our lips meet in a kiss that contains such energy it could shatter the universe. I probe for her tongue with mine and find it as my hands explore the soft, smooth skin of her body. My cock is a thick pulsing rod inside my pants, aching to be let out of its cage of fabric where it's been contained for far too long.

I pop the top button and unzip my fly with one hand, relieving some of the pressure, and as I do, feel a warm, slick wetness on the back of my middle knuckle. A moan spills out

of Josie's mouth, and I look down to see her shaved slit glistening with arousal.

She wasn't lying when she said she wanted me.

Seeing this drives me to a whole new level of arousal. I don't understand how this is happening—how a girl who looks like Josie could even be interested in me, let alone inviting me to take her. Women have never shown much interest in me. My own mother even left me when I was a child. A girl like Josie should be being hit up by celebrities on Instagram, not with a monster like me in a house in the woods that's barely even standing.

But if she wants me, there's no way I'm going to deny her. I couldn't—even if I wanted to.

I drag my forefinger up the cleft between her soaked folds, drawing a long, drawn-out moan from her perfect lips. It's like stepping into a dream—a dream I've had about her since the first time I saw her.

I part her gently and find her button with ease. She gasps as I apply just the right amount of pressure, and I watch with pride as her face is overwhelmed with pleasure. “How's that feel, sweetie?”

“Yes,” she gasps, nodding adamantly. “G-g-g...”

“Good?”

She clutches my shoulder as though she might fall over. A tremble courses through her, and I smile. This is like heaven for me. I'm dying to be inside of her, but Christ if I couldn't spend the rest of the night just pleasuring her like this and watching her reactions.

“Take out my cock, sweetie,” I whisper to her. Her body shaking, she reaches down with both hands and takes my

pulsing rod from my pants. She looks down at it, and her eyes go wide.

“Oh...my...” She examines it, running her fingers all the way from the hilt to the crown. Yes, she’s a virgin, all right. She doesn’t have to be questioned for me to know the answer. I can tell just by her fascination and the way she’s inspecting my hard steel.

“That’s right,” I tell her. “Now suck it.”

I wrap my hand through her golden hair as she drops obediently to her knees. She opens wide and leans forward, and then it’s my turn to let out a deep moan as she takes me into her mouth.

Josie may be a virgin, but she wastes no time getting right to it. She sucks aggressively, causing her cheeks to hollow as she looks up at me with those perfect blue globes that seem to stare directly into my soul.

“That’s it. Good girl. Get it nice and wet.”

“Yes, sir,” she replies, lifting her mouth from my cock and drawing her lips and tongue up the length of my shaft, bathing it in a shining layer of her spit.

Sir? Where did that come from?

But I don’t even have to ask. Josie smiles devilishly up at me and says, “Vincent made me call him sir. But I’m tired of that. I’d much rather call *you* sir if you’re okay with that... *sir.*”

“Oh, yes,” I reply, overflowing with desire for the goddess kneeling before me. “I think I can handle that. Do *you* think you can handle my whole cock down your throat?”

Josie's eyes thin, and her lips twist into an even more playfully wicked grin.

"Maybe if you help me, sir."

My cock pulses, and I quickly feel myself starting to lose self-control.

"Take a breath," I tell her. She does, and I watch as her two perfect breasts rise as her chest expands. Then I push her head down on my cock.

She takes the first half with no problem at all, but then comes the sticking point. She looks up at me with a look that lets me know she badly wants to take it all. So I help her along.

"Head down, relax," I tell her as I apply more pressure. "You can do it, baby. Just like this."

I apply pressure to the back of her head with my hand while at the same time pressing forward with my hips. She coughs and braces herself against my thighs with both hands, but doesn't pull back.

"You're almost there, princess. Take it all, and I'll bury all these inches inside your sweet little unclaimed pussy."

Christ, her mouth feels so incredible. There's so much wet and so much warmth. She's almost there too. Just a couple more inches and her nose will be pressing against the bottom of my abs. For a girl who's never even sucked a cock before, this is incredible. She's a keeper.

I know she's not going to get all the way there on her own, so I go ahead and help her the rest of the way. I thrust forward with my hips and apply just enough pressure on the back of her head to force my cock all the way down her throat. I feel her gag, but she stays down on it like a good little girl.

I leave it there for two seconds—anything longer than that would be too long for her first time—then I pull out.

“Wow,” Josie gasps as she sits back eyes watering, a look of complete disbelief on her face. “I can’t believe I did it!”

“You love it, don’t you?”

Josie nods, biting her lower lip. “Yes, sir.”

I strip out of my security shirt and hear an audible gasp from Josie. I look down just as she’s reaching up to run her fingers across the muscles of my abs.

“You’re so...strong...”

I’ve felt like a pauper my whole life, yet already this girl has me feeling like a king.

Smiling, I step out of my jeans and stand naked before her like she did me. I take her by her wrists and lead her to the couch where I take a seat, my blazing erection aiming up at her like a flagpole.

“You don’t know how long I’ve been thinking about this,” I tell her, guiding her to me so she’s standing over me with her legs spread, her pretty little pink pussy right there ready to be claimed by me. “You want me inside you, Josie?”

“Yes,” she says, a naughty little smile on her lips. “Yes, sir.”

“Come here,” I tell her, guiding her by her hips. “Sit on it.”

The angle is just right. She keeps her eyes directly on mine as she squats down—all that trust embedded in those bright blue spheres. I feel her open slightly when our bodies meet. The warmth and wetness ignite the passion inside me, and I nearly explode. But I hold out with everything I have in me. There’s so much more. We’ve barely even started yet.

I groan as I push in farther. Josie lets out a sharp intake of breath and grasps my chest with both hands. And then we both feel it. The quick pressure—the resistance of her cherry before it lets go and my cock sinks deeper into her.

“Oh my God, Magnus...” Josie slumps forward against me as her womanhood accepts the last of my inches.

“That’s it, baby,” I whisper into her ear. “That’s all of me. You’re mine now.”

“Yours...” she whimpers almost contemplatively. I feel her lips twist into a smile against my ear. “I like that.”

“How about this? Do you like this?”

I begin to grind inside her, moving back and forth and in a gentle circular motion, just enough to get her used to what I have in store for her. My hands cup her ass then move up to the curve of her back.

“Yes!” she cries out. “Oh my God.”

She’s mine now, I think. I can barely believe it, but it’s true. The soft, wet walls of her pussy cling to my cock with each thrust, and her moans bathe my ears with the most incredible sounds I’ve ever heard. This truly is heaven.

I pump faster inside her now, picking up speed. Maybe I should be taking it slower on her considering her lack of experience, but my basic instincts have taken over, and I simply can’t help myself. Not with a beauty like Josie. And she seems to be taking it without issue too.

With every thrust, her body shakes and she clutches me tightly with her arms, which are now wrapped around my neck. Her bountiful breasts are pressed against my chest, and her lips rest loosely and open against the hinge of my jaw. Her hole is so soft and so creamy that between our legs is nothing

but a wet mess, but I'm sure neither of us cares. In fact, it's ten times hotter, if you ask me.

I feel the walls of her pussy beginning to clench down on me and reach up to grasp the back of her neck.

"You're such a good little girl," I whisper, fucking her harder. "You going to come on my cock, aren't you?"

"I-I think so, sir," she whimpers.

"You definitely are, baby. I can feel it. And at the same time, I'm going to come inside you."

Just saying this to her sends me to the edge. I have to grit my teeth and use every ounce of willpower I have to keep myself from fucking exploding.

"You want to feel that, baby?"

"Yes, sir," she moans. "I do. Come inside me. Come in me."

She's practically pleading with me, which lets me know how close she is. I give her everything I've got, driving my cock as deep as it will go with nearly punishing thrusts. Josie cries out, and her entire body twitches like she's coming apart. I don't even need to hear what she cries out next to know what's happening.

"I'm coming!" she practically screams, digging her nails into the skin of my shoulders.

My cock explodes inside her, throbbing nearly painfully as I unleash a torrent of my seed that splashes deep against her cervix. I spank her ass with both hands and pin her down against me as she wriggles against the euphoric pleasure of her orgasm.

We're both gasping for air as we come down. I stroke the back of her head and kiss her all over—her cheeks, her neck, then finally settle on her lips where I could find myself forever.

“How about *that*?” I chuckle.

“*That* was amazing,” she replies, propping herself up on my chest with her elbows and looking deep into my eyes. It's like staring into my future. “I may not have done that before, Magnus, but I did take sex-ed class...”

I chuckle. “Oh, yeah?”

“And you know there...could be consequences for what we just did?”

Jesus. She's worried about whether or not I'd be upset if she got pregnant. How can she still not understand how I feel about her?

I reach forward and twist a lock of her golden hair around my finger. She's so unbelievably gorgeous, and I'm still hard inside her. We only had a chance to get to one position—I think I might just have to go ahead and start up round two so I can show her a few more.

“Josie, baby. I knew damn well what I was doing when I came inside you,” I tell her. “And if you get pregnant, not only will I be the happiest man on earth, but I'll be there for the baby, and we'll be a family. A family like neither of us ever had. How does that sound?”

Josie nods, and tears spill from her eyes. She leans in and kisses me, and I lift her up and turn her over onto her back. I start rocking my hips and coax a moan from her lips.

“Now, the last one was called cowgirl.” I smile. “This one is called missionary.”

JOSIE

I WAKE up to warm sunshine and the feeling of Magnus’s massive arm draped over me. It’s like a security blanket, and for the first time since I can remember, I don’t want to immediately get out of bed and get my clothes on.

For so long I’ve been forced to share a bed with Vincent—to sleep by his side while he tried to convince me to give myself to him. Despite the fact that he is an enormous bastard, he never forced himself on me. He said that he wanted me to “come around” and that one day I would, and that was the only way he would be able to actually enjoy having me.

Those nights were awful. Trying to get to sleep with that monster by my side was bad enough, but the mornings were more unbearable—waking up with his arm around me, his stink all over me, his morning wood pressed into my butt. Sometimes when he was still half asleep, he would try to cuddle with me like we were an actual happy couple or something. Those days were the worst.

But this morning is different.

This morning I’m waking up with a man who makes me feel truly safe, wanted, and special. A man who I willingly gave myself to after truly knowing for only one day. Oh, how Vincent would be jealous.

But it wasn't to spite Vincent. Not even remotely. And Magnus was right to stop me the first time when I was simply throwing myself at him. That extra time allowed me to truly recognize my feelings for him, to understand how similar we are, and how badly I want to be with him and why.

I can hear his deep breathing behind me and feel the rising and falling of his massive chest against my back. I twist beneath his enormous arm to see him sleeping, eyes still closed, like a gentle giant sharing my bed. Who would think by looking at this man that he was capable of doing the things I saw him do back at his apartment?

Ever so gently, I trace the line of his sculpted jaw with my ring finger. His eyes slowly open and focus on me.

"You're still here." He smiles.

"Of course I am, silly. Where else would I be?"

He shrugs. "Thought maybe you ran off in the night. Back to your rich, club-owning, future husband."

I crack him lightly on the chest with my fist. "Don't you dare."

"Don't worry, baby," Magnus chuckles, grabbing me by the butt with a thick, callused hand. "You know he'll never touch you again."

He runs his hand up my back and threads his fingers through my hair, giving me a scalp massage. I close my eyes and let out a deep sigh. "This is what waking up in the morning should be like."

"A gorgeous naked girl in my bed?" Magnus suggests. "You're damn right."

I reach down beneath the blankets and feel his cock, hard as steel, and begin to trace the shaft with my fingertips. There's a hot, fluttery feeling in the depths of my stomach. "You know I never got a chance to taste your cum. Would you like some morning head?"

Magnus growls and tugs my lips to his. His eyes are suddenly filled with lust, and his free hand finds my left breast.

"You know what you do to me?" he asks.

I play my fingers over his hard cock and lean into the grasp he has on me. "Is that a yes?"

He nods, a hunger in his eyes. "It sure is."

That's all I need to hear. Smiling, I duck my head beneath the sheets and begin kissing a trail down his chest to his chiseled abdominal muscles. I hear him chuckle, and he reaches down to grasp the back of my head as I reach the sexy V that points down to the enormous hard-on he has that's pointing right at my chin.

I've never wanted to please someone as badly as I do now, and I eagerly open my mouth to take in as much of his cock as I can. I get about half of it down when Magnus lets out a deep groan of pleasure that I can feel resonating in the mattress.

"Christ, you're good at that, baby."

I smile and keep going as he caresses the back of my head. It feels so good pleasuring him. My whole body is tingling now as I feel him growing even harder inside my mouth, the swollen tip of his cock pressing against my cheeks.

"I'm always so horny in the morning, Josie." He's thrusting faster now, holding my head in place where he wants it. I keep my mouth open obediently, doing my job and making

sure I don't do anything to ruin this for him. "I'm getting so close. Are you ready?"

I can't speak with my mouth full, so I make noises on his cock that let him know I am. Magnus pulls the sheets away and looks down at me. I look up, and our eyes meet just as he lets out a growl and I feel a spray of warmth across my tongue and against the back of my throat.

"Take it," he commands. "Take all that cum down your throat."

I didn't realize just how badly this would turn me on. I swallow eagerly as he goes off, feeling his cock pulsing as he holds it securely in one position in my mouth. He strokes the back of my head and then the side of my cheek, then with two fingers, milks the last of his release from his shaft out onto my tongue. He pulls out, and I swallow it down like I'm meant to.

Magnus smiles and draws a deep breath, lifting me back up to him. "You know, if I didn't trust you implicitly," he growls, "I'd say you'd done that before."

"Only *one time*, sir." I smile. "And that was last night with you."

Magnus pats me on the butt and grins back at me. "Come on, let's go see if the water still works in this old place."

I stand and follow him to the bathroom, admiring his sculpted glutes the entire way. He reaches into the shower and turns the hot water handle. There's the sound of pipes yawning somewhere behind the walls, and then after a few seconds, water sprays from the shower head.

"It's a miracle," I tease as Magnus pulls two towels from a closet in the hall. "Just kidding."

“No, I think you’re right,” he laughs. “It *is* a miracle. But not as much of a miracle as you, baby.”

He smirks as he takes me by the waist with both hands, and I feel myself blushing, but there’s no time for me to respond as he’s instantly lifting me into the shower with him. The warm water sprays down on both of us. I lean against him as he finds an old bar of soap and begins to wash me.

His muscles look even more spectacular while wet. They glisten under the suds and have me thinking about what it would be like to do this *every* morning.

Before I know it, he’s knelt before me, cleaning my ankles and feet while looking up at me with a slick grin on his face.

“You really don’t have to do that,” I tell him. “Why don’t you let me do that to you?”

Magnus shakes his head. “You just gave me morning head. This is the least I can do for you.”

I giggle as he rises to his feet and pulls me under the water with him to rinse off the suds. We kiss, Magnus turns off the shower, and then we dry off and return to the bedroom.

“Would you like some breakfast?” he asks.

“Why? You going to make me some something?” I giggle. “I’d hardly like to see what this place’s fridge looks like after all this time.”

“There’s a diner down the road. They make some pretty good eggs, and we have...some things to talk about.”

A small pit begins to form in my stomach.

My mother.

I nod. “Okay. But what am I going to wear? My dress from last night?”

Magnus grins. “There are some of my clothes here from when I was younger. I bet you could fit into some of those.”

“The tomboy look?” I suggest. “You sure you wanna see me in that?”

“Baby,” Magnus says, taking me into his arms, “it is absolutely *impossible* for you to look anything other than beautiful in anything.”

THE DINER IS empty except for us and one other couple sitting by the door. Magnus and I take the booth in the back so we can talk without being overheard. After such a wonderful night and morning, I’m a bit on edge about what this discussion is going to be, but Magnus is right about one thing: The eggs are great here.

“So where is he keeping her?” he asks. “Your mother?”

“He calls it The Castle,” I reply, the words like a toxin in my mouth. “We stayed at his home where he lived, he called it The Palace—” Magnus scoffs and shakes his head. “I know, disgusting. But The Palace is where he keeps things he can’t have around him in case the police decide to raid. Illegal things. It’s well fortified and filled with his men. That’s where he keeps my mom.”

My hands are shaking as I hold my knife and fork. This conversation is bringing up things I’ve tried desperately not to think of in quite some time. The thought of my mother there

with Vincent, captive, unable to leave because of what he's done to her...

"All right," Magnus replies. "I'll get her out."

"I don't know, Magnus," I sigh. "Maybe...maybe it's too dangerous, you know? Maybe I should just go back. I mean, she's my mom. If she gets hurt because I ran off—"

"Don't be ridiculous, Josie," Magnus says firmly, taking my hand. The tears are already welling up in my eyes. "You're not going anywhere. Vincent isn't going to win. Understand?"

I nod, too choked up to speak.

"Thank you."

MAGNUS

RIGHT WHERE HE LEFT THEM, I think as I pull away the old panel of floorboards in the kitchen beside the fridge, exposing the crate of firearms. It must have been there for at least sixteen years now, and as I lift it out of the compartment, I find myself doing something I can't remember doing more than once or twice in my life: thanking my father.

I hear Josie's footsteps behind me about to enter the room and call out to her.

"Don't come in here, baby." I don't want her to see this—these instruments of violence and death. She's already experienced enough hardship in her life; she doesn't need to be reminded of what's going to occur today. Protecting her doesn't just mean keeping her physically safe. It also means making sure she is no longer tormented by the life she's been forced to lead since encountering Vincent.

All I want is for her to be happy and at peace. As long as she's with me, she'll never hold a gun, so why does she need to see a whole crate of them like I'm a soldier getting ready for war?

She doesn't.

I take two pistols over to the counter and check them. They've been sealed and stored so well over the years that not

an ounce of dirt or dust has gotten on them. I take them and three magazines of ammunition and place one in my waistband, and the rest in a duffel bag and head into the living room where Josie is seated on the couch.

With her hair all messy and her make-up having been washed off in the shower, she looks completely natural and absolutely adorable. And even with a baggy T-shirt, there's no hiding how great her tits are.

“You look unbelievably sexy,” I tell her.

Josie blushes and twists her hips bashfully. “Not silly?”

I step close and take her in my arms. “If silly means sexy, then absolutely.”

Josie giggles, warming me up inside. For a moment, I forget what I have to do today. If only I could just run away with her. If only Vincent hadn't cornered us into this impossible situation where he's holding her mom hostage.

“You know what I think? I think Magnus means protector,” she suggests, gently pressing a palm against my chest. “I don't know if that's true, but to me it is. What do you think about that, sir?”

The warmth inside me grows. How did I get so incredibly lucky with her?

“What do you think about Josie meaning my princess?” I ask.

Her blush deepens, causing her to somehow become simultaneously sexy and adorably cute at the same time.

“I'm okay with that—” She nods and leans in to kiss me on the cheek but stops when she feels my pistol pressing against her. I see the thought process play out across her face;

she knows what it is and why I have it and what needs to be done today, but it also scares her.

She quickly smiles, doing her best to hide all that, and leans back in.

“It’s okay, baby,” I tell her. “All that is not for you. You stay here, and I’ll deal with Vincent and his goons. And when I return, I’ll have your mother with me, okay?”

Josie nods, doing her best to keep a straight face.

“What’s her name?”

“Debbie,” she says, her voice strained. “You be careful, okay?”

“Hey, what do I look like?” I smirk. “There’s a reason Vincent had me working security at his best club.”

I have to get moving or I’m never going to get out of here. I’ll just end up staying here for the rest of the day. After all, that’s where I’d much rather be.

With a final kiss on Josie’s plump lips, I leave her and head out the door to my truck. This is it, the final step before we’re together forever without the dark cloud of Vincent hanging over our heads.

I’M HARDLY ten minutes away from Josie and I’m already feeling it—that ice-cold, feral focus that comes over me when I need to get something important done. And right now, nothing could be more important than rescuing Josie’s mother.

The Palace, as Vincent calls it, is a hideout mansion like something out of *Scarface*. It looks like a house a frat boy

would buy if he suddenly woke up with a hundred million dollars. Gaudy, tasteless, and if I remember right, registered to some shell company owned by Vincent that he does business through.

I'm crouched across the street in the bushes like a wild cat, surveying tonight's security, which seems sparse. I only see two men by the gate and one patrolling the grounds. Vincent hasn't had much competition as of late; maybe he's letting his guard down.

Quietly, I screw the silencer onto my pistol and take aim.

The guard on the left goes down before his companion even has time to notice. He's reaching for his own weapon when my shot hits him in the center of his forehead, knocking the hat off his head.

He goes down right beside his pal.

Then I'm off, crouched low, stalking across the street toward the gate. One of the men has a keycard in his pocket which I use to open it. Somehow, the man patrolling the grounds hasn't seen me yet. He's on the other side by a water fountain checking his phone. Gun down, I stalk closer and wait until I'm right up on him, then press the tip of the barrel to his neck.

"Debbie," I hiss. "Where is she?"

The man's body goes stiff, and his right hand expands. I can see he's thinking of grabbing for his gun.

"Don't," I tell him. "Don't do it. Just tell me where to find Debbie, and we can both walk away from this. Reach for that, and you won't be so lucky."

"H-he'll kill me," the man replies.

“You got a car?” He nods. “Get in your car and drive. Drive far away from here and don’t look back. This man is not worth dying for, and you know that.”

My captor wavers, then raises both hands above his head and nods. I reach in and take his gun off his hip, along with his cell phone. “For my security,” I tell him. “Now where is she?”

“That door.” He points. “Down the first flight of steps. Two doors down. She should be alone, or she’s with Vincent.”

I grit my teeth. “Let’s hope so.”

I wait until the man has gone out the gate before following his directions. Through the door he pointed out, down the flight of stone steps into a dimly lit hallway, and then two doors down.

There’s a woman’s voice coming from within, so I ready my gun. Then, with one swift motion, I kick the latch and force my way in.

Inside is a woman, thin with blond hair, sitting on a bed with her eyes glued to a television. She’s talking to the television, not Vincent. She barely even looks up when I enter.

“Let me...guess...” she says, almost laughing. “She...said...no?”

Oh, Christ, she thinks I’m Vincent. And she thinks I’m here to punish her because Josie didn’t put out for me. I quickly rush to her side and take her hand in mine.

“Debbie, my name is Magnus, not Vincent, I’m here because—”

“Magwhat?” she asks.

“Magnus,” I repeat. “I’m a friend of your daughter’s. I’m here to get you out of here.”

This house may be a mansion, but this room is barely a prison cell. A bed, a television, an attached bathroom that's been stripped of everything but the necessities. Vincent really is a piece of shit.

“Friend of my...who?”

Great, she's out of it. Well, if that's the case, I guess I'm just going to have to do this myself.

I tuck my gun into my waistband, grab Debbie around the thighs with both arms, and hoist her over my shoulder like a sack of grain.

“W-what are you...?” she tries to protest, but I'm already on the way out, back through the hallway and up the stairs to the yard. The last guard is gone like he said he'd be, and I make my way out the gate and across the street to where I parked my truck a few blocks down, the whole way Debbie making some strange noises, trying to formulate a sentence.

Once we're there, I lay her in the passenger seat, get in, and take off. The mission may have been a success, but you never know when someone else may show up at The Palace—someone else including Vincent himself, and there's no point in getting in more trouble than necessary, especially with Josie's mom with me. The last thing I need to do is endanger her.

Right now, all I need to do is get her home to Josie. We'll get her clean, and we'll all be a family. One free family.

JOSIE

I ALMOST CAN'T BELIEVE it when I see Magnus pulling up with my mother in the passenger seat. It's been months since I've seen her, and as I focus on her, I realize that a part of me actually never expected to again. I guess I was just never able to expect that.

I'm nearly tripping all over myself as I run down the steps to the truck. I don't know what I'm more excited about; the fact that my mom's here or that Magnus returned safe and sound without injury.

"Momma!" I cry out, throwing my arms around her in a massive hug. I can tell she's not in her right mind, and I have Vincent to thank for that, but she does still recognize me, and Magnus and I will get her right soon enough.

"Oh, honey," she says sweetly, hugging me back. "How... are you? This...this nice man...he came and...he brought me here."

"This is Magnus, Momma." I smile. "He's my...well, I guess you could call him my boyfriend."

I turn and smile at Magnus, who winks back at me.

"Boyfriend?" Momma gasps. "Well, ain't that something. He's a looker, Josie!"

My mom's legs sort of sway from underneath her. Magnus notices immediately and comes over to take her by the arm. "Why don't we get you inside, Debbie?"

"Is there...televi...vision inside?" Momma asks.

It's going to be a process getting her right, but the important part is that there *can* be a process now. Now that we have her in our care and out of Vincent's clutches. That's all that matters.

I have to stop myself from crying tears of joy as Magnus and I begin to lead her up the stairs and into the house. But just as we begin to get her inside, I hear the sound of tires coming down the drive toward the house and a pang in my chest like the blade of a knife causes nearly all the breath in my lungs to disappear.

"Quickly!" Magnus hisses, hands on my back. "Inside."

We pick up the pace and are helping Momma onto the couch when a commanding black truck pulls up out front. My blood turns to ice when I see it, and my feet stop midstride. Vincent steps out of the truck, smiling like he owns the place. I turn to Magnus.

"I thought nobody else knew about this place!" He doesn't answer. He simply draws a pistol from his waist and moves for the door. "Magnus, wait!"

"Stay here," he replies calmly as he steps outside onto the porch.

Oh God...

I'm trembling as I watch another one of Vincent's men step out of the truck behind him...and then another. Now there's three of them and only one of Magnus. What is he going to do? They all have guns too.

Vincent looks up at Magnus and chuckles.

“Good job, partner.”

A jolt runs through me—the kind of jolt you feel when you get jump-scared in a horror movie.

Partner?

“Great job leading us back here. She’s been missing long enough.”

“Vincent—” Magnus starts to speak, but Vincent laughs and waves his hands in the air.

“I told you that you could take her for a day and have your fun with her. My treat to you for being my most prized head of security. But boy did you put on a good show to win her over!”

Wait...what’s happening? Put on a show? Win me over? The pang in my chest grows, turning into a gripping pain that expands throughout my entire torso.

“Don’t listen to him, Josie,” Magnus says over his shoulder back to me.

“Wow,” Vincent remarks. “You really fell for her, huh? But you can’t change the plan up at the last minute, buddy.”

I’m sweating. Trembling. The perfect moment we had among us no less than five minutes ago has shattered like a pane of glass.

“You pretend to rescue her from me, I *let* you, she puts out for you, but then I come back and get her after you lead me to her. You knew how this was going to end, pal. Only *our* plan had you looking innocent in the whole thing—”

“That’s not how it went, Vincent,” Magnus growls. “Don’t believe him, Josie.”

I’m feeling sick.

“No?” Vincent laughs. “How’d I find this place then, Mag? Have I ever been here before?”

“I don’t know, Vincent. But it sure wasn’t me.”

“And why was it you that just happened to come upon me and Josie having an argument? You just lucked out? Or did you and I set that up beforehand?”

My heart is in my throat as I reach out and brace myself against a pillar of the porch. Blur coats the edges of my vision.

Vincent is right; how *could* he have found this place without Magnus leading him to it? Magnus isn’t dumb enough to let himself get followed.

Is it possible that Magnus played me? That they both... played me?

I don’t want to believe that. There’s nothing in the world I want to believe less.

“Magnus!” I scream. “Magnus, you—”

Suddenly, I feel a hand on my shoulder and look back to see my mom standing behind me, eyes fixed on Vincent. I can see the hatred there and am instantly reminded of what she’s been through over the last few months that he’s been holding her.

“You’re a *liar*, Vincent!” she hisses. “And my daughter knows better than to believe you!”

A gunshot rings out, and one of Vincent’s men goes down in a bloody heap.

“Josie! Debbie! Take cover!” Magnus’s voice rings out.

There’s another gunshot, and just as I grab my mom and dive off the side of the porch into the bushes, I hear a handful more.

“Oh, honey!” my mother cries out over the thunderous ruckus. I grab her head and hold it down. Through the leaves I see another one of Vincent’s men go down and the sound of someone else crying out.

I close my eyes against the storm of the firefight.

Please let Magnus make it. Please.

Bullets hit metal, and a few more shots ring out, then there’s silence. I keep holding my mother just in case. Then there’s a voice.

“Josie!”

My eyes snap open. “Magnus!” I cry out as I stand.

And there he is, standing like a victorious statue, pistol in hand, his right arm dripping with blood, his T-shirt twisted around his bulging muscles, the bodies of Vincent and his men strewn about him, motionless on the ground.

My heart flutters as I get to my feet, helping Momma to hers at the same time. After all that noise, Magnus is still standing.

“Don’t worry.” He smiles. “The blood’s not mine. Well, a little bit is. I caught a graze, but I’m fine.”

I rush to his side, and he crushes me to him with his left arm, careful not to allow any blood to get on me.

“I’m sorry, Magnus,” I cry. “I-I almost believed what he said for a second.”

“It’s okay, baby,” he replies, stroking his fingers through my hair. “I’d never expect you to go through a situation like this. But it’s over now. He’s gone. And now you know that I will always protect you from anything else in this world.”

His scent sinks into my nose and lungs. I close my eyes and inhale, embedding it there. How could I ever have doubted this man? Even for a second? His rough fingers find the base of my chin and lift my lips to his. We kiss, and his tongue sweeps into my mouth with a possessive touch.

“Come on,” I tell him. “Let’s get you inside and cleaned up.”

“One minute,” he replies, walking over to his truck. I watch as he kneels down and looks underneath it for a moment, then gets up and goes around the other side.

“What are you doing, Magnus?”

He doesn’t respond but kneels down again and then, using his good hand, reaches under the truck. There’s a metallic clunking sound, and he pulls out a small black box and gets to his feet, a satisfied grin on his face.

“What is that?” I ask as he shows it to me. One side is metallic, probably magnetic, and there are a couple of small lights on it.

“GPS tracker,” he replies. “This is how Vincent found us.”

“Vincent,” my mother chimes in from the porch. “That son of a bitch.”

Magnus and I both laugh. “Damn right, Debbie,” Magnus chuckles. “But you won’t be worrying about him from now on.”

EPILOGUE

FIVE YEARS LATER...

I'M GRINNING as I drive. And not because it was another great day at work where I closed another big security contract, but because I'm on the way to see my wife and take her to my special night I have planned. I know she's just finishing up now and will be waiting out front for me when I get there, and the last thing I want to do is keep her waiting.

When I pull up out front, I see her standing there looking as gorgeous as ever. She's wearing a pair of slim blue jeans and a loose-fitting peach T-shirt that she thinks looks casual and professional at the same time, and while it might, I find it extraordinarily sexy. I stop the truck in front of her and open the door for her to climb in.

"Look at us." I smile as she sets her bag in beside me. "A couple of working stiffs."

"How was work?" she asks, kissing me on the cheek.

"No, no, no," I reply. "That is *not* good enough."

"What—?" I cut her off with a deep French kiss. It hasn't even been eight hours since I last saw her, but I've missed the

hell out of her. Blood pumps instantly to my cock. and I slip a hand up beneath her shirt and down the cup of her bra for a feel of her breast.

“Magnus! Someone might see!” she gasps. “It’s my work!”

“Let them,” I snarl, squeezing her softness as I put the truck in drive and pull away. “You’re the boss. Hell, you own the place.”

I love pointing that out to my wife. It doesn’t just turn me on, it makes me proud as hell.

After we took Debbie in and saw how much work it was going to take to help her get clean, Josie decided she wanted to open a center for women in need, women like her mother, so I took one more venture back to The Palace for a little startup money. After all, Vincent wouldn’t be needing it anymore.

We found ourselves a building, renovated it, and hired a small staff. From there, we started a charity and took donations. Over the last five years it’s been a massive success. It blows my mind. I can’t even count the number of women we’ve helped escape dangerous living situations, help get clean and improve their lives. Josie could; she keeps a log that she’s quite proud of. Her mom even helps out. I help when I’m needed, but for the most part, they’ve got it under control.

Without a terrible, corrupt boss to work for any longer, I became my own boss and started up my own corporate security company. I hired Jimmy and a couple of other guys from resumes, and we started working big corporate gigs all over the state. The pay is a lot better than working for Vincent, and I don’t have to worry about the morality of it all. The people are a lot nicer too for the most part.

Being my own boss is great too. I can turn down jobs if the pay isn't right, or if I just feel like staying home and spending time with my wife and my son.

Josie got pregnant quickly, and both of us like to think it was from our first time together. We named him Terrance, or Terry as we call him. He's got his mother's big blue eyes but my hair. He's a handsome little devil, and I'm just so proud every time I look at him.

"You think Terry will be full of energy tonight?" Josie asks as I drive.

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about that," I chuckle.

"No? Why's that?" I don't answer right away. I just wait for Josie to figure it out herself. "Magnus? Helloooo?"

She gives me a whack on the thigh, trying to get me to answer, but I just grin back at her. She opens her mouth to speak but then notices the road I'm driving on isn't the one that takes us home.

"Hey," she says. "This isn't the way home."

"Oh, really?" I smirk, glancing over at her as I make a turn. "You sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure." Josie nods, starting to smile. "Magnus, where are you taking me?"

It's working perfectly.

"Well, baby, I know you've had a lot to do at work lately, so I thought it would be nice if we took the night off and just relaxed together."

I slow the truck and pull into the Mountain Sun Hotel parking lot and up to the valet. Josie gasps and looks over at me.

“Magnus, we can’t afford this place! This place is like a five star—”

“Four-star,” I laugh. “But close. It’s *really* nice. And it has an amazing spa, I hear.”

I get out and go around to her side as the valet opens her door for her. She gives me a look that says *I’m so not dressed for this place*, and I just shake my head at her and take her hand as I toss the valet my keys and hand him a five.

“Thank you, sir,” he tells me.

“No problem.”

We head into the lobby, which is white, modern, and glistening, and Josie is hanging on to my arm and gawking the entire time.

“Magnus, how did you...?”

“New contract,” I explain as I hand the girl at the desk my card to check in. “Your mom’s watching Terry. Don’t worry, baby, we both need this.”

“Room 305,” the girl says as she hands me my room key.

“Thank you.” I smile, taking Josie under my arm and leading her to the elevator. I’m hard as a rock and want to slip her pants off on the way up to the room, but I’m sure they have cameras in every inch of this place, and nobody gets to see my wife naked except me.

“This is...” Josie purrs, leaning up against me as we ride up to our floor. The elevator doors ding and we get out on 3 and walk to our room. I slide the keycard into the slot, and the door opens into the most expensive, luxurious suite I’m willing to bet either of us has ever been in.

“Wow,” Josie says simply as we step inside. “You...are... the best husband ever and I love you. Have I ever told you that?”

I never knew it was possible to love someone as much as I love Josie. Look at us—two adults, broken as children from broken families, together now united by marriage with a child neither of us will ever abandon or harm. It seems almost impossible.

“And you,” I say, stepping to her, slipping both hands up her shirt. “You’re the sexiest, most incredible, most alluring, most caring wife and mother in the world and I love you. Have I ever told you that?”

A blush settles over Josie’s cheeks, and she gently shakes her head.

“Maybe those words, but not all together like that.”

“Well, now I have,” I say as I lift her shirt off and toss it on the chair in the corner. Gently, I kiss her cheek, then down her neck and turn her around and use my teeth to unhook the clasp of her bra. With both hands, I reach up and grasp her breasts. I’m hard as a rock now, craving to be inside of her.

I turn her around and undo the button on her jeans, exposing the soft green fabric of her panties. She gasps and braces herself against the wall as I lean forward and let the draft of my breath graze against her like a tease.

“I have you all to myself tonight, my love,” I whisper, looking up at her as I slowly pull her pants down over the soft curves of her womanly hips. “Should I take it easy on you?”

Josie shakes her head quickly. “No, sir.”

“No, sir?” I smile, tug her pants to her ankles, then rise up and let my lips crest against hers. “That’s good, my love,

because I wasn't going to anyway. You're *mine* now, baby. Aren't you?"

"Yes." She nods, licking her lower lip. "I'm yours."

NOW AVAILABLE: *Hitman*

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Coming back from the war was supposed to be best thing to ever happen to me. But then I saw how Lucy, my best friend's daughter, had grown up in the four years I was gone. Now I barely recognize her. She's barely legal, has dangerous curves, and a beauty I can't ignore.

I'm going insane for her. I'm obsessed. Every second I'm not with her, she's on my mind.

Her father wants to send her away to college. But she wants to stay home and pursue her art, and I believe in her. In fact, I believe in her so much that I'm going to make a decision that will change everything: I'm going to risk it all and bind her to me in a way that she'll be mine forever.

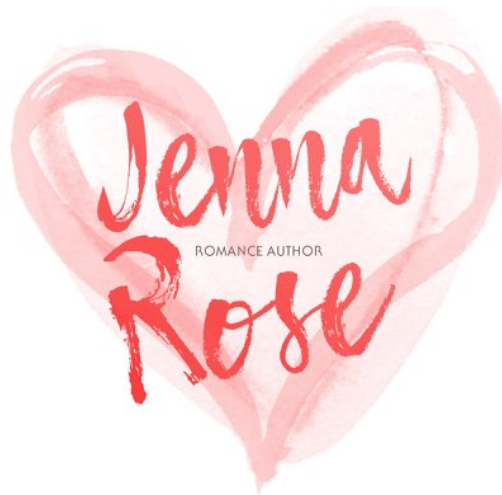
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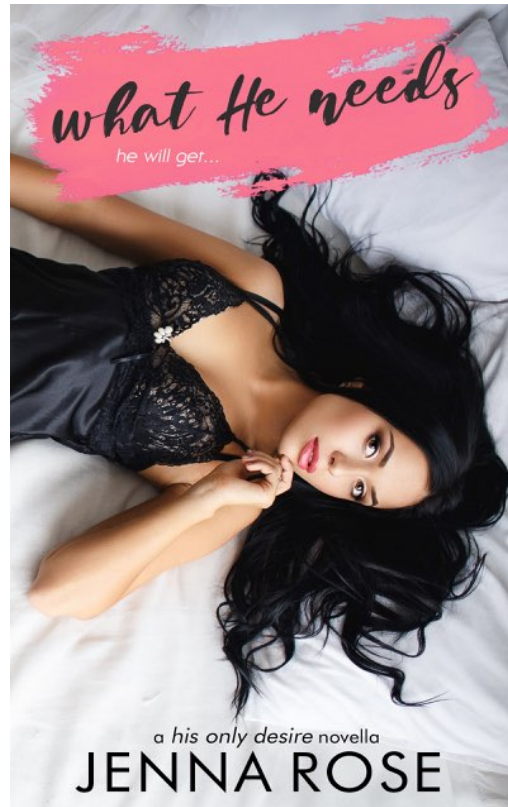
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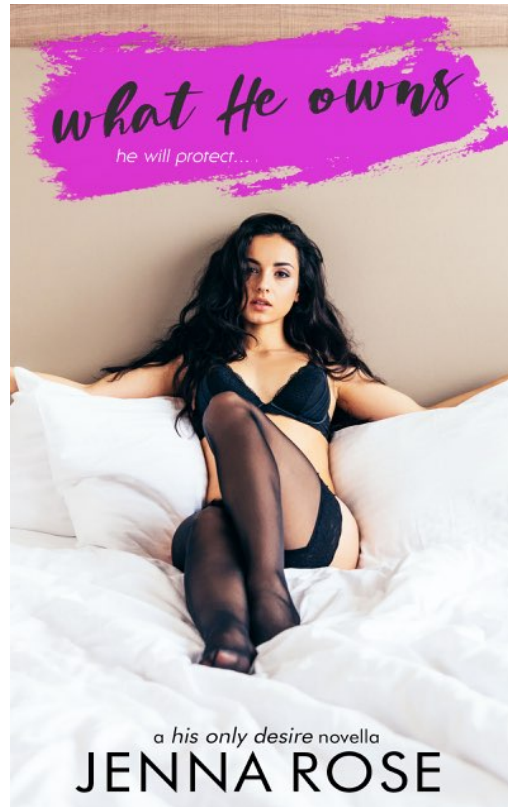
WHAT HE NEEDS



Percy Rankin is professional fighter, but he's also a professional ladies man who needs to clean up his image. So when his manager suggests paying a nice girl to be his fake-girlfriend and stand by his side when the cameras are snapping, Percy figures why not? What's the worst that could happen?

But then he sees Whitney, a proper, gorgeous, innocent music student studying violin, and everything changes. There's nothing fake about his desire—a desire he's never felt for anyone. But Whitney isn't falling for it. She knows guys like Percy and won't be convinced that this "relationship" is anything more than just business. But Percy has fought for everything he has in life, and he's not going to stop until she's his...

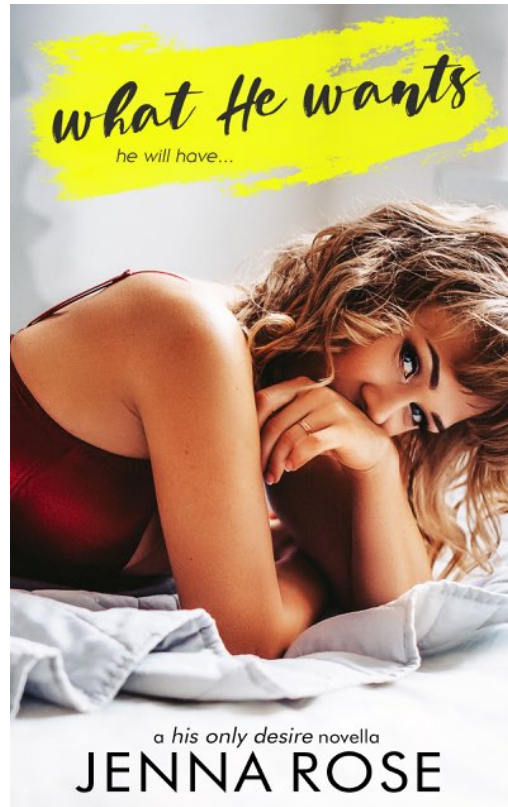
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Gwen Thompson is hot on a story involving town development and corruption. The trail leads her to the home of Harrison Night, billionaire-playboy-business-man. All she wants is an interview, but when the rakish bachelor looks at her, Gwen knows he wants to do a lot more than answer her questions.

But Gwen won't sacrifice her integrity; she backs off. But Harrison wants her, and didn't get to where he is today by giving up on what he wants. He agrees to the interview, but on one condition: he and Gwen have dinner together first. Gwen agrees, but she is a professional. She's here for the story and just the story. At least, that's what she keeps telling herself...

What He Wants



While working undercover to bring down a dangerous crime boss, Fletcher becomes entranced by the girl living across the street. He keeps his eyes on her. Watching. Waiting. She's an angel in the wrong part of town, and he's going to make sure she's safe—no matter what.

AURORA IS STRUGGLING, working, saving her money for school, but one night she sees something she shouldn't have and suddenly, she's whisked away by a mysterious man who claims to be her protector. But he wants something from Aurora—something she's never given—and she's not sure if she can.

DON'T WAIT! Grab your copy and fall in love with these alphas today!