



Lies
YOU TOLD

CLUBHS BOOK ONE

LISA M. MILLER

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BOOK 1

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LMMILLERBOOKS

*Anyone who has a kink that they thought was weird, it's not.
Embrace it!*

PLAYLIST

A list of songs that inspired and set the tone of the book. Hope you enjoy.

[Lies You Told Playlist](#)

TRIGGER WARNING

To those readers who need trigger warnings, this book and series take place in a kink club, so if any of the dynamics typically in those books offends you, then this book is probably not for you. SA is a theme throughout the book.

If you have any questions about themes within the book you can reach out to me on social media @Immillerbooks

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READING ORDER

Billionaire Boss

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Their Missing Pieces

Hidden Secrets

ClubHS

Lies You Told

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CHLOE



The assistants and paralegals all run around the office in chaos. I can see them as I sit behind my desk. They've all been in a frenzy since I mentioned a VIP client coming in before lunch. I usually have the floor-to-ceiling windows frosted. People are less likely to bother me if they are; I'm not sociable at work. If my office had walls, that would be even better, and I could get on with my work without having to see anyone else. Greyson has been my client since before I made Partner a couple of months ago. Many people think he's the reason I frog-leaped over a couple of people to get that position. They're right, but not for the reasons they might think. They all think I was sleeping with him. I wasn't. His daughter and I, on the other hand, were classmates at Harvard. I went to study hard and one day make Partner. I did in less than ten years, a record for this firm. She went to Harvard to bag a husband like it's the nineteen-fifties or something. She's still one of my closest friends. She might be on the board of the family business, but she hasn't practiced law in... well, a while. Her seat is more for show than anything else. Her husband is the one with any sort of relationship to the company. She's Greyson's only child. She enjoys shopping, lunching with the other wives, and going to the spa once a week. But she's my best friend, and she likes her lifestyle, and I like mine. I move my mouse across the screen to click on the email Greyson sent me last night. Why he didn't message me, I'll never know. Probably because this is work, and he knows my assistant has my calendar open every minute of the day.

TO: Chloe Lawson

FROM: Greyson Huntington

SUBJECT: I need to arrange a meeting.

Chloe

An ex-employee is suing me. Can we arrange a meeting for tomorrow morning? I'll go through the details then.

Greyson Huntington

CEO Huntington Media Corp.

That was all. The complete e-mail. He didn't even try to call me last night before or after I received it, which is a little strange. I can't call Franchesca because this is business. And while she's on the board, I know she doesn't know anything about day-to-day operations. She hasn't reached out to me, so I'm guessing she doesn't know yet.

"He's on his way up." My assistant Adam says through the intercom.

"Thanks. Set him up in the conference room when he gets here."

I gather my notepad and my coffee mug from my desk.

"What's all this about?" Peter, one of the other partners, asks as I head toward the conference room.

"I have no idea. I showed you the email."

"Do you want me to sit in on the meeting with you?"

I stop in my tracks, my coffee spilling a little over the top and onto the floor. My face must read like thunder because he holds his hands up defensively.

"Why would I need you to sit in on the meeting? Does the word Partner on my door mean something different from the one on yours?"

He has the decency to look embarrassed, as he should. I brought Greyson into the company when I was still an associate. When my then-boss retired, I handled most of the caseload, anyway. Greyson told the Partners he expected me to

be named Partner so I could take over his account. He wanted my name on the account. He trusts me. Greyson's company brings in millions yearly, just with run-of-the-mill stuff, like contracts that need updating. I spend a huge part of my day dealing as an arbitrator. When I do go to court. I have one of the best win-loss ratios in the firm.

I get to the conference room at the same time as Greyson and Adam. He pulls me into a hug, which I'd let no one else do.

"Water? Coffee?" Asks Adam.

"Water, please," Greyson says, pulling out his chair and sitting down.

I do the same at the head of the table and put my stuff on the desk.

"You have everyone in a panic," I say, trying to hide my own.

Adam walks in with a bottle of water and a glass and puts them both on the table in front of him before leaving the room again. Greyson has never made me nervous, but he does now, and I don't like it.

"She's suing for unfair dismissal."

I breathe a sigh of relief. Nobody said it, but we all worried that it was going to be a lot worse. This is something I can deal with, with my eyes closed. "Who is she?"

He spent the rest of the meeting telling me about an employee who worked in the accounts department. HR had received some complaints. She's used up all of her goodwill within the company, and her manager fired her. It sounds cut and dry, and I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop.

"What are you not telling me?" I ask.

"Nothing. This is everything I've been told."

"Do you think your staff is keeping something from you?"

"I don't know."

“Has she ever worked for you personally?” I’m trying to gauge if I’m going to need to do damage control down the road.

Greyson is never not sure of anything. He knows everything that goes on in every department of his company. He’s completely anal that way. It’s why we get on. I’m the same way.

“I need to ask,” I say, choosing my words carefully. “Was her department head sleeping with her?”

“Not a chance in hell.” He says, looking at me head-on.

I make a note on my notepad to investigate with HR to check through everything.

“We could have done this over the phone, Greyson. I know how busy you are.” I say, softening my voice. He’s become a friend over the years. But when I’m lawyer Chloe, sometimes I need to ask the hard questions. Friend-of-the-family Chloe can use a softer touch.

“We could have, but I wanted to do this face-to-face.” His phone buzzes on the table in front of him. “I have a lunch meeting I need to get to.”

“No problem. I’ll get the ball rolling on this straight away.”

“Who has she hired?”

He winces. “That’s why I wanted to tell you face-to-face.”

That doesn’t look good.

“Jaxson Hill, he’s at Oakes and Parker.”

I put the mug down hard on the table. Jaxson-fucking-Hill. I’ve not heard that name in years.



dam pops his head into my office, and I turn to see the darkening sky. I have a great view of the Hudson out of my corner-office window. It's late spring, and the nights are getting shorter. They'll get even shorter if I stay in the office longer.

"Chloe, I'm leaving for the day."

"Okay. I'm leaving soon, anyway. See you tomorrow." I'm distracted, but as I look up, I see Adam walk away from his desk. A couple of associates are scattered around heads with concentrated looks on their faces. I make a mental note to see who's working late. They're my people. It's not expected, but it doesn't go unnoticed.

I've avoided looking him up all day. In college, we spent all our time competing with each other. I look at the notes I made earlier, and I can't believe he's taken on this case. I can't help but worry that there's more to this. Jaxson wouldn't have taken it on if he didn't think he could win. Not against a billion-dollar company like Huntington Media Corp.

My phone buzzes on my desk, and I see it's Franchesca, Greyson's daughter. I hit enter on my search for Jaxson as I pick up my phone.

Franchesca: Dad just told me about the lawsuit.

Chloe: You know I can't talk about it.

Franchesca: He told me about Jaxson.

I can't get sucked into this with her. She always got on with Jaxson. Her husband was one of his roommates. Maybe Jaxson is doing this because of some grudge against Franchesca's family. No, that can't be it. By all accounts, he was loved by everyone. Everyone except me, that is. That also has a lot to do with the fact that I was on the receiving end of his jabs.

Franchesca: You know, everyone thought you guys were destined to be together.

I roll my eyes. No way in hell. He hated me in college. Everyone knew it.

Franchesca: He's gotten better looking with age too.

Franchesca: He's like TV and movie hot now.

I'm refusing to answer her. I don't care what he looks like. He could look like Chris Evans for all I care because I seem to be one of the few women on the planet who doesn't find him attractive.

Franchesca: Maybe you and he should finally bang it out.

Franchesca: I'm joking. Kind of.

Franchesca: Fine, ignore me. I'll be in touch. Don't work too hard.

JAX



The Subway car pulls into the station, and it's a free for all for everyone involved. People all pushed against each other to get into the subway car. Of course, the people getting on at my station are all dressed in designer suits, ready to tackle the workday. I didn't have this in L.A. On the plus side, though, I get to work in a fraction of the time. People move about the station like a well-choreographed dance routine as some get on—like me—and some get off. I do not miss spending hours in my car daily commuting to work.

I've been living here for a week now and still have to get used to the subway system. I needed a change after a bad break-up—she turned into a stalker—and my friend Bryan's firm was looking for someone in their New York office. He's still in Miami, but the law firm has offices in Miami, Los Angeles, and New York. I brought a couple of clients from my list with me. This is how I find myself with this big corner office in the heart of the Financial District. I'm still with the same firm, but some of my clients have businesses on both coasts and want to stick with me.

I'm getting named Partner at the end of the week—part of my agreement to come to work here. I wasn't prepared to stay at the position I was in, not when I was close to making Partner, anyway. I could have set up on my own. That was the plan in law school, but Oakes & Parker—newly named Oakes, Parker & Partners—have name recognition, and that attracts better clients. Bryan is an old friend. Hell, he's more than that. He's my mentor, even if he's only five years older than me.



I walk through the open glass doors of the building and head to the turnstile, pressing my ID against the reader before the gate opens for me.

I have two important meetings today, one I really want to blow off, as I'm doing it as a favor for one of the other partners.

Of course, the one I want to blow off is right in the middle of my day. According to the other guys in the office, she's a real ice queen. She tried to arrange the meeting at her office, but we told her firm a million reasons—and a couple of white lies—why we couldn't meet in her office.

After getting off the elevator, I walked through the bullpen, and the junior associates were trying to look like they weren't all sitting around gossiping. The cubicles fill the space in the middle of the room, with offices occupying the outer walls and a medium-sized conference room on the far side. Two other Partners and I have corner offices on either side of the floor.

I walk to my office and see my assistant sitting behind my desk. Her blouse is missing way too many buttons that are appropriate for the office. Twelve months ago, this wouldn't have bothered me, but I've learned my lesson—not to sleep with someone who works in the same department—hell, even the same company or building, if I'm being honest.

I leave the door open as she looks at me, biting her bottom lip. I lean against the still-open door and wait for her to explain why she's behind my desk. But she doesn't seem to be getting the hint.

“Why don't you close the door, and I'll run through your agenda for the day?” She says, licking her lips.

I pull myself away from the door and make a big deal of looking outside my office to read the name on the door. “Just

checking this is still my office.” I can hear the anger in my voice, and it seems she does too. She seems a little surprised; I’m usually the friendly guy in the office.

She sits up a little straighter but still doesn’t move. I’m starting to get even more annoyed now!

“Get out of my seat,” I say, way louder than I’d planned.

“But Mr. Hill...” She smiles again with the lip biting.

It’s getting really fucking annoying.

“Did you not hear me the first time?” I ask, and I can hear the anger in my voice rising a few notches. She must hear it as well. She jumps up from my chair and walks to the other side of the desk, quickly fastening the buttons as she moves.

I walk the rest of the way into my office and sit in the chair she just vacated. I need to set some boundaries. On my first day here, it was clear that everyone knew the gossip from Los Angeles.

The assistant assigned to me came with the office, but I already knew *this* would not work. “Tell me what’s in the diary!” I demand, busying myself at my desk.

“We had to move some things around...”

“The lawyer representing Huntington Media Corp is on her way up,” one of the associates pops his head through the door.

“I thought...”

“We had to reschedule. Your morning meeting was canceled, and since...”

“Fine! Meet them at reception. I’ll take the meeting in my office.” I say to my assistant.

The associate gives me a nod before moving away from my office and back to his cubical on the outside of the bullpen. His cubical is opposite my assistant’s desk. He seems to be my associate, though.

I didn’t even want to take this case. It’s a loser of a case. Probably why they gave it to the new guy. I’m so distracted

trying to look at my inbox that I don't hear them enter my office.

"Mr. Hill, Ms. Lawson." My assistant says, closing the door behind her.

My eyes move away from the screen, and I see the Ice Princess in the flesh. I guess they weren't wrong. She doesn't look any different in the almost decade that I last saw her. She knows how to make a pantsuit look sexy as hell, though. I look behind her and see she's come alone. Interesting!

She was always easy on the eye, though.

She's always been the enemy, too.

"Mr. Hill," she says.

"Chloe, come on, I think we can do this on a first-name basis."

"Jaxson Hill. Last I heard, you were on the West Coast. Had your fill of plastic, brainless bimbos?"

"Didn't know you cared enough to keep tabs on me." I flash her my boyish smile that usually works with the ladies.

She laughs. "Just a google search after my client told me you were the opposing lawyer on this case."

Interesting. She knew about me before today. I'm interested to see her in the courtroom. To see if she can handle the pressure. The guys in the office told me the lawyer for Huntington Media Corp was an Ice Queen, so I'm guessing her reputation is still what it was in college. Only there she was sleeping with the Professor for grades—so the legend has it.

"Jaxson, you know this is a losing case. I'm actually surprised you took it on."

She's not wrong. I wasn't happy to be shoved into this position. Going up against my old school nemesis is not how I wanted to lose this case either. I'm not about to tell her I had no choice in the matter.

Her eyes lower as she looks down at her clasped hands on her knees. She looks so submissive like this. Not the Chloe I know. What am I thinking? I don't know Chloe Lawson any more than I knew her in college. Nobody knew her except for Franchesca. Franchesca Huntington, so that's how she got the job? Is she fucking Huntington now?

"Jaxson," she shouts.

I must have zoned out somewhere there. No way she got such a high-profile job without lying on her back or falling to her knees.

The rest of the meeting goes by uneventfully, and I'm reminded of just what a sharp brain she has. Could she have gotten where she was without knowing what she was talking about? I need to stop, re-group, and not underestimate Chloe Lawson! She plays to win, just like I do.

CHLOE



I walk out of Jaxson's office building and onto the busy New York street, feeling out of my element. Jaxson Hill has always had this way of getting under my skin. I hated the guy after he started spreading rumors about me in sophomore year, and we competed with each other every day after. The annoying thing is he got better looking over the last almost decade. I wanted to scream when he zoned in on my breasts before the meeting had even started. He's a jackass, and I can't wait to wipe the floor with him.

Even though my heels are not walking shoes, I walk to a coffee shop nearby. Some of this energy needs to be burned off. I open the app on my phone and book into the members-only club I'm a part of. I hope that tonight I can still get in. The club is still relatively small, but it's elite, and I can let go for a couple of hours. No strings attached. I can just submit to my basic desires.

My name gets called by the Barista, and I grab my coffee to go.

HS: Confirmation accepted.

I put my phone back in my purse, feeling happier. Knowing tonight, I can let go.

I head back to the office. Ready to start the rest of my day. Spending the last hour with Jaxson has pushed me to be even more determined than I already was.



I walk into the office, and Adam meets me at the reception desk on our floor. That's never a good sign. The receptionist types away on her keyboard, giving me a weak smile.

"How did your meeting go?"

"As expected. Mr. Hill is going to look over our agreement."

"You think he'll settle?"

"I hope so. It's the best deal his client will get, and he knows it." The Jaxson I knew would settle. He hates to lose as much as I do. He's not going to want this loss. This is what I tell myself. He's a good lawyer, though I'd never in a million years tell him that to his face.

We get to my office, and one of the Senior Partners is waiting on my couch.

Great!

"Chloe."

"Richard?" I say, putting my purse in my bottom drawer and moving the mouse on my desktop to bring my computer to life. I enter my login details, purposely not giving him my full attention. Richard is my least favorite of the named partners at the firm.

"How did the meeting go?"

"I'm not sure. Mr. Hill said he was going to take the agreement to his client. Which is what we'd have done in the same situation."

"I hear you know, Hill? He's not an ex, is he?"

I stop what I'm doing instantly. "What?"

"You heard me, Chloe."

“I don’t see how this is anybody’s business.”

“Adam, shut the door,” Richard says like he’s mistaken that this is his office.

“Adam, don’t.” I’m firm with my tone.

They think I don’t know that they all call me the Ice Queen, so I decide to play it to my strength sometimes. Adam must hear it in my voice as he leaves my office, leaving the door ajar.

Richard is a prick. He’s the only person who didn’t vote for me for Partner; instead, his pick jumped ship and moved to different firm. He’s still butt hurt by the sound of it.

“Jaxson Hill is NOT my ex.” He wishes I want to add. “We were at Harvard together.” I hate to be one of those people who drops what school they went to in every conversation. Richard is one of those people. Except he went to Yale. And tells everyone he meets. “We were the top two in our class. We competed with each other our whole three years.”

“I had someone like that at Yale.”

I close my eyes so he doesn’t see my eye roll.

“Well, I’m here if you need any help on this case.”

“I won’t.” I may be blunt and to the point. I will not be asking Richard or any Senior Partners to help me on this case. End of story. I’ve been doing legal work for Greyson my whole career, which says a lot since his son-in-law is also a lawyer.



I hold my hand out to flag down a cab. I have enough time to swing by the apartment before heading to *Hidden Secrets*. I walk through my living room and head straight for my bedroom. Today only got more and more stressful. I’m just

about ready to break. I need a good session with a Dom to submit the only way I know how.

Pulling the small leather sports bag off the shelf in my cupboard and look inside. I see I have everything I need. The new owners have made some big changes since they have taken over, the biggest being a locker room for people who don't want to trek across the city in fet wear. I throw in my brush and a couple of hair-ties lying around the vanity and head back out of the apartment.

HS: Your car has arrived.

Another new thing, the owners added. A car service. Locking my apartment door, I walk towards the elevators, my heels making that muffled thud as I walk across the thick carpet. There are only three apartments on this floor. All three bedrooms, all with amazing views of the city. Greyson co-signed the lease a couple of years ago. He wanted me to have an apartment in an area he knew would be safe and easy for me to get to work. The apartment is mine, mainly due to the huge bonuses I've got in the last couple of years. Greyson isn't the only reason I deserved that Partner spot, but he did help. I work hard. That's why I have exactly one close friend.

I smile at Harry—the doorman and concierge—as he gives me his smile. Harry started working here the same day I moved in, and he's had my back ever since. Which I appreciated after my ex showed up one night demanding to be let up into my apartment. If the cheating asshole thought I was letting him anywhere near me or my space again. We went on two dates, so could he really be an ex?

The driver opened the door for me, and I recognized him as the same person who had picked me up last week. Before the place became Hidden Secrets, I usually went there once a month. Now I'm there every week—not always to play—sometimes it is nice to be around like-minded people and have a drink in the bar and watch.

As the car drives off, my phone vibrates in my pocket. Franchesca has been blowing up my phone all afternoon. I

cannot deal with her right now. I rest my head back on the headrest and close my eyes.

We pull up to an entrance on the street where a man is standing by the door. After the driver opens my door, I hand over my membership card—another new addition—to the man by the door. I hand my small sports bag over to the girl at the desk and head into the bar. The staff here is amazing. They'll take my bag up to my locker so I can enjoy myself at the bar.

I usually head for the bar first, one drink before I go and play. Not today. Today I need to feel something, and I don't know what. I need to escape my brain. This is the safest and only way I know how.

CHLOE



I head straight up to the corridor where the locker room is. Letting out a huge sigh as I moved my bag that one of the girls brought up, and open my locker, number 22, and saw what stuff I left last time I was here. Not much. I changed out of my ‘street clothes’ into a leather corset and panties. I could walk around practically naked, but I’d never do that without my own Dom. Not that I don’t trust the guys in this place, I do. Jacob would have their ass’ kicked out so fast if anyone wasn’t behaving in a way they were supposed to. It’s why they have the two-drink limit.

When I booked in this morning, one of the Dom’s I liked to play with matched with me. Some of the other girls are chatting and laughing with each other in the corner. I miss that. Not that I’ve ever been a girly girl. Franchesca is as close as I get, but we don’t hang out like we used to.

I have no work friends. People either see me as the boss or as competition, or they stand clear. My nickname is on the tip of their lips and in their thoughts. Most of the time, I’m okay with that.

I notice one of the girls keeps looking over at me. She screams cheerleader, blonde and bubbly, and she has the other girls eating out of the palm of her hand. I hear she’s engaged to a billionaire. Millionaires and billionaires are what this club is made of. My client list helped me get into this club, including a couple of the members here. Of course, bonuses and billable hours are another reason for my promotion—I can easily afford this lifestyle. The Park Avenue apartment with a

view of Central Park and the kind of designer wardrobe I only dreamed of owning when I was a teen praying on scholarships to get me to where I am today.

The blonde looks over at me again, and I try to ignore her as I pull my hair up in a high ponytail. Shutting my locker, I head towards the door at the back of the room. I'm happy to see him waiting for me outside the door. He commands any space he takes over. He's well over six feet and knows how to pull off a pair of leather pants, and he's also the most popular Dom here.

He walks down the corridor, and as usual, he stops. This is my cue. I lower myself to the floor. Head down, palms face-down on my naked thighs. I'm turned on, and he hasn't even spoken or touched me yet. My pussy lips flutter, and it takes everything in my power not to try to alleviate the need I have. I can feel my nipples pebbling under my corset. The breast sections are made from lace, and I'm sure my nipples are peeking through the material. They have a small button that can be unfastened to expose the breasts when the Dom in question decides to play with them.

I see his feet come into view as his fingers lift my chin to look at him.

“Good girl Chloe.” He says with a bit of his Irish accent; he's not been able to lose fully.

I love it when he praises me.

I hold myself back. Fighting the urge to look him in the eyes. His eyes melt me every time.

“Stand and follow me.”

I follow his instructions, but I keep my eyes lowered. It's the only time I allow any of these guys to see me submissive. I feel some eyes on me as we walk down the three steps before walking past the bar area, through the public play area, and down another small corridor. I specifically asked for a private room tonight. I need him to make me feel something—I don't need to socialize tonight. That's not what this is. I need the privacy of being able to let go.

With my eyes lowered, I'm getting a really good view of his ass—his second-best asset.

“Take off your clothes, then come here.” I follow his instructions straight away. I'm not a brat. I thrive on being the best at everything, this included.

I unfasten the corset. Slowly, I peel it off my body, then fold it neatly and place it on the table before pulling down my lace panties and putting them on top. Like I know he likes.

I watch as he pulls out the wooden bench from the side of the room, the muscles in his arms the type of arm porn girls love. He holds his hand out to me, and I hold it, his grip firm. He guides me over the bench as I rest on the front of my body on the padding. I really fucking need this. I need the pain. I need to let go and release this pent-up feeling I've had since I found out Jaxson was in my city.

I hear him walk away, his boots on the hardwood floor, and I know he's walking toward the enormous chest on the far side of the room. I've been in this room numerous times. I like the public playroom, but tonight I just needed... this.

My sex clenches in anticipation as I hear his steps getting nearer.

I hear the swoosh of the leather before I feel it on my right thigh. I love the leather riding crop. My skin heats up, and I barely have time to process the second time it hits me, this time on my left butt cheek. It feels amazing. My body is heating up, and I can feel. It makes me feel alive.

He continues to hit me with the flogger, the heat and sting giving me exactly what I need. My sex is throbbing, and I need some kind of friction. If I move my hips—just a little—I'm sure I could get myself off. But I don't. Why? Because I wouldn't feel like I'd earned that orgasm. It wouldn't be as good as letting Kieran push me over the edge. He hits me again, twelve. He's always refused to push me past fifteen. He hits me again on my right butt cheek, never hitting me in the same spot twice. I know my body must look a lovely mixture of pinks and reds. Fourteen, he hits me everywhere but the one place I want him to. Until... fifteen. I feel the leather as it

slaps against my pussy. I know he can see how wet I am. I can feel my arousal pooling, and I'm guessing some is now on the riding crop that just hit my pussy. Sometimes I need to feel the bites and the pain. Sometimes I need my whole body to be given the okay to burst and break free. Today is one of those days. I hadn't intended to let him make me cum. But I need the release as much as I've needed the pain tonight. Kieran knows that. He always knows just what I need.

He drops the riding crop on the floor as he runs his hand—petting me almost—as I feel the heat inside me warm my whole body. His hand slowly travels up my spine, but I'm so relaxed right now.

“Do you want me to make you cum?” He asks, checking in with me.

I can't find the words; I just nod my head. “Words, Chloe. I need to hear you say it.”

“I need to cum,” I say.

“Good!”

I hear the zipper on his leather pants before they drop to the floor. I'm so needy.

“So wet,” he whispers in my ear as he pushes his rock-hard cock into my soaked opening from behind.

It's been too long since I've let him claim me like this. I usually wait until I get home to get myself off, but tonight I need this. His body covers my back as he fucks me with a purpose. He bites down on my shoulder, though not as hard as I'd like. It won't even leave a mark.

“Come for me, Chloe. Let go.”



The shower I had at the club is nothing like the relaxing bath I'm in now in the comfort of my own apartment. The

bubbles smell amazing—lavender—as I take a deep breath, eyes closed, my head resting against the edge. I love my bath. It's my happy place and the only time I refuse to have my phone in hand—here and at the club. If I don't have my phone, nobody can disturb me here.

I open my eyes as I reach for the glass of wine I have perched on the tiled edge of the bath, taking a sip before placing it back on the side.

I run my fingers through the soap suds, loving how it makes my skin feel silky. For the first time—in a long time—I wish I had someone I could be getting lost in right now. Sure, Kieran was good. He's always good. But I need something more. Maybe it wasn't such a great idea, letting Kieran fuck me after our session. It's the first time I've let him in months.

I've reached all the goals I had for this time in my life and my career. I have a gorgeous Manhattan apartment with an amazing view of the city. I've finally been named Partner and have almost everyone's respect in the office.

I sip my wine, closing my eyes again. Something feels like it's missing.

JAX



“The afternoon partner meeting has been canceled.”

That’s the third time this meeting has been cancelled in the last two weeks. “Let me know when Bryan gets in the office,” I say to my assistant. She’s my new assistant and way more competent than the temp I had at the end of last week. I insisted on hiring her myself this time. I know what I want, what I expect! That’s someone who works hard, understands the job, and can make my job easier. Not someone who thinks, fluttering her fake eyelashes at me and missing buttons on her work clothes. She’s been moved to Will Oakes’ floor. If I wanted that—which appears to be what some of the older guys here think—I’d have hired any old airhead. I don’t need an assistant for some ego boost. I need someone to make my hours in the office easier.

“His flight landed an hour ago. He’s heading to his hotel first, then here. I’ve booked you a table at your favorite restaurant.”

“Thanks,” I smile, genuinely meaning it.

She closes my office door behind her. My desktop computer pings and my attention immediately gravitates to my email.



I lose track of time reading through a contract, engrossed in work, when there's a small knock on the door before it slowly opens, Bryan's head poking through. He shuts the door, walking across my office towards my desk.

I sit back in my chair, smiling, glad to be seeing my friend and mentor. It's been too long.

"You settling in okay?" he asks, getting comfy in the black leather armchair. "I wanted to be here your first week, but stuff kept me in the Miami office."

"It's okay. I'm a big boy. I don't need you holding my hand on the first day of school." I said, eyebrows raised, fighting back a smile. Bryan was a mentor to me when I interned at his Miami office as a fresh-faced, cocky asshole right out of college. That summer, he got me to grow up better than any other male role model in my life has—or lack thereof.

"You have any push-back?"

"Only what we were expecting," I say. When Bryan offered me a promotion and a new start in New York, he also wanted me to act as his spy here. The partners have been bothered about things they've heard from other lawyers, lower down the ladder, about some bad apples.

We both look at the floor-to-ceiling glass window near my desk. The office is bustling with energy, but one of the Managing Partners is standing on the other side of the room looking at us in my office. "Like I said, just what we were expecting."



We walk across the Italian restaurant, which is still busy, even for mid-week. Every night is busy in this city. There's always something to do. This is why I'm a city boy at heart. I couldn't handle small-town life. That is just not my rhythm.

A laugh pulls my attention to the two women a couple of tables across, and I smile. Bryan walks right into me, thanks to my abrupt stop.

“I’ll meet you at the table.” I nod my head at the table. “I’ve just seen someone I’ve not seen since college.” Okay, that’s a lie, but a one-hour meeting in a decade doesn’t really count. Franchesca, I haven’t seen in months either. Bryan doesn’t need to know about Chloe just yet.

Bryan pats me on the back, laughing as the hostess takes him to our table, which I see is not far from the girls.

Chloe sees me first since she’s facing my direction and instantly stops with her glass midway to her mouth. A flush coming over her cheeks.

“What...” Franchesca says, turning around and seeing me come up behind her. “Oh, my god. Jaxson Hill as I live and breathe.” She smiles, putting her napkin on the table before standing up and wrapping her arms around me.

“Good to see you, Frankie.”

“Please, you know I hate that name. You know you’re the only ass who calls me that.”

I look over at Chloe and see her eyeing me. Franchesca turns to see where I’m looking and laughs. “Chloe, don’t be rude.”

Now she’s glaring at Franchesca.

“Have you forgotten who he’s representing?” She says, taking a big gulp of her wine. Interesting. I seem to be making her nervous.

If looks could kill.

“Chloe,” her friend grumbles.

“What? He’s representing the woman who wants to stick it to your dad. Why are you not more pissed?”

“He’s just doing his job.”

A laugh escapes me, and I’m not even going to feel ashamed. “Thank you, Franchesca. Yes, I am just doing my

job.”

She mumbles something that sounds a hell of a lot like asshole.

“Maybe someone needs to get laid,” I smile at her. “Or have you slept with all the Partners at your firm too?”

Franchesca laughs—she probably thinks I’m joking—as she hits me on the shoulder playfully.

I see I’ve hit her just how I wanted to. All the color drains from her face. I feel a little bad at the lowest of low blows.

She takes a deep breath and rises from her chair. The Ice Princess from college in all her glory.

“When I return to my seat, you better be gone, Hill.” She struts, yes, struts, off to the lady’s room.

“Why do you always have to push her with that?” Franchesca pushes me.

I look over and see Bryan has ordered us drinks and is eyeing me suspiciously from our table.

“I need to go,” I say. “My friend is waiting for me.”

“See you, Jaxson.” She says, hugging me again.

I walk over to our table and pick up the menu. I don’t know why I bother. I already know I’m going to order—my usual.

“What was all that about?” He asks, but his demeanor has changed. He looks like he’s bordering on pissed.

“You heard?” I ask, putting my menu on the table.

“Enough. She looked pretty upset, the one who left the table.”

“Nothing fazes the Ice Princess.”

“Why does her friend look familiar?”

I laugh. “That’s Franchesca Huntington, heiress to Huntington Media Corp.”

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Now Bryan looks really annoyed.

Our waitress takes that exact moment to take our order. We both order, but Bryan’s death glare continues.

“The woman who left the table was Chloe Lawson, their lawyer.”

Bryan blinks at me, and I know he’s going to rip me a new one.

CHLOE



Jackass!

I take a deep breath as I look at myself in the mirror. He humiliated me out there. I fight the urge to cry. Jaxson fucking Hill does not deserve my tears. If he smells blood in the water, he will pounce like the shark he is.

I pull up the Hidden Secrets app on my phone. The silver logo comes up on my screen. It manages to be sexy without being trashy. I key in my login details and password. I won't be able to book a private slot, not this late in the day. But I should be okay with socializing. I need to be around my kind of people.

I need to get through the rest of this dinner with my best friend before she returns to her husband and apartment.

I take another deep breath as I try to stop my heart from pounding. I don't know why I still let him get to me. Okay, so I know why. It's not my fault the guy is hot, even if I hate him. That's what pisses me off more. His digs are not even original. I mean, it's almost the same lies he used in college. Just switch out the Professor for Partner.

Argh!

I fill out the request to attend button and close the app. I'll get a notification soon enough to let me know. They need to get their ass in gear if they're serious about expanding the place.

I close my eyes. ‘Chloe, don’t let anyone knock you down.’ I get my lipstick out of my purse. I always feel better with a fresh coat on my lips, ready to tackle anything.

I left the restroom way more confident than I did when I entered. I watch as Jaxson and the person he is with eye me as I go to take my seat.

“Better?” she says, eyeing my lips. She knows I see my lipstick as my armor against the world.

“Much!”

I see our plates have been cleared away. I’m glad I ordered dessert earlier. The Tiramisu is to die for here. Franchesca and I have been coming here once a month since she moved back to the city last year. Every single time I order this for dessert.

HS: Request accepted.

HS: Please log in to your account for tonight's access code.

“What, or who just put that smile on your face?” She asks, happier than I’ve seen her all night.

“Nobody,” I say, putting my phone face down on the table.

“How come Jaxson and you never banged it out? Might have been good for both of you.”

I look at my friend, shocked. She cannot be serious right now. “After the lies he spread about me? Do you blame me for hating the guy?”

“Chloe...”

I look at my best friend for the first time and see it in her eyes. She believed it. She still believes it. I can’t believe this. My best friend. My heart starts to pound in my chest. I take a deep breath. I really need to calm the fuck down. Otherwise, I’m going to have a breakdown; and I can’t do that. Not here. Not with Franchesca sitting in front of me and Jaxson only a couple of tables away. I feel every time his eyes look over to our table. If I didn’t already have an appointment at Hidden Secrets, I definitely would have set one up right now.

“You believe him, don’t you?” I’m shocked I even have to ask.

A smirk passes over her face for the smallest of seconds. I’d have missed it had I not been watching her so closely. “Well...”

The waitress brings over the bill, and I hand her my card. I can’t even look at my friend right now. It’s taking all of my energy not to blow up in her face. I stand, casting one last glance over at my friend. She’s looking back at me like I’m the one in the wrong here. She looks to where Jaxson is sitting, but I refuse to look at him and his friend.

I stride through the restaurant and don’t look back.

The cool air hits me as I leave the restaurant. I hail a yellow cab as I walk a couple of steps down the block. Pulling my phone out of my pocket, where I put it after rushing out of the restaurant, I give the driver the address. There are two entrances to Hidden Secrets. The front entrance, which I usually use, and the secret, private entrance.

I pay the driver as I get out and pull up the app to find the passcode for today. I enter the code in the door at the private entrance. It beeps as it opens, and I’m finally able to breathe. I close my eyes as I lean against the wall. I hear a door open. Jacob, the manager, watches me with concern as I try to center myself.



I stand by the bar, and I’m happy to see some of my friends here tonight in the open playroom. I changed when I arrived, but Jacob kept looking over at me. As soon as I saw him watching me outside his office, I rushed off. I didn’t want him to ask if I was okay. I wasn’t sure I could handle it. I nod and smile at the people talking around me, but my attention keeps going toward Jacob.

Kieran walks over to him, and the two huddle together, and then Kieran looks my way.

I distract myself by engaging in conversation with the people around me, so much so that I don't feel Kieran come up behind me.

My breasts and pussy do, though.

He smiles at the group I'm with before he guides me away from them.

"Jacob said you might need a session?" He says, giving me his full attention like I'm the only person in the room.

I bite my bottom lip. I do need a session.

"I need to feel," I murmured, lowering my eyes.

He lifts my chin with his fingers.

"Why did you not reach out? It's not like you."

I want my eyes to fill up with tears, but I know that won't happen. Not until I get broken down first. I need this lifestyle. This is the only safe way I know how to let myself go.

"We might have to wait for a private room..."

"It doesn't need to be private," I say, looking up at him. I give him a weak smile.

"Chloe, I'm not sure you're..."

"It's what I need. Please." I look him in the eyes for the first time since I arrived. He's not my Dom, but he is my friend. "We've used the public space before. Hell, six months ago, you used it in one of your training sessions."

He runs his hand down his face, rubbing his hand over the stubble on his chin. He knows I'm right. He must be worried if he thinks I'm going to freak out in a public session.

"Okay, let me get something set up. How much have you had to drink?"

"A glass of wine with dinner, then water when I got here. If you don't believe me, ask Jacob. He's been watching me like a hawk since I got here."

JAX

It's been too long since Bryan has given me that look. His disappointed look. He's the only person who's ever pulled me up on my jackass-ness. My phone buzzes on the table between us, and I check it. I always check my phone. You never know when a client is going to need you.

HS: Your membership at Hidden Secrets New York has been accepted.

HS: Please read your email to confirm our terms and conditions.

I open the email app on my phone. I've been waiting for this since the move. After attending the opening of Hidden Secrets Los Angeles a couple of months ago, I knew I'd want to extend my membership. The owners had the great idea of giving people on both coasts access to both clubs.

"Are you even listening to me?" he asks, sipping his whiskey.

"I heard you. Doesn't mean I agree with you."

I look over at their table, and Chloe looks pissed off. If I didn't know her better, I'd think she was ready to cry, but the Ice Princess never cries. Not once have I seen her shed a single tear.

"Jax," he says, and I hear the frustration in his voice. "You're better than this. I thought you grew out of this."

I give him my full attention now that Chloe has left, and Franchesca looks pissed off at their table. “She brings out the worst in me. I shouldn’t be surprised by the reputation she has.”

“Jax, stop being a dick, okay? She’s obviously good at her job, or she wouldn’t have Greyson Media Corp as a client. You’re not the same guy you were in college, and maybe she isn’t either.”

It annoys me when Bryan brings logic to the equation.

“Where did all this animosity start, anyway?”

I debated giving him the whole run-down, but I didn’t do anything wrong. “I had two roommates in college, Franchesca Huntington’s future husband and Chloe Lawson’s ex or whatever they were. Whatever it was, it was over before Christmas, our first year there. Chloe and I, though, were the smartest in our friend group and our year, too. At least that’s what I thought.”

Bryan looks at me thoughtfully. He listens to me like he always does. I tell him about how she slept with more than one professor and about all the hassle we gave her over the years.

“Anyway, he’s the one who told me. That’s why they split.”

Bryan takes another sip of his drink. I hate it when he does this. He’s not always a big talker, and he makes me think about stuff. He puts his empty glass on the table.

“How did she react to that?” He asks.

“How do you think? She denied it.”

“But you didn’t believe her?”

“Why would I? My friend was fucking her.”

“Until he wasn’t.” He says all matter of fact.



The town car Bryan was using dropped me off at Hidden Secrets. Was it out of his way? Yeah, kind of, but he insisted. I show my L.A. member card. The guy on the door talks into a mic on his lapel.

The door opens, and I walk in.

“Mr. Hill,” the woman behind the desk smiles. “Welcome to our New York Club. The rules are the same as our Los Angeles Club.” She gives me a gold wristband. Only VIP members get that. I’ve known Mike, the owner, for a long time.

I walk towards the bar—I have no intention of playing tonight. Bryan got in my head tonight. I need to decompress. I always feel more centered when I come to the club, even if it’s just to watch.

I look over to the middle of the room. A woman is handcuffed to the beam in the middle of the room with a gold chain between the leather cuffs. Her long dark hair falls partway down her back, and she has a nice ass. She’s wearing a black thong and nothing else. I see she has some *Louboutins*, the red under the shoe giving them away. Her legs are being kept apart by the matching leather and gold bar spreader at her ankles. The man she’s with rubs a riding crop down her spine, and her body reacts to it instantly. I want to see her face, but there is no available space on the other side of the room. He pulls back the flogger, hitting the underside of her left ass cheek. It goes a pleasant shade of pink. He moves to the front of her, running the flogger over her breasts—if I was closer, I’m positive I’d see goosebumps cover her body and her nipples harden.

I take a sip of my drink, and the ice doesn’t do a good job of cooling me down. I run my tongue over the ice, wishing I could be running it over this woman’s body in front of me. My cock hardened instantly, though I was glad I was wearing slacks; it was in no way comfortable.

The woman in front of me is beautiful. Her body is all woman. Her body turns ever so slightly, and I can see she has

the kind of perky tits a guy can have in his hands and feel like he really has something to play with. She's in no way a stick figure, but she has a healthy body, just enough muscle on her hips that a man like me can grip onto while he fucks. I take another sip of my drink. Watching this couple is making me more turned on than it should. Between watching this gorgeous woman here and being in Chloe's vicinity for the last hour or so, it's no wonder my body needs some kind of release. I wish the woman's head would turn my way slightly.

The sound of the flogger on her skin brings my attention to the scene in front of me. Her skin is covered in red and pink marks. I hear a moan escape her as I move a little closer.

Slap! He hits her between her legs.

My cock twitches in my pants.

She pulls on the handcuffs as she moans her approval. The men and women around us are quiet and engrossed in the scene in front of us. The guy runs the flogger over her skin again. He moves closer, whispering in her ear. She nods, agreeing with whatever he just said to her.

He bends down to unlock the spreader bar and slips her shoes off straight away, his hands slowly stroking up her legs. He moves up her body, unlocking the cuffs with a key. She moves her wrists in a circular motion. I'm disappointed I missed this. I still have no idea what she looks like; her back is still to me. Her ass looks amazing in the thong she's wearing. She must wear heels like that a lot. The guy holds her and picks her up, cradling her in his hands. They seem so comfortable with each other. I'm guessing they're a popular couple to observe and watch. They walk past my table, and then I see her face. Her eyes closed. She looks content. Then the realization hits me like a sledgehammer.

WTF! I'm shocked to see Chloe in his arms as they walk through a black curtain on the other side of the room.

I need to decide now. Do I stay and risk her coming back this way and seeing me, or do I leave while she receives her aftercare?

CHLOE



Kieran carries me and pushes the door open with his back, obviously knowing ahead of time which of the aftercare rooms would be free. He lays me down on the bed that looks like a massage table, only more comfortable, covering me in a sheet as he walks across the room. I yawn—fighting to keep my eyes open—as Kieran walks back towards me.

“You did amazing out there.” He says, pulling the sheet down a little before rubbing my skin with the ointment he uses after a scene. My body comes alive as his hands firmly rub the oil into my skin. I didn’t realize how much I needed this until now. A moan escapes my lips as two fingers push into my skin, moving upward up my spine.

When Kieran was carrying me through the public playroom, I could have sworn that I saw Jaxson near the bar. Of course, I must be going crazy. He’s been on my mind since our meeting in his office last week. Then he goes and opens his big fucking mouth again tonight. Jackass!

“Relax,” groans Kieran in my ear as his hands move to my shoulders.

Another moan escapes me as I feel his breath on my skin. He’s so close it’s almost as if he’s going to kiss me, but I know he won’t. We don’t do that. We never do that. We don’t have that kind of relationship.

“When are you going to let somebody in?” He asks, moving the sheet down further. “It wouldn’t be hard for Jacob to work his magic.”

“Why? You finally fed up of me?”

He stops what he’s doing and steps away from the bed, moving to stand where my head is. “If you were mine, I would have to spank you for that.”

Gulp!

“I’m sorry, Kieran,“ I whisper. I know I sound small. I hate that Jaxson, and I guess Franchesca got me into this mindset.

“Who broke you, Chloe?” I hear the concern in his voice, not pity. Pity sounds worst somehow. I’ve never told Kieran the entire story. I didn’t want him to change the way he looked at me. Jacob knows, and that’s enough. He had to know. He was worried something was going to trigger me one day. The only thing I omitted was names. He never needed to know the names.

“Not tonight.” I shrug, closing my eyes a little. The adrenaline finally leaves my body. “It was a long time ago.”

“I’m going to hold you to that,” he smiles at me, pulling me to him and wrapping the sheet around me. It feels nice in his arms. Unfortunately, he doesn’t make my toes curl—or my pussy clench, for that matter. Otherwise, I’m almost certain we would have made something work by now. As it happens, he’s probably the closest thing I have to a friend right now.

I still can’t believe Franchesca earlier, the bitch.

“I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.”

“I’m not. Just remembering part of the reason I came here tonight.”

“You’ve been coming more frequently lately.”

I take a deep breath. “I know. I do want to talk about it.”

“Okay. Well, we could meet for a coffee tomorrow?”

I look up at him. He smiles weakly back at me. “Kieran, you know this...”

“Chloe, I know.” He smiles genuinely this time. “You just look like you really need a friend.”

“Like you wouldn’t believe,” I whisper. “You’re the closest thing I have to a friend at the moment, Kieran.”

“Well, good. Do you want to go to the place inside your building or...”

“Not my building. How about near Battery Park? I love it there near the Hudson.”

“You’re on. Let me know what time works for you when you look at your diary.”

I laugh as he helps me down from the table/bed. I tighten the sheet around my shoulders as he guides me to the door, his arm around me as we walk to the changing rooms.

“I’ll get Jacob to order you a car home.” He winks.

“Thanks,” I smile weakly again. “I shouldn’t be too long. I’m just gonna put some clothes on.”

The changing room is quiet, even for a mid-week night. I pull my clothes on and see my *Louboutins* are in front of my locker. I pull my phone out of my purse, not sure how to feel about getting a message from Franchesca or not. I key in my passcode and see she hasn’t messaged me. I put my phone back where it was as I hurried to dress. I need to do some work when I get home if I’m going to find time to meet with Kieran tomorrow.



The phone keeps ringing outside my office, and I pop my head out to see Adam isn’t there. Confused, I pick up the phone. A little annoyed since I rely on Adam to screen my calls.

“Ms. Lawson’s office,” I say, reaching across the desk.

“This is Mr. Hill’s office. He wants to arrange a meeting with Ms. Lawson regarding the Huntington settlement.”

Yes! I hold back, cheering down the phone. Adam comes into view and gives me a puzzled look as he approaches his desk. He puts his coffee down on the desk, along with a couple of files he was collecting. Holding out his hand for the phone, I smiled at him.

“Just one moment, Ms. Lawson’s assistant will know her calendar better,” I smile.

He laughs, taking the phone off me. “Ms. Lawson’s office.”

I walk back into my office and close the door, ready to finish the last couple of jobs before meeting with Kieran. I get lost in going through one of the many contracts I have on my desk for Greyson when I’m startled by a knock at the door.

“Come in,” I say without looking up.

“It’s time for you to attend the super secret meeting you added to your calendar this morning.”

“Thank you, Adam. I shouldn’t be gone for long, an hour at max.”

“Please tell me you’re meeting a guy?”

I turn around after grabbing my jacket, and my eyebrows raise. Adam and I get on great. He’s the best assistant on the floor. But our relationship is not friendly. We don’t share personal details. I feel it’s important to set boundaries. Everyone else in the office seems to think this makes me cold, hence the nickname. I refuse to tell anyone here that it’s no more original than what Jaxson used in college.



I get off the Subway at Battery Park and walk towards a small coffee shop a block away. As I approach, I see Kieran standing outside, dressed in a blue suit and tie. It throws me off at first, as I’m not used to seeing him dressed like this. He’s either in jeans and a tight t-shirt or naked on the top half

of his body. I see he has two coffees in his hand, and I hope I've not had him waiting long. He turns around as I approach, a smile coming over his face as I approach.

"I was half-expecting you not to show up." He says, handing me my coffee.

"Thanks," I say, taking a sip. It's still hot, so he couldn't have been waiting long.

We walk and talk, the Hudson out in front of us. The occasional runner passed us. I tell him all about the Jaxson, including my run-in with him last night and my argument with Franchesca. I know I'm being stubborn, but she hurt my feelings last night. I'm not ready to talk to her unless she wants to mend what she did. She knows how much harder I've had to work to get where I am.

He puts his arm around me, and it surprises me. I stiffen under his touch. But he doesn't let go. I'm not used to being comforted outside of the club setting. But he tightens his hold slightly, and I breathe out slowly, glad for the feeling of him next to me.

"You need to start letting people in, Chloe. You have this amazing personality that you don't let anyone see. You can only use the Club as a crutch for so long."

I know he's right. That's the most annoying thing about all this. It doesn't make hearing it from him any easier. I guess that's what friends are for, huh?

"We're going to start having some social evenings at the Club. A night where the people who, like you, are submissive in our circles. You need to make friends with some of the other submissives. I've seen you keep to yourself. I know you don't talk to any of them when they hang around in the locker room. It doesn't go unnoticed. I know you are friends with some of the Doms, but they are trying to find their forever sub. There is not a dominant-sexual-bone in your body. You need to make nice with the other subs. You'd be surprised just how much, A: you have in common with some of them, and B: you might actually like some of them."

I know he's right. I've seen the others looking at me, wanting me to make eye contact. I'm social on the floor, but that's usually with a couple of the guys I can hold my own against. Most of them are some of the girl's Dom's, their other half. Their special person in their life.

"Was this your idea or Jacob's?" I ask as I throw my cup in the bin on the sidewalk.

He laughs. "Does it matter?"

I guess not.

JAX



The glass wall in my office isn't frosted today. I wanted to see the moment Chloe and her client walked onto our floor. I've met Greyson Huntington numerous times, mainly through my association with his daughter's husband. That was the last time I saw Chloe, a month after we graduated from Harvard. Though we avoided each other the whole night. It seemed neither of us wanted to ruin our friend's day.

I've been unable to get the image of her hot naked ass out of my head all morning, which resulted in me being locked in my office all morning. Bryan agreed with me that our client wasn't going to get a better offer. I knew I had to settle, especially since the amount was higher than even I expected.

Our client's brother wasn't happy, which further pissed me off because I'm almost certain he was behind this lawsuit. Our client accepted the offer before I even finished telling her the details. Her brother doesn't like me. He's been giving me the death glare from across the office all week. I heard he had his eyes on this office and was unhappy when he heard I was moving from across the country. Nobody agreed that he deserved the promotion. Instead, he's still in a cubicle in the bullpen.

I watch as Chloe walks away from the reception desk with our client slightly ahead of her as the receptionist walks them through the bullpen. The black knee-length dress Chloe's wearing is classy, but leaves nothing to the imagination. She's wearing the shoes again, the ones from the club last night. Last time they made her legs look like they go on for days.

I close my eyes, breathing through my nose. Her body last night was a sin. I adjust my cock before I stand. ‘Get a fucking grip.’ She shouldn’t have this effect on me. She’s been my enemy my whole adult life. You don’t get a hard-on for your enemy.

I need to get these images of her out of my head. The office already thinks I have trouble keeping it in my pants, thinking they know my reasons for leaving Los Angeles. I cannot walk to the conference room with a hard-on just because a hot piece of ass has walked into the building.

The door was left open for me, and Chloe and our client sat down before I entered. Chloe takes a sip of the water in front of her.

“Jaxson,” Greyson says. Greyson has always been friendly towards me, sometimes more so than he is to his son-in-law.

I didn’t even see him come in. How did I miss that?

“Mr. Huntington,” I smile, holding out my hand.

“Jaxson, please. You’ve not called me Mr. Huntington since you were at Harvard.”

He’s right, of course. ‘Give me a break,’ I plead with my eyes.

He slaps me on the back, laughing. He sits down next to Chloe.

“Ms. Lawson,” I say, holding out my hand. She looks down at it for a second longer than is polite.

“Mr. Hill.” I can hear the disgust in her voice. Then I’m reminded of the total dick-ish mood and behavior I showed her a last night in the restaurant.

Bryan opens the door and follows me to our side of the conference table. He sits far enough away that I know he’s here purely in an observational capacity.

Our client won’t look Greyson’s way, and it speaks a thousand words, her silence. Instead, she goes quiet. Greyson sits back in his chair, assessing the table in front of him. The meeting goes according to plan. Our client signed an NDA,

which is the only thing she wasn't too happy about. Our investigator told us she's been talking to some magazines, wanting her five minutes of fame. I can only imagine Chloe doesn't know, or I'm sure the offer would have been dramatically lower.

Chloe takes one last sip of her water bottle, finishing it. I imagine the things she could do to me with those lips.

Woah! Where the fuck did that come from?

Chloe looks at me funny like she's trying to figure out what I'm thinking. Thank god she can't read my mind.

Bryan clears his throat at the other end of the table, and everyone gets up to leave the meeting.

"Chloe, Ms. Lawson," I correct myself. "You got a minute?"

Her eyes go a little wider, but only for a second. Nobody else probably noticed. She picks her purse up, putting it over her shoulder. Her body language tells me she already has one foot out the door.

"What do you want?" She asks as I fight back a laugh.

"About last night..."

"Look, Jaxson. I've heard it all before. Mostly from you. I couldn't care less what you think of me. You are nobody to me. If we come up against each other again, we'll remain civil. But I swear to god, Jaxson, if you start spreading shit about me again, we're going to have a problem."



My assistant leaves my office, closing the door behind her. It's been days, but the look on Chloe's face is still with me. She looked hurt, but she still had that fight in her. The fight in her takes me back to our days at Harvard when we competed weekly. Both wanting to be top of our class. I'd

never in a million years admit this to anyone, but Chloe is the reason I'm the guy I am today. We pushed each other. Like neither of us had been pushed before, at least on my end, But I cannot get those images out of my head.

A far cry from the woman I know. The Chloe I, well, I thought I knew, didn't have a submissive bone in her body. But seeing her submit like that... I never thought Chloe would be into *this* stuff. I've wanted to go back every night to the club, on the off chance I'd see her like that again. But I've stayed away. I could walk into any bar surrounding our building and find many available women, but I wouldn't be allowed to be me. Sure, they'd let me dominate. But not in the way I *need*. I need the control. I need to know the woman in front of me is allowing me to be my true self. Every kinky crumb of me.

JH: I need you to add me to the list tonight.

HS: Will you bring a guest?

JH: No. I need you to match me up with someone.

HS: Okay. I'll cross reference your limits with other guests tonight.

An hour later, I got another message just as I closed my desk for the weekend.

HS: Okay. I have you matched up with someone.

HS: She's been a member for some time. She should meet your tastes.

I pocket my phone and lock my office door before I head for the elevator on the far side of the building. Most of the office is deserted. No surprises there. It's Friday night, for crying out loud. Two guys come out of the copier room, and I nod their way.

"Don't work too late, guys," I say. I still don't know most of the people on our floor. I've only worked with a handful of

associates and paralegals.

“We’ll be on our way out soon,” one of the guys shouts as he switches off the lamp on his desk.



I walk through the door into the main bar and public play area. I went home before coming tonight. The club gave me a list of my partners’ hard and soft limits. Jacob said he was going to introduce us.

He waves me over from the far side of the bar, where he’s sat with another member I’ve seen here before. I still don’t know many people here, just like at the office.

“Water,” I tell the bartender, and he nods, moving down the bar to get it. “What can you tell me about her?” I’m nervous, and I don’t know if this is a good thing or a bad thing. It’s an unusual feeling for me. My body is on high alert. I know it’s because of Chloe. My body is wondering if she is here tonight.

I hear heels clacking on the floor, approaching us from behind me.

“Here she is...” Jacobs smiles, moving towards her and embracing her with a hug. “Jax, this is Chloe.”

I turn around just in time to see the shocked expression on her face before she runs off toward the locker room. Not before I saw her in a similar figure-hugging dress she wore to my office a couple of days ago.

Jacob gives me a panicked look before running after her.

I pull a seat up at the bar. This is about to get very interesting. Especially since Jacob told me, he had matched me up with someone.

I know I’m screwed right now, though.

CHLOE



I run into the changing room, my chest hurting, as I can hardly breathe. How in the world did I end up here? More to the point, how did Jax end up here? I thought I saw him here last week when Kieran carried me off to the aftercare room. But I just put it down to him being on my mind and the guy looking like him.

Fuck!

Was it him that night? I just put it down to the guy looking kind of like him, and I'd just gotten into another argument with him. I thought I was seeing things, projecting. I mean, I've thought about him more in the last week or so than I have in the last decade.

When Jacob called me this afternoon, telling me a member was looking for a scene partner, I knew I should have been more apprehensive. But I really listened to what Kieran was saying when we had coffee earlier in the week. I need to put myself out there more. Well, that bit me in the ass.

I open my eyes and see a woman crouched in front of me with a worried expression. "You okay?" she asks. She pulls her blonde hair over her shoulder, so it's not falling in front of her face.

I shake my head.

Then I realize I can hear Jacob outside the door, and I can hear in his voice that he is worried. He's never seen me like this. I've never done anything like that.

He might be the Manager of this place, but even he is limited in where he can go. I hear the door open, followed by heels clicking on the tiled floor of the changing room. I pull my face away from my knees and see Kate standing before me. She's an owner of Hidden Secrets with her partner. They still live in Los Angeles but come to New York monthly. They say it's to check on the place, but I hear they have some sort of thing with Jacob. I've never been here on a night when all three of them are here, and I don't really socialize with anyone, so...

"Chloe? What's the matter? Jacob is just about ready to break every one of his rules in this place."

"I know the guy," I whisper.

I'm so glad to be having this breakdown with Kate in town. Kate is one of the few submissives I've bothered to get to know in this place, which isn't ideal because... well, she's not always around. She sits next to me on the bench and tentatively puts her arm around me. I tense under her touch before relaxing. She's not a threat. She's my—I hope—friend.

"Jacob gave me the gist of it. How do you know Jax?" She smiles.

"How do you?" I throw back at her like a grenade I don't want to be left with when it goes off. "Judging by the way you said his name and the smile on your face, I'm guessing well?"

"We've moved in similar circles for years. He's been a member in L.A. since the beginning. Was one of our first members. Mike knows him better."

"I take it they're having this same conversation somewhere else?" I look around the locker room for the first time. I see it's empty, which is unusual for this time on a Friday night.

"We've hated each other since college," is all I say. Kate doesn't seem too impressed with my answer, though. "He spread a bunch of lies about me. We've hated each other ever since. Lucky for me, I've not seen him in like ten years. But whenever we are around each other, I feel like I did back then."

“Well, I don’t know what he was like back then, but people change. I had a friend in college, too, a real man whore. Now he’s settled down. All loved up, and it’s nice to see. Look, guys in college have half a brain cell...”

“Not Jax. He’s smart. Always has been.” I almost want to gag by uttering these words, but it’s true. If he hadn’t pushed me... we would have made each other better and smarter with every paper.

“He’s not a bad guy. He’s also a very competent Dom. Let’s just say a few ladies in L.A. are unhappy he’s on the other side of the country.”

My eyes widen at what she’s just said.

“Not all scene partners have a sexual element to them.”

She’s not telling me anything I don’t already know. But can I trust Jax with the one thing I need my complete trust to be locked in on? “I know this. Kieran and I, it’s not always...”

“Yeah, Kieran is also chomping at the bit to make sure you’re okay. But let’s not get off topic. That’s what toys are for. You have all the power in this exchange. You’re the person who decides how far things go and what the limits are. Why don’t you both sit down and talk to each other? I’ll get Mike to mediate if you want? Or Jacob, if you’d be more comfortable with someone you know.”

I take a deep breath. “Okay, but I want Jacob to mediate or Kieran. No offense, but if Mike and Jax are as close as you say —”

“He won’t be offended. I think he’ll be relieved.” She laughs.

We stand up and walk to the door together. I’m surprised to see a brick wall of Jax, Mike, Jacob, and Kieran all leaning against the opposite wall. When I turn my head, I see a line of about ten people waiting to enter the locker room. “Sorry, guys,” I apologize.

They give me a weak smile as they filter in. Jax has a look in his eyes I’ve never seen before. I’ve seen him pissed because it’s always aimed in my direction when we’re in the

same room. But this time, it's different. It's anger, but laced with... arousal. I look down and see I'm wearing leather shorts that barely cover my ass, and a black mesh top, my breasts wanting to break through from the barely there bikini top. In the public playroom, submissives are required to wear lingerie or fet-wear. For my first meeting with a new Dom, I needed the added level of protection of the mesh top. Now I'm glad I did. Jax has glanced at my tits more than I could count in the years I've known him.

"You're off the hook," I hear Kate whisper to Mike as he wraps his arms around her.

"We'll be around..." Mike says, pulling Kate with him. "Jacob, come and find us when you're done."

"Chloe..." Jax says. I look at his face.

"Follow me, you two. We'll go to my office."

We follow him. Jax guides me with his hand on my lower back. I don't feel repulsed by his touch. It's relaxing, actually. Jacob sits in the chair to the side, motioning us to sit on the couch. Jax holds my hand, guiding me down to my seat. It's like he's had a personality transplant or something.

"Okay, so on paper, you two, your kinks could not line up any more perfectly," Jacob says. Usually, I like his blunt to the point nature. Not when it's aimed at me, though. "Jax tells me you have a history."

"Yeah, he spent more than a decade believing and spreading lies about me."

I feel his body tense up next to me.

"What do you mean, lies?" Jax says, and for the first time in my life, I hear the confusion in his voice. I can't look at him. I look down at my hands on my lap. "Lies, you know, things that aren't true. In your line of work, Jaxson, I thought you'd know what a lie was."

"What lies?" He asks, a hint of anger laced in his words. If I were to look at him right now, his jaw would be clenched. I can't look at him. Not here. This is MINE! This is MY safe place.

My pussy likes that voice, though. It clenches, and it takes me a moment to understand why. It's his fucking Dom voice. I discreetly move my hand to cover my nipples. "I didn't sleep my way through law school."

I guess he didn't tell Jacob that one. Jacob moves his attention to Jaxson.

"Everyone said it." Like that's a fucking excuse. "Even..." he stops himself.

"Even who?" I ask. Now I give him my full attention.

"Well, Bl..."

I don't let him finish. I'm too riled up and ready to stick up for myself for the first time in a long time. "Oh, the guy I broke up with because he didn't like the fact I was smarter than him? Why do I think that's not the first name that came into your head just then?"

"Chloe," he groans. "If it wasn't true, why didn't you push back? You never once denied it."

I see red! I stand and start pacing the room.

"Chloe," he pauses. "What the fuck happened?" He grabs me by the shoulders, forcing me to stop pacing and look at him.

Now I really need a session.

"Chloe..." Jacob pulls me out of my own head.

"He raped me, and when I told Bl..." It's the first time in years I've been capable of starting this story. The tears still can't come. I need the release. I've bottled stuff up for so long that it's the only way I can feel anything.

It takes me a moment to realize Jaxson isn't still in front of me. He's sitting back down on the couch, his head in his hands. Like I've just changed his whole world. Welcome to the club!

"I need a session with Kieran now!" I say, pleading with Jacob.

“No, you don’t,” Jaxson says, looking at me. Tears in his eyes.

I stopped, shocked to see him so affected by my words. “If you think I’m going to let *you* touch one part of my body, you can think again.”

“Chloe, Kieran thinks...”

“I don’t care what Kieran thinks.” Well, I do, because he’s my friend. “Get Kate up here right now.”

Jacob walks over to his desk and presses some keys on his keyboard. Picking up the phone on his desk, he presses a button and then speaks to someone on the other end of the call. A couple of minutes later, she walks through the door.

She takes in the room. Jax on the couch, Jacob leaning against the desk, and me, pacing—again.

“I leave you alone for half an hour.”

“Kate, I need another submissive viewpoint here,” I say, knowing that Kate will do the right thing.

“What did you guys do?” She asks, her eyes moving between Jacob and Jaxson.

Jax doesn’t move. He still has his head in his hands. He hasn’t moved since he sat back down.

“What’s the most important thing a Dom has to prove to his or any submissive?” I say, as I stop pacing.

“Trust,” Kate says. Her attention leaves me and goes straight to Jax.

“There lies the problem. Jaxson Hill, I wouldn’t trust you with anything, least of all my body.” I say as I walk out of the room, slamming the door behind me.

I walk straight into Kieran, and he takes me in his arms. “I have a private playroom booked downstairs.”

JAX



“Why did I see Kieran taking Chloe into one of the private rooms, not Jax?” Mike asks as he closes Jacob’s door.

I look up at him as Kate passes me a glass. I don’t even care what’s in it as long as it burns on the way down. I’m still in shock. A bomb could go off right now, and I wouldn’t realize. Ra—I can’t even finish the word. A million thoughts are going through my brain right now, and every single one makes me feel like an asshole. No wonder Chloe hates me. She should despise me. Every protective bone in my body screams that I need to apologize if she ever decides to give me the time of day.

“She dropped a bomb on Jax,” Jacob says, sitting back in his chair.

“What kind of bomb?” Asks Mike. I can feel his eyes on me.

“The kind that’s Chloe’s to tell and nobody else’s,” Kate says, her eyebrows raised. She has Mike wrapped around her little finger. He’d be the first to admit it, though. There is nothing that guy wouldn’t do for her. This part of their relationship might be new, but he wants to give Kate everything and anything she wants.

“I’m gonna go. I need to process this.” I say, gently putting the glass on the table. My mind feels foggy and in a blur. I can’t believe she said that about Blake. Why the hell did he? And fucking Franchesca, if Chloe knew the stuff she’d said on the subject over the years. They’re closer than sisters. At least,

that's what Ryan moans about when he's complaining about his wife and her best friend.



Somehow, I made it back to my apartment. I couldn't tell you how I got here. I grab a bottle of bourbon from the bar on the far side of the room, and I sit in the dark, looking out on the city, the lights in various buildings keeping the skyline dotted with lights. My new home. The one person I want to be with right now is Chloe. Taking away her pain—or giving it to her—if that's what she'd prefer. This need to take away all her pain is consuming me, and I don't like this feeling. I'm used to dominating and being in control of all of my surroundings and all aspects of my life. But this, I've never felt so helpless.

My whole history with Chloe plays out in my mind like a movie. I'd had the hots for her until Blake told us he'd broken up with her because she'd slept with our Professor. That pissed me off. I'd worked my ass to get into Harvard, and Blake was telling me Chloe just spread her legs to get an A in his class. When he got fired in our final year, Chloe and I were bitter rivals. The venom was thick and lethal; everyone knew we were the top, the ones to beat. Coming in third was the best anyone else could manage.

I take another swig of the bottle, my memory playing tricks on me. I see things differently. All my memories are different now that I have this new information. The looks she'd have when she didn't think anyone was looking. The hurt would flash over her, then she'd correct herself, and a cold-ness would come over her. Usually followed by a jab and a bite in my direction. I see them now for what they were, coping mechanisms. The only way she was probably able to get through each day.

I was the biggest asshole on the planet. I should have asked. But Blake was one of my best friends. He was my bro. Why didn't he believe her?

Jax: I need to ask you something. You up?

Blake: Bro, it's nearly midnight.

Blake: Of course, I'm up.

Jax: I saw Chloe Lawson today.

Blake: Poor you! She still busting your balls?

Jax: I need to ask you something.

He doesn't message me back, but the dots keep appearing and disappearing with every passing minute. He's either thinking of some bullshit to peddle to me, or he is struggling to find the right words not to make me blow up.

Blake: About what?

Jax: Why didn't you believe her?

Blake: The truth?

Jax: Of course.

My phone starts to ring, Blake's name and picture coming up on my caller ID.

"It got out of hand," he says quietly. He sounds genuinely ashamed of himself. I've never heard this side of him. "She hurt my feelings when she wanted us to stop seeing each other. She told me she wanted to buckle down. She didn't want any distractions."

"But..."

"Jax, let me finish. I'm not sure you will ever want to speak to me again after this conversation."

That sobers me up in an instant. I'm almost certain our friendship can't come back from this. Everything hinges on what he's about to tell me.

"She didn't have the best childhood. The fact she got into Harvard was a fucking miracle. I was punching way above my

weight being with her. But I lied to you, man. Then the lie got out of hand. You guys seemed to always be at each other throats. Franchesca said you two just needed to bang it out. We all had a bet that it'd happen at the wedding. But you two avoided each other like the fucking plague.”

I end the call before throwing my phone onto the couch. I want to throw it against the wall, but I hold back. I control myself. I look out at the city. Tonight, I will be like the city. They say New York is the city that never sleeps. Well, tonight, I'll be joining it.



At some point, at some god-awful time in the early hours of the morning, I decided it was a great idea to go for a run. I have no idea how long I've been running, but my clothes are sticking to me, and my insides feel like they're on fire. I sit on the grass and look around me. The park is quiet except for people like me, joggers trying to get an energetic start to the day. I lie back, trying to get my breathing under control when I realize I'm in the middle of Central Park. I'd gone further than I had planned.

My phone buzzes on the strap on my arm. My lungs are burning inside my body, proving just how hard I've pushed myself this morning. I answer it, happy to see a face I don't hate.

“Hey,” I say, still out of breath.

“Please tell me I'm not interrupting something?” he laughs.

“No, I've been out for a run.”

“At this time? On a Saturday?”

“What do you want, Bryan?”

Bryan and I talk for the next hour while I lay back on the ground. I tell him everything, including the fact that I got in

touch with my investigator guy in L.A. to find out all he can about the Professor in question.

I'm so pissed at Chloe right now. I'm pissed that she's lived with this for so fucking long. That she confided in the wrong person. I'd hate myself, too, if I were her. I reminded her constantly of the most traumatic time in her life.

Bryan wants to help. He agrees that if he did it to Chloe, he probably did it to other students. That doesn't sit well with me. I need to get to the bottom of this, and I need to get to the bottom of this now.

I walk back to my apartment, stopping to get something to eat and drink. I can't get Chloe out of my mind. A whole new level of respect for her is coming to the surface. I used to think she was weak and undeserving. I couldn't be more wrong. Chloe fucking Lawson is the strongest woman I know.

I'm going to make her mine.

Like I should have done our first week in college.

CHLOE



My whole body aches and hurts in the best possible way. I open one eye to look at the clock on my bedside table. I've slept late for the first time in months. It hits me like a lead balloon, Jax's face. He looked gutted last night in Jacob's office, like everything he knew in life was different. I guess that is factually true. There is no way in hell Jax knew. Unless he's a damn good actor as well as a lawyer, hell would have to freeze over before I ever admit that to him, or anyone else, for that matter.

Today, I'm going to do something I've not done in a long time. I'm going to relax. Do nothing work related at all. Spend some time on me. Retail therapy can be my friend. What is the point in working all the hours known to man if I can't enjoy it now and again?

I get dressed and grab a coffee and something to eat on the go. The Saturday morning breakfast rush is in full swing. I smile at the young man behind the counter as he brings me my order, but I don't engage.

I pull my phone out of my purse and see a message. There's a second of anxiety in the pit of my stomach before I see who sent it. I've still not heard anything from Francesca, nothing at all. At this moment, I realize something really important. Something I never thought I'd ever think regarding my closest friend. I don't want to hear from her. I'm so hurt by her words that I don't even want to hash things out with my best friend.

Kate: Just checking in? Everything okay?

I feel a smile spread over my face. I like Kate a lot. She's a good person, and she understands me. I wouldn't have to pretend to be someone I'm not, or hide any part of my personality if we became, dare I think it, friends.

Chloe: Everything is good. I'm just getting ready to hit the shops.

Chloe: I'm spending some time on myself. Some self-care.

Kate: That sounds great. Do you want some company? I understand if you want to be alone.

Usually, I'd have found some excuse to be alone. But I like Kate, and she knows what it's like to work in a male-dominated environment. Mike and she seem to find the perfect balance. Maybe I need somebody like her, somebody who understands the lifestyle to talk to.

Chloe: Okay, I'd like that.

Kate: Great, pin me your location.

I send her my location and sit on one of the benches in the park, drinking my coffee. I do something I've not done in forever, and I sit and people-watch. I'm always on the go and always busy. I never take the time to re-group and take in the world around me. I love this city. I always have. Even as a kid, I used to love coming into the city when my mom allowed me to meet and see her at work. We lived in Jersey growing up, unable to afford the prices of even a small two-bedroom apartment in Manhattan.

"Chloe." A familiar voice shouts, pulling me from my thoughts.

I'm surprised at how quickly she gets to me when I hear her call out my name. I turn to look at her, keeping both hands around my coffee cup. I'm not a hugger. Kate seems like a hugger!

“I’ve been itching to go on a spending spree since we opened the club.” Kate smiles at me.

“Okay, then I’m your girl,” I say, meaning every word. “I thought you’d be flying back to L.A., though.”

“No, Mike wanted to spend a couple of days here this time. I’m not complaining. I love the city. I’d never visited until we came to check out the club months ago. He wanted me out of the way for a couple of hours, so I thought I’d check and see how you’re holding up. I was worried about you last night.”

“Wow! I can’t imagine living anywhere else.” I say as we leave the bench I’ve been sitting on.

We spend hours shopping before we decide to grab food. I’ve forgotten how much fun it can be hanging around with someone when you have so much in common. We get seated by the window, again great for people looking. The waitress brings us a bottle of wine and pours us a glass, leaving the wine on the table between us. I nod my thanks.

“So why did you really want to meet up?” I ask. I smell bullshit with the whole ‘girl time’ hang she mentioned while we were shopping.

Kate gives me a knowing smile. “That’s what I like about you, Chloe. A spade is a spade with you.”

A smile back. I like that Kate takes me as I am. I’m just me. “Is it legal...?”

“No, though I do have a meeting with you next week. I don’t want to discuss that now.”

Adam didn’t mention anything about a new client meeting.

“No, this is about Tuesday night.”

I run through my calendar in my head, and nothing comes to mind.

“We’re trying a new thing. I think you’d benefit from it.”

I take a sip of my wine.

“Jacob came up with an idea,” she says. “He thinks it would be good for the submissives to meet up without the

Doms.”

I remember Kieran mentioned something similar when we met up for coffee.

“After last night, I agree even more,” she says. I can feel her eyes on me.

I gulp, even though my mouth is dry.

“I think it would be good for the newbies and those of us who’ve been in the lifestyle for a while. It would be a place for us to talk.”

She’s right. She’s making a great point. “People who understand our dynamics,” I offer her.

“Exactly. Some of the girls have been wanting something like this for a while. We were going to open it up to everyone. Jacob said he knows one or two guys have already said they’re coming. Mike and I want this place to be a safe space for everyone. We want to expand. We’re looking at expanding but still keeping the place we have.”

“And it will be a Dom-free zone?” I ask.

“Yeah. Jacob will probably be around, and Mike may be too. But I don’t think they’re who you were thinking about.”

The waitress comes over, putting our food down in front of us. She leaves us to enjoy our meal and no chit-chat, which I find refreshing.

“It wasn’t,” I say, putting a fork full of pasta in my mouth.

“If you want to talk...”

“I know. I just don’t want to ruin our meal,” I whisper, concentrating on my food.

“Deal. Let me say, though. I’ve never seen Jax as devastated as he was last night. Even after shit went down with his stalker-bunny-boiler-whatever-you-want-to-call-her.”

“I wondered why he left L.A.,” I whisper.

A small knowing smile spreads over Kate’s face, and we don’t say another word until we’ve eaten our food.

I motion to the waitress to bring us another bottle. “I’m going to need more alcohol to have this conversation with you, Kate.”

She gets her phone out of her bag. She obviously wants to let Mike know she’s going to be here for a while.

“Shit! Have I just ruined your plans tonight?”

“Absolutely not!”

“Jaxson thought I slept with my Professor in college.”

Kate gives me her undivided attention. I can’t read anything on her face. She could think anything right now, and I’d be none the wiser.

“He was friends with my ex. When I told him our professor raped me, he didn’t believe me. He told all his friends I slept with our Professor. That lie followed me around for a couple of years. I was the stupid person, though, who never said anything. I mean, my own boyfriend didn’t believe me. How was I to think anyone else was going to?”

Kate reaches for my hand, squeezing it reassuringly, not saying a word.

“Jaxson kept the lie going, bringing it up as a cutting blow every time we got into it. We hated each other. We still do. But he also made me a better student. Our fighting to always be the best in class pushed me, well, both of us, if I’m being honest—to be the best in our class. I’m as driven as I am now because of Jaxson Hill. I guess I should thank him.”

“My friend’s dad, Greyson Huntington, knew something was wrong. He’d known me since high school when I applied for the Huntington scholarship. Usually, they give it to someone who wants a career in the arts. Being the billion-dollar media company they are. But I guess I won him over. They sponsored two people that year. When Greyson found out what had happened with our Professor, he got the guy fired. I was able to enjoy my last year at Harvard without seeing the creep on a weekly basis.”

“Chloe, that must have been awful.” She squeezes my hand tighter this time. I needed that more than I thought I did.

“Jaxson found out last night the truth. Funny, I’ve not talked about him in years. Not since Greyson demanded to know what was up as he could see me spiraling, then I talk about him twice in less than twenty-four hours.” I take a big gulp of my wine.

JAX



I'm looking through my bookshelf, trying to find the book I need, when someone knocks on my door. Looking up, I see my assistant. Usually, she comes right in. I know I've been in a pissy mood for days now. My investigator sent me a report last night but said he was going to call today. I'm surprised he's been able to get as much information as he has in a couple of days. I nod at her to enter.

"Mr. Hill, your two-o'clock appointment is here."

"Thanks," I say as I head toward the reception desk near the elevator on our floor. The two young women watch me as I pass. The blonde on the phone, I can feel eye-fucking-me from here. She's wasting her energy. My body and, more importantly, mind seem to have a submissive brunette taking up too much space.

Greyson Huntington is standing with his back to me as he talks to the receptionist.

"Mr. Huntington," I say to get his attention. Holding my hand out as he turns around. He shakes my hand firmly, just like I'd expected. "We'll take this in my office."

We get a few looks as he follows me to my office. Due to our recent legal case with Greyson, everyone in the office knows who he is. They also know I'm not his lawyer or, more importantly, who his lawyer is. "I don't want any interruptions," I say to my assistant as we walk past her. She nods understandingly. There's only one person who would try to interrupt this meeting.

I frost the floor-to-ceiling windows, separating my office from the rest of the floor. I sit behind my desk. Greyson takes the seat in front. It shows he's not used to being on this side of the desk. It gives me a feeling of power seeing him uncomfortable. Of course, nobody else would notice, but I've known this man too long. He's always had the upper hand, but not now. He might have the information I need, but I'm certain he's not going to bullshit me on this. I'm going to get the information I want of him, but first, I need to know why he's here alone.

"I was surprised you wanted a meeting in my office. I don't feel good taking a meeting without your lawyer here." Everyone knows Chloe has been his lawyer since she graduated from Harvard. Lawyers are the worst gossipers in the world. It must be something to do with all the secrets we have to keep about our clients, that when it's stuff that can be broadcast, we broadcast it loud and far. She was a big get for the firm she ended up working for. Chloe Lawson is still a name people talk about at Harvard. She's the crown jewel for them—not that she participates in any alumni.

"This is about Chloe."

The shocks keep on coming. If I were to believe in gossip, which I haven't been longer doing since Friday night. I'd think this was personal to him. Rumor was she was sleeping with Franchesca's dad. I guessed when people knew she wasn't going to fight back; they could say anything.

"I hear you have a private investigator looking into your Professor."

I stop breathing for a second. My poker face is out of the window. How the hell would Greyson know that?

"I paid a lot of money for people to find information. It seems not hard enough, judging by the reports I'm getting. How did you find out?" He asks me matter-of-factly. "Because I know Chloe and you are *not* friends."

"She told me Friday night." That is all I tell him. I feel like I'm being backed against the wall. I don't like it, not one bit.

“Blake called Monday wanting information on Chloe yesterday,” Greyson says as he stares me down. It would be unnerving if I didn’t kind of like the guy.

I feel my jaw clench just at the mention of Blake’s name. Why did that jackass get in touch with Greyson?

“It seems you know Blake’s involvement in all this.”

“I needed to know Chloe was protected. I also wanted to pay him a visit.” I can hear the anger in my voice. Remind me never to play poker with that guy. He can read me like a book.

Greyson relaxes in his chair. “You care about her?” He says, sounding surprised. I guess that’s understandable. Chloe and I have been sparring partners for as long as he’s known me.

“I’ve come to accept my involvement in this, but I don’t want her to know I’ve been looking into it.”

“I’m still surprised she told you.”

“I don’t think she was very happy about it,” I say, choosing my words carefully.

“She didn’t plan on telling me. I didn’t give her much of a choice. But I understood something was eating her up from the inside. She was starting to look sick.” Greyson was acting paternal to her right now. The last thing I want is to ruin her relationship with him. “I’ve told my investigator to share my file on him. Don’t make me regret it.”

“Has he hurt anyone else?” I ask.

“Since Chloe told me, no one.”

I nod as he stands and leaves my office.



I get home to my apartment, throw my jacket on the chair and carry the files I decided to take home. Bryan threatened to

return to town if I worked late in the office one more night this week. Considering he's taken more trips to New York in the last couple of weeks than ever, I decided to take work home with me. I'm sure Catherine will thank me later. They've been married for twelve months. I'm sure she hates all his traveling.

The phone by my door rings, and I'm surprised. I'm not expecting any guests, and I've only just ordered food to be delivered. No way is it ready that quickly.

"Mr. Hill?" the security guy for my building says. "I have a Blake here for you. Says it's important."

Ugh. What does he want? What's he doing in New York? "Send him up," I say with a bite to my voice. I open the door and make my way to the elevator for the floor, watching the numbers on the elevator rise until they get to this floor.

Blake steps off, and he looks like shit. The normally clean-shaven put-together asshole, who women seem to spread their legs for him easily, looks like he's not slept in a week. He stinks too. The guy smells like a distillery.

"Please don't tell me you need my legal help?" I say, still angry at him. A week ago, we were college friends who hadn't seen each other in a while but could easily talk together over sports and a couple of drinks. Now he's a stranger and someone I don't want to be associated with.

"Why have you been asking around about it?" He asks, pushing his way into my apartment.

"You didn't honestly think I was going to drop it, did you?" I ask with anger in my voice. I try to keep my voice down, though. The last thing I want is the neighbors complaining about the noise.

"I just don't understand why you care after all these years." He stops and looks at me, spinning around. "Do you still have a hard-on for her?"

I feel my jaw clench as I stare him down.

"You do, don't you? I mean, I know you did at the time, but..."

“What do you want, Blake?”

“She’s a fucking freak!” He says.

I’ve had enough of this. “Blake, lose my number. I never want to see you again.” I walk over to my apartment door.

“She’s damaged goods!”

I see red! I’m swinging my fist back and colliding with his nose before I realize what I’m doing. He holds his hands to his face, staggering about with blood dripping down the front of his shirt.

“You broke my fucking nose.” He shouts.

I open the door to my apartment. “Out! I never want to see you again!” I’ve calmed down now. I’m in control since the news was broken. I’ve been scared to go to the club, not wanting to use my frustrations on somebody who didn’t deserve it. Being a Dom in a scene requires a level of control for which I’ve not been in the right headspace. Boxing has never been my chosen relief either; I prefer to run. It usually clears my head. But I’ve had so much aggression bubbling under my skin since I found out that it needed a violent way to come out.

I look around the apartment; the adrenalin leaving my body, my hand a mess, my knuckles red, and a couple of freckles of blood splashed on my hand. I don’t know how much time passes, but I suddenly realize Blake’s gone, and I hope I never see his face again. What he said, though, wasn’t a lie. I have always had a thing for Chloe. Knowing how strong she is just making her appeal to me more now.

CHLOE



I feel my legs being held wide apart, fingers pushing into my skin, as a tongue makes me moan, sucking and licking my pussy. I moan my approval. When my pussy gets a slap, I smile as I hold back my welp. He returns to eating me out, his finger hovering over my back hole. I need him to push through, but I know he's not pushing through to torment me. He enjoys keeping me on edge. I move the cover out of the way so I can see his eyes. I didn't know how much I needed them until I didn't have them.

As I look down, I hear him laugh. Who knew sex with Jaxson could be so good? I widen my legs, and he pushes a single finger into my pussy, and a smile spreads across his face. He knows I want and need more than one fucking finger.

"More," I moan, trying to grind against his finger.

His eyes twinkle at me. "I said no sound. Good subs only get rewards for good behavior."

"Good Dom's should know when their sub needs more."

"I could always stop," he says, pulling away from me, his chin resting on my stomach.

"Please, Sir," I say, biting my bottom lip. I know it does things to him when I bite my lip. It always has. I think he likes the idea of my bite touching parts of his own body.

"I never took you as being a brat, Chloe."

"What can I say? You bring this side out of me."

He moves to kneel, stroking his hard length as he looks me in the eye. My whole body reacts, my nipples hardening, my pussy clenching, and he's not even looking at my body. His eyes are on mine.

“Chloe, are you mine?”

“You tell me,” I volley back.

“You've always been mine.”

I gulp, biting harder on my bottom lip. A small part of me wants it to bleed. I still need the hint of pain.

“Claim me then!” I say, even though I can hear the confidence in my voice.

He lets go of his cock, gripping my hands above my head, holding them together. He moves his mouth to mine. He kisses me before biting down on my lip, and I moan my approval. He lowers his body to mine, his cock bobbing, wanting to enter my wet and needy pussy. I don't move. I close my eyes as he enters me. He's hard and rough and pushes through my slick wetness.

I hold back my moan, meeting his hungry kisses with my own.

I jerk awake, hiding my head in the pillow next to me. This is the third night since last Friday that Jaxson Hill has made it into my dreams. I snake my hand inside my panties. Of course, I'm wet. I'm always soaked. I push two fingers into myself with Jaxson Hill still on my brain.



I make myself busy in my office. I'm excited about meeting with Kate because we're going to lunch afterward.

I'm on the phone with my boss when Kate walks into my office, closing the door behind her. She puts some files on the

table in front of her as she takes a sip out of the travel flask in her hand.

My boss is driving me crazy on the other end of the phone.

“Okay, all that sounds good. A client has just walked into my office. I’ll speak to you later.”

Kate and I spend the next hour going through all the club contracts. Kate had a lawyer she used for the initial opening of the club, but she wanted someone she could trust, someone who had only her interest. Not that Mike would do that, but Kate definitely comes better off if they dissolve the business. According to Kate, Mike’s been with the same firm for years, and she wanted someone she trusted as much as he does.

She leaves them with me, and I tell her I’ll get a courier to get them back to the club before the end of the week. Jacob will know what to do with them.

We’re walking through the lobby of the building, our purses and jackets going through the x-ray machine, when I see a face I’ve not seen in years. My ex, Blake. He looks like shit and looks like he’s got a broken nose. His eyes are bruised, and a white bandage is taped to his nose.

“Your a fucking bitch Chloe,” he shouts. Not caring who hears him.

I look around, checking that nobody from my office, or even worse, my boss, is in sight. I want the lobby floor to open up and eat me up.

The security guys are on him in seconds. “Do you know this man, Ms. Lawson?”

“Unfortunately.”

Kate has her phone out of her purse. But my attention is on Blake.

“Blake, what the hell do you want?” I whisper, anger in my tone, hoping he takes the hint that I need him to stop shouting. This is my place of work, for crying out loud. I drag him to the side so we’re no longer in the middle of the lobby where everyone can see us.

“Why the hell did you have to bring up old shit?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. We haven’t seen each other in nearly a decade, Blake.”

“How does Jax suddenly know what happened?”

Nausea comes over me.

“He’s been digging around. My boss found out. They’ve forced me to take a leave of absence. Some of my cases are under review. Funny how I was in line for a promotion before Jax started sticking his nose in business that doesn’t involve him.”

Fuck! I knew Jaxson took it badly. I didn’t think he’d... I look over my shoulder and see Kate is close by on her phone. There’s not a doubt in my mind she was filling Mike in. That makes me feel better somehow.

“What are you talking about?” I ask, remembering he was droning on before Kate distracted me.

“He broke my nose last night.”

Jax did that! Why would he suddenly become so territorial after finding out all this shit?

“Jax did that?” I try hard but fail to show how ‘not’ impressed I am at that. He’s the first guy other than Greyson to stand up for me. I wasn’t able to stand up for myself back then. I was too scared. I mean, I had a good reason to be scared and worried. The one person I did tell didn’t believe me. It makes telling and confiding in people difficult after that.

Kate puts her phone in her purse and stands behind me. I feel better knowing Mike and probably Jacob will be making their way here. Is it wrong that a part of me wishes Jax was on his way, too? These dreams I keep having staring him as the main attraction is messing with my head.

I was planning on finishing work early, for the first time since I got promoted, for the social at the club with the other submissives. I need to get home and my safe place away from here.

“Blake, what did you think was going to happen coming in here like this?” I say, standing a little straighter. Now the initial confusion of the situation leaves me and the pissed offness of it all coming to the forefront. For the first time in my life, I feel confident enough to stand up for myself, knowing Kate will have my back. I poke him in the chest, my adrenalin the most powerful thing about me at the moment.

“When did you and Jax become friends?”

I laugh. “We’re not.”

“You sure about that?” He looks over my shoulder.

I turn to follow his line of sight and see Jax running through the front door, Mike and Jacob right behind him. Kate laughs behind me.

Jax sees us immediately and heads right for us. Striding across the marble floor like he owns the place. It shouldn’t turn me on as much as it does. But he’s dominating the space, making all my submissive lady parts come to life.

“For fuck’s sake,” I whisper.

JAX



When Mike called, telling me that Kate and Chloe had run into trouble at Chloe's firm, something told me it was related to Blake. I wasn't wrong. I'm ready to go in all guns blazing until I see Chloe poking Blake in the chest. He looks pissed, and I swear if he lays one finger on her.

I stand back, and a couple of minutes later, Mike and Jacob also get here, stopping beside me.

"There she is," Jacob says with a smirk, pulling at his lips.

Blake sees us, and I'm glad he's not completely stupid. He keeps his eyes on me until Chloe turns around.

Chloe turns, then looks at me, a confused expression on her face. She has no fucking idea about my feelings for her. But she's going to find out real soon. I'm done standing on the sidelines.

Mike and Josh head over to Kate and Chloe, and for a moment, I can't move. My feet feel like they're stuck in cement. I stop to look at her for a moment. Her cheeks pink a little. But she does the same thing I do. We stare at each other from opposite sides of the lobby of her firm's building.

Blake moves away from her and walks my way, stopping in front of me.

A hurt look falls over her face for a second. If I weren't as zoned in on her as I am, I'd have missed the look on her face. The mask falls into place again, but she doesn't look as stoic

as usual, like she's trying to rein in the persona she has with most people—except Kate, it would seem—that of Ice Queen.

He stands in front of me, and I punch him in the stomach, pulling him up as he groans, falling forwards slightly. I'm not usually a violent man. I usually hit back with my words. But Blake is bringing the worst out of me. Is it Blake? Or is this newfound need I have taken over my body and mind to protect someone I should have protected over a decade ago?

I put my lips to his ear. "I warned you to stay away from her." Nobody could mistake the venom in my voice.

Blake stumbles away from me, and I don't look back at him. My eyes lock in on Chloe as she sees the whole thing. She bites her bottom lip. I wish she wouldn't do that because it's having an effect on me; she wouldn't appreciate. If she knew the thoughts and dreams I've been having of her of late, she'd run and never look back. Leaving Blake on the floor, I stride over to Chloe, who is still standing where she was. She rubs her legs together, and I wish we were alone. She's turned on. I can see it in her eyes.

I stand in front of her and put my hands in my pocket. I don't want her to see my knuckles, which are still tender from my fight with Blake last night.

"I hope you've got a good lawyer," she says, more as a statement than a question.

"He won't say anything," I say, confidence oozing out of my pores.

Then Chloe shocks me more than she ever has before. She puts her arms around me and whispers in my ear. "Thank you." With those two words, she guts me.

I keep my hands in my pocket, even though all I want to do is wrap my arms around her and hold her. She probably needs that more than anything.

Just as quickly as the hug happens, she pulls away, her face even more flushed.

"It was long overdue," I said, meaning every single word.

Her eyes bug out of her head. Realization hits her at what I've just said.

Kate, Mike, and Jacob have moved a little further back than where they were a moment ago. Mike is on his phone while Kate keeps her eye on us. Her face is neutral, as if she's trying to observe us together.

"I think we need a real talk, Chloe. A long overdue talk."

She lowers her head. It amazes me how naturally submissive she is when I'm around her. Unless we're in a boardroom, she has her game face on.

"I..."

"Chloe, please. I need to clear the air."

"Okay. I was going to say I think that's a good idea. But Kate and I have a work meeting. Call my office and leave your number with my assistant."

I laugh, reaching into my jacket pocket. I pull out a business card and hand it over to her. "Let me know when you're free." I walk off, leaving my friends before I turn around. "Chloe, I expect to hear from you today." I use my 'Dom' voice on her.

It has the desired effect as she swallows. I feel her eyes on me as I walk towards the glass revolving doors and out onto the busy New York street.



The walk back to my office was filled with thoughts of Chloe and that aroused look on her face as I walked away. It took Jacob way longer to message me back than I'd thought.

Jacob C: She seems open to working with you.

Jax: Good. I want her to trust me.

Jacob C: I'll see you later.

My assistant looks up from her screen as I walk back into the office, a confused look on her face. I'm sure I looked like a crazy person running out of here half an hour ago, and now I'm walking back in all cool and collected.

Lunch gets delivered, and I lock myself away. I know until I hear from Chloe, I'm going to be distracted. I'm on the phone with another client when my assistant walks in and puts a coffee on my desk, along with a post-it note.

Partner meeting in 30 minutes

I nod my head as she leaves. I've grown as a man. Six months ago, I'd look at my assistant's ass as she left my office. Now, I only have eyes for one woman who has a great body.



I miss working with Bryan and wish he'd return to New York. Then I wouldn't be playing spy on my own. Fucking Bryan owes me big time for this. I mean, I see his thought process. Being the new guy, it's easier for me to keep my eyes on shit. But they already don't trust me. I understand the reasoning, but I still do not love being stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Of course, all of that falls away just as the meeting is getting way off-topic, and I'm getting bored. My screen lights up, and one rule for partner meetings is that phones have to go on silent. I see an unknown number and can already feel the smile tugging at the side of my mouth.

Unknown: Okay. I'll meet you. I can meet either tomorrow night or Sunday.

Unknown: It's Chloe, by the way.

Unknown: I bet you get a ton of unknown numbers off girls.

Unknown: Ladies!

Unknown: Who am I kidding? I was right the first time.

The last message almost makes me laugh, but I manage to hold it in! I forgot how much Chloe babbles when she gets flustered about something. If her messages tell me anything, it's that I make her nervous. I hope it's because she feels the pull between us and not because she is scared of me.

I never want Chloe to feel scared of me or like she can't tell me anything ever again.

CHLOE



“**Y**ou’re so fucking cute.”

I glare at Kate, who is fast becoming a close friend. This glare has scared many men over the years, making them nervous and wish they weren’t on the opposing side. Kate Ashley, not so much. She seems to think it’s funny. I’m glad she’s not handling me with kid gloves. She’s treating me the way she would have done, whether what happened in the lobby happened or not.

Kate raises her perfectly arched eyebrows at me, telling me, without even opening her mouth, that she’s not impressed by my glare. It seems Kate has a look of her own she uses. We burst out laughing.

“Are you finished?” I ask, putting my phone back on the table. She’s been hounding me for over an hour to be a ‘big girl’ and message Jaxson.

“Pass me your phone. I want to see how awkward you are with him.”

Rude!

I smile as I hand it over. I hardly know her, but I’m already comfortable enough to hand over my phone with little to no coaxing willingly.

“Oh, my God.” She laughs, looking at the screen.

“He makes me awkward. I’m not like this at the office.”

She gives me a weak smile. “Well, you’re a boss-bitch, and you don’t want to let them see you weak, or you know they will pounce. Jax knew you when you were young and growing into the woman you are now. You have less to prove to him, and he already knows how awesome you are.”

“Thanks, but I’m not worried. I know I’m a better lawyer than most of the guys on my floor. I hope none of them saw the drama back there.”

“That’s the right attitude.” She takes another bite of food. “So, what was that look between you and Jax all about?”

“We’re going to have a long overdue conversation.”

“Why did you never tell him the truth?” Kate asks, taking a sip of her drink.

“I was scared,” I whisper, ashamed for the first time in years. Ashamed that I didn’t speak up. It’s my one regret in life. “I was twenty-one, and he was my Professor. He had a position of power. I’m a girl who was raised in a one-income Jersey City family. I didn’t think I had any power.” I feel myself closing off from her, and I hate that. Telling Greyson was the hardest thing in the world, way harder than telling Blake. It pisses me off when people say well, why didn’t the woman come forward?

Why did she let it escalate? But people who say that haven’t been in my position. Why, when a person comes into my office and tells me something like this, I listen. I don’t pass any judgment. Half the battle is coming forward or finding someone who will listen. But I don’t just take their word for it. The world is a cruel and unusual place, and for every person who doesn’t speak up, there is always someone who wants to cash in, and that’s the awful world we live in. “Greyson wanted me to. I was worried it would hurt my career.” I laugh, finally getting out of my own head. I look at Kate and see it on her face, and she gets it.

“You’ve known Greyson a while, then?”

“Yeah, you could say that. I applied for the Huntington Scholarship, and they only usually offer it to people who want

to enter the entertainment industry. I'm the only person they've put through law school. Now Greyson is my biggest client. He's like a dad or uncle, maybe." It feels weird thinking of him that way. "He's the only man in my life who's protected me and looked out for me, and for that, I'll always be grateful."

"No dad?"

I laugh. "No, my mom never spoke about my dad. He's not on my birth certificate. I don't think she even knows who it was."

"Greyson sounds like a great guy, though."

"He's the best."

"Maybe it's time to let someone else in. Someone who can give you everything you deserve."

"When did you get so wise?" I ask, smiling at her, no longer hungry.

"When I slept with my boss last year," she smiles, wagging her eyebrows at me.

"Ha ha ha. I'd heard about that."

"Yeah, I don't want you to miss out on something you want. Don't be like Mike and miss what's obvious to everyone around you. Jax can give you everything you want. You just have to let him in."



Kate's words keep playing on a loop in my head. I know she's right. Jax and I could have been friends a long time ago. He was different than most of our social circle. Like me, he was also on a scholarship—neither of us had the wealthy parents of our friend group. Getting to know some of the submissives tonight was good, too. We're all unique in our own way. But we're also strong too. We're not in this lifestyle

because we want a guy to walk all over us or because we are damaged somehow. We're in this lifestyle because we need this power dynamic, even if it's just in the bedroom—or, in my case, to feel something. Samantha, who's been a member for a couple of years, asked for my business card. I seem to be the go-to lawyer for the submissives at the club. My phone buzzes.

Jaxson: Tomorrow, I don't want to give you time to change your mind.

Jaxson: I'll make reservations.

I looked at the message he sent earlier. Reading it again and again. I notice the three little dots on the screen. A small giddy feeling comes over me, butterflies in my stomach. I'm also getting that nervous sweat under my arms—not sexy at all. This feeling is new, and I'm not sure I like it. I can't be falling for Jaxson Hill.

Jaxson: Either you're typing the world's longest message or just staring at my message.

I drop the phone on the bed, startled.

Jaxson: Don't go shy on me now.

I see the screen staring up at me. Maybe this would be a good ice-breaker before we meet tomorrow! 'Get a grip, Chloe. Over the years, you've spent tons of hours with the guy. Just because most of those hours were spent in animosity still counts.'

Chloe: Busted!

Jaxson: It took you ten minutes to write that? (smile emoji)

Chloe: Didn't know you were such a comedian!

Jaxson: There's a lot about me you don't know.

Chloe: Like?

Jaxson: I can be very creative when I want to be.

Chloe: Sounds... fun!

Jaxson: Hopefully for both of us.

I look down at the screen, not sure how to answer. He's given me an opening to flirt back, but I don't know if he wants the same deal I had with Kieran, not sexual unless we both need a release occasionally. He might want a 'play partner.'

Jaxson: You still there?

Chloe: I am.

Jaxson: Good! I like messaging you.

Chloe: I had a dream about you this week.

Jaxson: Really? How interesting!

Jaxson: What kind of dream? Or can I guess?

I feel my skin blush and my nipples hardening under my tank top. I move my non-texting hand under my tank top. I twist my nipple, liking the bite of pain. It's been too long since a guy has made me feel this way. Made me feel in any kind of way desired. It's a nice feeling to have, to be desired, even in some small way.

Jaxson: I hope you're not touching yourself right now.

I still, mid twist. I could be daring here. If my chat with the other submissives has taught me anything today, it's that I need to take charge of my sexuality, and I need to let someone in. Not every guy I let in is going to screw me over. I've not dated for five years. All of my sexual experiences and orgasms, for that matter, have either been at the club or using a battery-operated device at home in that time. I deserve more, and I know this. But I'm not sure Jaxson Hill is the guy to do that.

Chloe: What if I am?

Jaxson: There you are.

Chloe: It's not the first time either!

Jaxson: Really? How far back do these illicit dreams go?

Chloe: That would be telling, Sir!

There's a long pause. Have I pushed too much? We're supposed to be talking about this tomorrow. But hiding behind the wall of a text message makes me way freer and more daring than I think I could have been face-to-face. But I have butterflies in my stomach at the word Sir, and I hope I've not just bitten off more than I can chew.

JAX



Okay! Don't blow this, Jax! My cock hardened as soon as she sent the message. Now it's my turn to stare at the screen. With that one word, she made me harder than stone. Sir! I need to hear it come out of her mouth as I feed my cock in her cunt. Or on her knees in front of me.

Fuck!

Jaxson: I can't wait to hear you call me that.

Chloe: That sounds fun!

Jaxson: Oh, it will be. You made me rock hard with that one word, Chlo.

Chloe: Nobody calls me that!

Jaxson: You've always been Chlo to me.

Chloe: So you're hard?

Nice change of subject there, I laugh to myself. I reach inside my sweats—needing relief. I stroke my cock idly. This isn't about getting off. This is about enjoying the feeling. Building up something—not about getting off.

Jaxson: Rock Hard!

Chloe: Good. Because I'm twisting my nipple right now, wishing it was you.

Jaxson: Why's that?

Chloe: Because I know your grip would be harder. That it would hurt more!

Jaxson: Chloe...

Chloe: We could be getting our meeting out of the way now!

Chloe: You want to video chat?

That sounds like music to my ears, but I know she's been out with Kate, and I don't want her to have regrets here.

Jaxson: I'd love nothing more. But I need you to be stone-cold sober when we talk.

Chloe: I am now! We didn't drink much.

Jaxson: How much?

Chloe: Two glasses with food a couple of hours ago.

Fuck! She's not even a little tipsy. That should make me happy that the conversation I'm having with her is real. But I also know she's hiding. I don't want us to talk about all the shit we need to over a fucking phone screen.

Jaxson: I want you to be within touching distance.

The three little dots appear and disappear a couple of times. I don't want her to have any regrets. The fact that she's so undecided about what to message makes a small part of me nervous.

Chloe: Times Square 24 hr diner.

Chloe: I'll be there in thirty minutes.

Chloe: If you don't want me drinking coffee alone. Meet me there.

Fuck! I jump off my bed and grab a hoodie. I walk into my closet and grab my sneakers. I need to get there before her. At this time of night, I don't like the idea of her walking the streets alone. The Dom in me wants to spank her ass for being so reckless. But something tells me that Chloe doesn't do things like this very often, and I need to take this opportunity she has sent me.



I jump out of the *Uber* as I approach the diner she mentioned. I open the door, looking for a free table to let us have a private conversation. I'm surprised to see her at the far side of the place, a coffee already in front of her and a chuffed smile on her face. It's been too long since I've seen a smile on her face that looks truly genuine. I want to see more of that.

"You came," she says, pouring sugar into her coffee, way more than is probably socially acceptable.

"Like I was going to leave you sitting alone at this time of the night."

"Always the protector."

"Not always," I say, serious for a moment. It's stupid to say that because that smile I was enjoying only a moment ago falters for the smallest of seconds.

"You weren't supposed to know." She stops, looks at me, and stirs the sugar into her drink.

"You should have told me. I was a huge jackass. We could have done... something."

She looks at me, regret in her eyes. "Like I told Blake."

"Blake is an asshole! Always has been. You know we both had a thing for you back then." I need to get this conversation back onto familiar ground, less confrontational. "He knew I liked you, then swooped in ahead of me. I was going to make my move at the first study session we all had."

She looks at me, surprised.

“Yeah, I think you’re the only person who didn’t know.”

“I guess we all had our secrets,” she gives me a weak smile.

“I’d have believed you,” I say as the waitress pours coffee into my cup.

Chloe waits until she leaves. “We don’t know that. You were pretty quick to believe Blake.”

“I know the kind of guy I was and still am. I’d have believed you if you’d have come to me.”

“Well, it was a long time ago. It’s water under the bridge.”

“Not for you.” That much is clear. Jacob told me enough. She has a problem with letting go and needs the pain to feel things. Is it completely healthy? Not at all, but Jacob runs a good club, a safe club. He wants the club to feel like a family—Mike and Kate do too—I’d rather Chloe get what she wants here than at some club that might not want to protect her as Jacob does.

She looks at me, her mouth open. I’ve managed to shock her. Who’d have guessed?

“I take it Greyson is why he lost his job?” I ask.

“Yeah, Franchesca doesn’t know. I want to keep it that way. She and I might not be talking, but I don’t want her to find out.”

“Your guardian angel.” I laugh as I take a sip of my drink.

“I guess,” she smiles weakly at me.

“Chloe, I meant what I said in my message.” I take a deep breath. I need her to know I want her. I want her not just as a scene partner. But if that’s all she’ll give me at first, then I’ll take it.

“Me too,” she whispers, a smile pulling at her lips.

“So about this dream,” I stare her down. This is it, make or break time.

She bites her bottom lip, fighting the smile spreading across her face. My dick goes from semi-erect to hard as stone in seconds. All because of a lip bite. I move in my seat now, a little uncomfortable. I want to see my marks all over her body. Bite marks, flogger marks, and my arousal marking her body. Claiming her as mine. Marking her as mine.

“That good, huh? The real thing is even better.” I finally say, pulled out of the mini-movie playing in my head of her tied down, ready for me to use how I see fit. Giving us both the kind of pleasure we deserve.

She bursts out laughing, hiding her face, but I can still see her neck becoming a darker shade of red.

“I have certain kinks,” she says, taking a deep breath. She swallows. Her voice changes ever so slightly. Not many people would probably notice, but I’m so in tune with this woman in front of me. I knew her before she built these high walls around her.

“I know. I saw you and Kieran’s scene a few days ago.” I don’t regret telling her or letting her know I’ve seen her naked except for the barely there dental floss of her g-string.

Her eyes go wide as she takes in what I’ve just said. I reach for her hand, and she doesn’t push me away, which surprises me, so I take that for the win it is. I stroke my thumb on her hand. She bites her lip again.

“Don’t look at me like that, Chlo. Or I’m going to want to do more than drink crappy coffee with you.”

“We need to look at our calendars and see which nights at Hidden Secrets work best for us.” She sounds like she did in the conference room, all business.

“Chlo, I don’t want *just* to see you at the club.”

“Jaxson, you don’t know that.”

“I think I know my own brain. It’s got me working at the best law firm in New York.”

“Second,” she smiles.

“I guess we’ll have to just disagree on that.” This feels good and natural.

“You bring out the worst in me when we’re against each other.”

“I disagree. We both bring our A game against each other, which doesn’t have to change. I mean, we’ve done it for the last decade.”

“True! I did always know how to kick your ass.”

“And now I can spank your ass.”

She looks down, her brain in overdrive. I can see her smile fighting to spread over her face.

“Yes, Sir!” It comes out coy as she bites on her lip. She really NEEDS to stop doing that.

God, I want to bite that lip, amongst other things. I take a deep breath. I need not to be distracted around this woman. My body is so distracted by her, though, but my mind is distracted by her the most.

“That sounds good coming out of your mouth.”

“It’s not the only good thing about my mouth.”



C hloe and I sat in the diner until two in the morning, and it was nice, comfortable even. But the awkward kiss as she got in her *Uber* was unfortunate. I’m on the phone with a client when my assistant brings a small box wrapped in black ribbon and a card on the top with my name scrawled across it.

Taxson

*I had fun last night. Here's to us
having more fun.*

Hope you like your surprise, Sir.

xoxo

I grab my phone off the charging dock behind me. I like this playful side of Chloe. I'm almost certain no other man on the planet has been on the receiving end of it, though. That pleases me more than it should.

Jaxson: What do we have here?

Chloe: Open it and find out.

I unwrap the black paper and laugh when I see what she's sent. I see my assistant opening the door just in time to cover the package with the paper it was wrapped in. I don't need my assistant to see a cock-ring on my desk, even if it is in a discreet box.

CHLOE



When Kate messaged me to say she could send my package to Jaxson at work before she left to return to L.A. I was giddy with excitement. I'm pacing in my office, trying to get my steps in, when I hear my phone ping on my desk.

Right on cue.

I sit back in my chair, the wheels moving backward as I sit. I'm wearing a tight black knee-length skirt today and my red silk blouse, dressing with the hope that I'd be seeing Jaxson later. I'm hoping this little gift may have just cemented the deal.

Jaxson: What do we have here?

Chloe: Open it and find out.

I bite my bottom lip while keeping an eye on my office door. I don't need anyone interrupting me while I'm having a back-and-forth with Jax.

Jaxson: Stop biting your lip. That's for me to do.

Chloe: How did you know I was biting my lip?

Jaxson: You always do it when you're nervous and horny, it seems.

Chloe: Definitely horny!

Jaxson: Wow!

Jaxson: My assistant nearly saw this.

I burst out laughing. My assistant looks through my office window and looks at me, confused. What? Have I never looked happy before?

Chloe: I thought we could try it out tonight if you're not busy.

Jaxson: I had a restaurant reservation with a smart, hot lawyer. I'm sure she won't mind me canceling the reservation.

I love the fact he went with smart before hot. Not that I think I'm more. I'm just glad he went with something that isn't superficial.

Chloe: I'm sure she will.

Chloe: My profile is up to date on the app.

Jaxson: Mine too. I guess I have some reading to do before tonight.

Jaxson: My place or yours?

Chloe: Yours.

Jaxson: Want an escape route?

Chloe: Something like that.

Jaxson: I could meet you at your office.

Chloe: Can we make it a block away?

Jaxson: Of course. 6 PM?

Chloe: Sounds perfect.

I sit back in my chair, biting my lip and smiling. I look at my call list and see my pain-in-the-ass documentary-producer client is on my call list. Usually, dealing with her would cause

me to be in a bad mood the rest of the day, but nothing can kill this high I'm feeling right now.



I'm walking down the sidewalk when I see Jaxson standing with his back against the wall and his legs crossed at the ankles. He's too engrossed in his phone to notice me staring. I enjoy the view for a moment. He is a good-looking guy, especially today, with scruff on his face.

My pussy starts to tingle, and I carry on walking toward him. It's been a while since we've been attracted to someone. I'm just glad we're both on the same page.

"You enjoy the view?" he asks, looking at me over his phone.

Busted! I guess he did see me coming.

"You got my gift on you?" I say with raised eyebrows.

"Of course," he says, patting his jacket pocket. He doesn't look bulky, so he must have taken it out of the box.

"Aren't you worried your office cleaner will find a box for a cock ring in your office?"

"Not at all. I put the empty box in the trash of a guy I don't like on my floor."

We both burst out laughing as he pulls me in for a side hug. God, he smells good. He smells expensive.

"Did you just sniff me?" He smiles. Jaxson has one of those smiles spread over his entire face, and you can see the sparkle in his eyes.

The walk from the subway station to Jaxson's apartment is one I know well. It's only a couple of blocks from my apartment. Funny how we haven't stumbled across each other on the subway yet. Of course, I get a cab most mornings, not

wanting to deal with the pushing and pulling of a busy commute.

He pulls his keys out of his pocket, looking at me over his shoulder.

“I never thought Chloe Lawson would see the inside of my apartment.”

I smile at him weakly. I’m nervous. I know why, but I guess it’s a good kind of nervousness.

“Take a seat,” he says, guiding me towards the couch as he helps me out of my jacket. I’m glad, again, that I wore this silk blouse.

I watch as he walks towards his kitchen, his apartment a similar layout to my own.

“Wine? Or something stronger?”

“Wine would be nice, red if you have it.”

He nods, then moves out of view. He returns with two empty glasses and a bottle of wine, one of my favorites. I watch as he pours our wine, and the silence is deafening.

“I, er, I’m glad you wanted to do this.”

“Me too,” I whisper, my eyes lowering to my knees.

“God, you are such a natural. I can’t believe I never noticed it before.”

I relax on the couch, turning to face him. It’s not easy to get comfortable in the skirt I wore, even if it did make my ass look great all day. He sits next to me, turning on his side, so we face each other. His arm is resting on the back of the couch.

“Maybe because you weren’t looking at me in that way.”

“Oh, I was, believe me!” It’s not the first time he’s alluded to having had a crush on me in college.

He runs his thumb over my hand, an electric feeling between us, like a shock. Man, am I in trouble!

“I need to ask you something. I don’t need the answer now. But eventually, I’m going to want to know.”

I’ve been waiting for this. Kieran had said the same. With Jaxson, though, I don’t want to hide. Even if everything about our ‘relationship’ over more than a decade tells me, I should be. He’s been nothing but a good guy since I word-vomited in Jacob’s office.

“I need to feel pain.” I pause. I know he’s not going to judge me. “When I’m emotional. I can’t let go unless I feel the pain first. It’s the only way I can let go. I don’t know why. I haven’t always been like this. But since...” My words trail off, and I’m not sure I want to share more with him. It’s more than I share with most people, though.

He listens to what I say. I can read his face, but I can see he’s taking in this new information. Processing what I’ve just said to him. Like I’m some puzzle, but he doesn’t look angry. It’s so passive. “Does that mean sexually as well?” He asks as he sips his wine. His eyes stay on me as he licks some droplets of wine off his bottom lip.

“Sexually, not always, though I do love the pain sometimes. Emotionally, when I’m in my own head, I’m a masochist; that is when I need the pain. The only time I’ve been able to cry since that day is if it’s the result of pain..” I let that sink in for a minute while I watch him continue the soothing touches of his thumb on my hand. Not once during my time talking did his movements waiver. How could I have been so wrong about him all these years?

“When?” He asks, again stroking. It’s the most soothing thing to me right now. I don’t need him to elaborate more. I know what he’s asking me. It’s strange to be this in tune with someone, someone who is completely different from the man I thought he was.

“Just after we graduated. About a month after Franchesca’s wedding.” I look at him, and I’m ready for him to interrupt. But nothing. He just sits there, stroking my hand, keeping me relaxed. Soothing me with his strokes. “I knew about these kinds of places. I just thought they were limited to romance

books and TV. Long story short, it opened my eyes to a whole new world. When I moved to New York, I looked into them. It took me some time to realize that not all places are as safe as Hidden Secrets. Like this one place, I went to in Staten Island.” My body shivers at the thought of that place. “I was a member before Kate and Mike took over. I was a member of the old club for about seven years.”

“It’s exclusive,” is all he says. I know he’s not implying anything by it. I can see it in his eyes and the tone of his voice.

“Greyson pays me very well and keeps me very busy.” I smile at him weakly. “It’s strictly professional. I’m where I am because of him.”

“I know. He loves you like a daughter.”

“I don’t know about that.”

“He does. What he did to protect you, he’s kept tabs on him ever since.”

“How do you know?” I’m confused but too surprised to hear this about Greyson. He was so angry when he found out.

“I did some poking around. I wanted to make sure you were safe. That other people were safe.”

“You did that for me?” I should be surprised, but for some reason, I’m not. Since he found out about the past, everything he has done has been a bit surprising, but for some reason, it seems right for the kind of man I am starting to see him as.

“Yeah.”

I take a large gulp of my wine that’s been abandoned on the table. “Can we move on from this?”

“Of course.”

He moves in to kiss me, and I hold on to the side of his head. My fingers are in his hair. It’s been a while since I’ve kissed a guy on the lips. It is way too intimate for ‘play’ at the club. I moan into his mouth as his tongue pushes past my lips, the taste of wine on his tongue.

He runs his fingers through my hair, and my whole body tingles with excitement, especially my pussy. He scratches at the scalp, and it's as if his doing that has a direct line to other parts of my body. I grip onto him, mirroring my grip on his hair.

My pussy clenches again at the small tug.

As we deepen the kiss, we moan in unison, and he moves even more into my personal space. Now I'm not enjoying the tight skirt I'm wearing. I groan as I move to try to get comfortable. But I'm fighting a losing battle. As if reading my mind, Jaxson moves his hands from my head and down to my skirt, hiking it up little by little.

JAX



Chloe and I play this push-and-pull game on the couch. Her breasts are fighting with the buttons on her red silk blouse, and I can't wait to grip them in my hands, tweak and pull and bite all manner of despicable things to her body. I don't think she'd appreciate me ripping her skirt to shreds, but she makes me want to lose control even if she didn't look sexy as hell in it. I'm not ashamed to admit I kept checking out her ass on the subway. My cock isn't liking that I'm still in my slacks and shirt from work. My jacket and tie are the only things I managed to remove. By now, I'd usually be in sweats. I've never felt like this before with any other woman, ever since I found a way to feed this need. I had to control in a safe and controlled environment.

I keep pulling her skirt up, my hand wanting to travel even further up to feel her slick arousal on my fingers for the first time. I get her skirt halfway up her thighs before she widens her legs a little. That's the only opening I need to push her back on the couch. My lips enjoy exploring her neck and mouth. I should want to savor my first time getting her naked. After all, I've waited so long. But she's pushing me to my breaking point, and I'm not even a bit surprised.

She moans into my mouth, her hands moving to my chest. I miss her fingers scratching my head already. Her fingers go to the buttons on my shirt. I stop her, putting my hand on her wrist. I need to get some of this control back.

I pull away to look down at her, her lips red and swollen from our kisses. I instantly had visions of my cock fucking her

mouth, and those kissable lips were swollen even more from my pounding. Her chest is rising and falling in arousal. I need to check I'm not moving too fast. We've just had a heavy-ish conversation. If this were any other woman, I'd have ripped her blouse in half by now, her tits would be on full display, and I'd have fucked her mouth or her cunt with not a care in the world. But this is Chloe. What she's told me in the last twenty-four hours is forcing me to change the pace I want to go.

"I'm only going to ask you this once. You sure..."

"Jax, I want this. If you use that strong hand and continue to move my skirt higher, you'll see just how much I want this."

Fuck!

I stand up, running my fingers through my hair. Confusion passes over her for a second before I reach down and pull her up. Holding her to my chest, I carry her to my bedroom. I needed that moment to rein in the other side of me.

I throw her into the middle of the bed. She laughs as I unfasten my shirt. Her eyes follow my hands, so I slow down. I have her mesmerized. I pull the shirt off and work on the belt. Slowly moving the black leather through the gold buckle, I pull it through the loops in my pants. There are so many things I want to do with this belt.

She bites her lip as she watches. Not once has she looked at my face. Her eyes have stayed fixed on the belt in my hands. I wrap part of the belt around my hand, snapping it taut, the sound crackling loudly in the room.

I laugh as I pull my pants down and kick them out of the way. My cock is fighting to break free from my boxer briefs. I rub my hand over the goods, cupping my balls and squeezing them. I'm not sure who I'm tormenting more, her or me.

"I feel overdressed," she whispers, her voice husky with need. Finally, she's looking up at my face. She starts to unfasten the buttons on her silk blouse. I shake my head 'no.'

"Come here." I hear the need in my voice.

I pull her up off the bed. I want her to put on a show as I've just done for her. I pull her against me, and there is no way, in hell, that she can't feel my arousal. I kiss her before switching places and lying in the middle of the bed. I move further up, so my pillows are propping up my head so I can enjoy the view even more. I put my hands behind my head, getting myself comfortable.

She has a confidence about herself now. This is the same person who can keep people's attention in a courtroom. She slowly opens the buttons, her delicate fingers taking care of the small red buttons, her body moving to a tune she's obviously playing in her head. It's hot as hell. I'm going to want her to do this again!

She pulls the blouse off her shoulders and lets it drop to the floor. She bites on her finger, all coy.

I rub my hand over my cock again.

Chlo turns around and slowly pulls the zipper of her skirt down at the back, painstakingly slow. She looks over her shoulder as she pulls it all the way before she lets it pool at her feet. Her ass looks great in the thong she's wearing. She unfastens her bra, still with her back to me. She dramatically holds it out and lets it drop to the floor. No care at all about the creases that are bound to be there as a result of her haphazard dropping of the clothes.

I sit up on the edge of the bed and pull her between my legs, with her back still to me. She whelps as I turn her around, her breasts at perfect eye level. I take one of them in my mouth, swirling my tongue around the nipple as it hardens with every brush of my tongue. She has perfect breasts.

Her hands sink into my hair again. I moan as her fingers run through it, scratching at my scalp. I really like it when she does that.

I grab onto her hips and put a finger under the elastic at her hips. Her eyes look down at me like lasers. Pulling her thong down slowly, I look up, and she's smiling down at me.

“Let’s see if you were telling me the truth,” I say as I move my thumb to her cunt. Of course, I already knew she was telling me the truth. I can smell her arousal.

She jumps the second my thumb touches her clit. A moan escaped her.

“Someone’s on edge.”

I run my thumb along her slit, her wetness covering my finger. I rub in her arousal, using it as a lubricant on her nub. She fidgets in front of me.

She tenses as I kiss up her stomach before slowly relaxing again. She’s on edge! And it’s *my* job to give her what she needs.

Chloe has her head back, looking up at the ceiling as she holds herself up with her hands still on my head.

“Chlo, eyes on me when you cum.”

I push two fingers into her, slow and steady. After a couple of minutes, her grip on my head tightens, and she looks me in the eye as she cums. I need her wet before she takes me. I’m bigger than most guys, and I don’t know when she had sex last. I don’t want my cock to hurt her. That’s not the kind of pain I want to give to this beauty in front of me.

Her legs buckle from under her, but I catch her. She pulls her thong down further so it’s no longer restricting her movement at her knees before kicking it out of the way. Chloe moves to straddle my hips, her knees on either side of my thighs as she kisses me. She tries to push me back on the bed, but I don’t want her to. I like her just where she is. She kisses under my ear, rubbing herself against my erection. I never let the women I’m with take control like this, but Chloe is different from every single one of them.

“I think someone wants to come out to play.” She whispers in my ear, biting down on my earlobe.

My cock twitches, and hates that he’s still restricted in my boxer briefs. “He does, but not before I’ve made you cum a couple more times.”

She pouts at me, moving one of her hands to my crotch.

“Don’t make me tie your hands together,” I say, my voice changing slightly. There is only so much willpower I have at the moment. She has me that much under her spell.

She gulps, and I fear I’ve gone too far until she moves back, sitting on the balls of her feet. Offering her hands and herself to me. This woman is fucking perfect.

“You’re gonna need to because all I want to do is stroke your cock till I make you cum.”

I stand, picking her up as I rise. Glad today wasn’t a gym day. I lowered her onto the bed, kissing her neck before moving away. Neither of one of us likes that we are no longer touching. I pick her thong up off the floor, spinning it around my finger.

“I don’t think that’s going to keep me bound,” she laughs.

“I want you to feel safe the first time we do anything remotely like this, especially since we’re not in the club.”

“Jaxson, I trust you.”

“I know you do.”

I bind her wrists with her thong like a hair tie but on her wrists. Kissing my way down her body, I squeeze her breasts, traveling even further south. I kiss her clit before moving her legs over my shoulders.

“Don’t move your legs off my shoulders, and you’ll get a reward.”

“What kind of reward?”

“That would be telling. Trust me; you’ll like it.”

I lick and suck on her clit, my tongue licking at her juices that have been building up in the short time I’ve been away. I could get lost in her cunt all day long.

Her legs squeeze against my shoulders and back. I push her back further, her shoulders, the only part of her body still on the bed.

She tightens her grip, crossing her legs together on my back.

“Good girl.”

“I’m close,” she whimpers. Hearing that need from her lips does things to me, right down to my core.

“I know.”

I lick and suck, then she goes off again, cumming on my tongue. I circle her opening. She whimpers as she rides out her orgasm.

Once she finally catches her breath, she looks down at me.

“I’m willing to beg.” She sounds hoarse. I know I have her right where I need her. I have no doubt in my mind that she’d be willing to beg. If this was any other time, and if she was any other woman, I’d be making her beg. But Chlo and I are playing the long game here, even if she doesn’t know it yet.

“There’s no doubt in my mind, but I wanted to give you a couple more orgasms first,” I say, lowering her legs to the bed. I pull my boxer briefs down, and my cock is finally glad to be free, and no longer confined to my boxer briefs. I stand up, walk to my bedside drawer, and pull out my unopened box of condoms. I walk back, putting it on, and the only thing moving is her eyes as she follows me around the room.

“Now I know why you wanted me relaxed,” she smiles.

I laugh. “You’re good for a guy’s ego.”

“Does that count, though, if it’s the truth?”

“We’ll take it slow—this time. But I’m warning you. I’ll be anything but gentle next time.”

“Pretty confident there’s going to be a next time, are you?” She moans as I push into her. “Fuck! That feels good.”

“I was just about to say the same thing.”

I grab her legs, pushing them back, so they’re pressing against her body, her knees pushing into her shoulders.

“My god,” she moans as I push on her legs.

I push all the way in. Slowly rocking in and out of her. I shouldn't have taken her like this. It feels too good. She's tight in this position, and I'm almost ready for blowing already. I move with a bit more speed, her moans telling me Chloe is happy. I grab onto her hips, thrusting into her. Her scream tells me she's close. Then I feel it, her cunt pulsing on my cock, just as my orgasm hits.

“YES” I shout as I cum. Wishing for the first time in my life that I wasn't wearing a condom.

CHLOE



I could have walked home, but Jax, being the possessive guy he is, made sure I took a cab home. Three blocks. That's how close we've been living to each other since his move to the city. He insisted I let him know when I got home safely. 'I mean inside your apartment, Chlo, not when the cab pulls up at your building.' I can hear the tone in his voice now. It's his Dom voice. I just know it. This was where he met me halfway. I open the door to my apartment, pull the lock into place, and press the switch that turns the lamp on. It casts a soft romantic glow over the room. Just for good measure, I take a photo of my apartment as I make my way to the kitchen for a glass of water.

Chloe: I'm home. Safe in my apartment.

Chloe: IMAGE

It's safe to say Jax, and I will have some fun over the coming months. We agreed we couldn't go out in public together. If either of our firms or clients, for that matter, see us together.

I shake off the thought that getting involved with Jaxson Hill could be more trouble than it's worth. But the sex tonight was, in one word, amazing!

I pull back the cover on my bed, the warm glow from the bedside lamp casting a romantic glow on the room. My bedroom, like everything else in my life, is organized. The neutral colors make it look like it's straight out of a magazine

or show home. There are no personal touches—much like my office. When did I become this person?

I rest my head against the padded headboard and take in my room. It's boring. Just like I'd call myself. Because I am boring, all I do is work, occasionally see Franchesca, and usually go to the club once a week. If Jax heard the thoughts in my head right now, he'd spank my ass so hard, and not in a good way. He'd make this hurt for the punishment it would deserve.

Chloe: Thank you for tonight, Sir.

Jax: Fuck, Chlo! Do you know what hearing you call me that does to me?

Chloe: I have a good idea.

Jax: I can still smell you in my apartment.

Chloe: I'm sure your housekeeper will take care of that problem.

Jax: You sure you're okay keeping this a secret at work?

Chloe: Of course. It was my great idea.

Jax: I have a deposition with your firm tomorrow.

Chloe: I know. My boss wants me to sit in on it. He knows we went to law school together.

Jax: Don't wear any panties tomorrow.

Why does that last message from him make me feel things? Naughty, wet things! But he cannot be serious. There is no chance in hell that I'm going to work without panties.

Jax: I want to know you're bare when we're in the same room.

Well, if that's not the hottest thing a guy has ever said to me. Wetness pools at my core. How? He's given me so many orgasms I've almost lost count.

Jax: Don't defy me! I will know!

Chloe: Why would I do a stupid thing like that?

Jax: Sleep well. See you tomorrow.

Chloe: You too.

I sleep better than I have in months. It has nothing to do with the many orgasms Jaxson gave me last night. I'm in big trouble here! I can see myself falling for this guy and his talented body parts. Just the thought of the things that man did with his tongue makes my skin pink in arousal all over again.

I'm screwed!



I put the Kate Ashley file on my assistant's desk, ready for him to file away. I keep looking at the clock, knowing that Jaxson is due any minute. I followed his instructions, with a little added something. If I read between the lines correctly, he's going to want to check I followed his instructions. That's what's had my body on edge for the last half hour. Knowing that when he looks up my skirt, he's gonna see more than he bargained for.

My phone pings on my desk. I walk back into my office, closing the door behind me as I walk across to my desk. I know it's going to be him before I get to my phone.

Jax: I'm in the building. Let's see if you can follow instructions.

I laugh to myself as I read the message again. My body was ready for this. I turn around, the high back of my chair keeping me well hidden. I lift my skirt and take a photo. My pussy is out for the world to see, but also something else. A black suspender belt is holding up some black stockings. I'm

starting to regret wearing it. It's starting to get warm in the city, even if it is still early spring.

I don't send the photo straight away. Deciding instead to play a little with fire! I'm standing up, collecting my things for the meeting, when Adam knocks on my door.

"They're here." He says, standing by my open door. "Why do they want you in the depo? He's not your client."

"No idea," I lie. I know exactly why. They want me to be the Jaxson Hill lie detector. This, right here, is why our firms can't know about this thing between us. I watch as the receptionist on our floor walks Jaxson and his client to the conference room. He doesn't look over at my office, which I'm grateful for.

Once I see everyone inside, we keep a row of seats out of everyone's way outside the table, so I sit there. I don't need a seat at this table, and I'm hoping I'm going to get pulled out of the meeting. I pull up my messages from Jax and send him the two photos I took in my office moments ago.

His phone vibrates on the table. I see him fighting not to look my way.

He sits back, hiding his smirk well.

Jax: Good girl.

My stomach turns over, butterflies fluttering inside. This man has me. I re-crossed my legs, but it doesn't go unnoticed. Jax looks away, but not before I see the shit-eating grin on his face.

"Can we get started? I have another meeting after this." I say, my Ice Queen persona still intact.

My colleague, the one running this deposition, turns the camera on and goes through all the introductory things. I keep my eye on Jax and his team—his client is a moron—I'm not sure how Jax keeps getting these clients. The only good thing about this meeting is I don't have to hide looking at him. I'm expected to spend the meeting watching him.

Jax doesn't look at me again in the whole deposition, and it's good to see him like this again. It takes me back to our days at Harvard during mock trials. Even then, we were always on opposing sides.

I shake hands with the team, head out the door, and make a beeline for my office. What I should have done was go to the restroom and relieve this ache that's been slowly building for the last hour.

I'm just getting comfortable behind my desk, getting ready for my web call, when a knock on my glass door moves my focus.

Jaxson!

I wave at Adam as I see Jax has charmed him to make his way to my door. He steps in, closing the door behind him. His back against the glass. My office is big, but while Jax strides across my office, all the air in the room suddenly feels different.

"Your assistant threatened me with bodily harm if you missed your call in twenty minutes. Of course, I didn't tell him I didn't need twenty minutes."

"What do you want?" I ask, standing up and leaning against the drawers behind my desk, careful not to knock the glass ornament I have on top.

"Are you going to the charity dinner in two weeks?"

He knows I am. Greyson holds it every year. Of course, Jaxson is new in town, so maybe he didn't know it was an annual event. "I've not missed one in five years."

"I got my invite this morning."

"Greyson..."

"I figured you would be going. Are you taking anyone?" He asks, and I realize now that he's nervous. It's not a look I'm used to seeing on him.

"Kieran, he usually comes with me to these things."

A confused look comes over his face. "I thought..."

“Kieran is my friend.” Is all I say. I don’t want to say more while I’m in the office. “We’ll talk later?”

“Count on it.” He turns around and makes his way to my door. “Chloe?”

“Yeah?”

“Don’t do anything about that ache between your legs.”

Just at the mention, my body reacts.

JAX



Leaving Chloe needy and wanting in her office was torture for both of us. I understand the need to show everything is as it was a week ago between us. It doesn't mean I have to like it.

I walk back to my office. I can't believe our firms and our homes are so close to each other. Was I distracted during the whole deposition? Yes. Would I change anything? Absolutely not!

Having to control my hard-on, though, was harder than I thought (no pun intended).

I pull up my calendar to see what I have to deal with for the rest of the afternoon. A ping goes off on my phone. I'm surprised it's from Chlo, but not in our usual chat. She messaged me from the app. Using the ClubHS private message.

CL: I need a release!

JH: Delayed gratification is hot.

CL: Not when you're wet and not wearing any underwear.

I laugh. Literally out loud, my assistant looks at me through the glass, confused. When I press the button on the side of my desk, the top half of the glass wall is frosted. Frosting the whole thing seems pointless to me. It's better than standing up and closing a set of blinds.

JH: Show me! I want to see how needy you are.

CL: IMAGE

CL: IMAGE

CL: IMAGE

Fuck! I can't take my eyes off the three images. Each one showed her arousal, her fingers just breaching her opening. I call her immediately.

"Remember the rule." I can hear the huskiness in my voice.

"You said nothing about touching, just that I wasn't allowed to cum. We need to extend that to you, too."

When Chlo plays, she plays to win.

"I think that's only fair."

"That includes the shower." I hear her laugh, and I know she doesn't do it often, so it makes me happy that I'm able to elicit a reaction from her.

"You could always stay the night next time."

"What, to service your morning wood?" I hear the amusement in her voice as her keyboard keys click in the background.

I laugh down the phone. "Don't act like you weren't screaming with enjoyment last night."

"True."

"I've booked us in at the club tonight."

I must have grabbed her attention because the clicking of her keyboard in the background stopped.

"Public or private?" she asks.

I had planned on something public to show everyone she's mine, but I can't yet, not when I'm still getting a handle on her needs. "Private, this time." I hope she hears that I'm not trying

to hide her away. We'll be doing enough of that in every other part of our life. I don't want us to be hiding there too.

“Private sounds good, Sir.”

I swallow, closing my eyes, fighting back the memories of the last time I heard that word out of her mouth last night.

“I'll meet you there. A package is on its way to your office now. I want you to wear that when I see you tonight. On your knees, in the club.”

“I'll make sure my assistant stops screening my packages then,” I hear the amusement in her voice. Why didn't I think of that?

“For the foreseeable future, I think that might be a good idea.”

“Promises, promises, Mr. Hill.”

“I haven't heard you complain yet.”

“I need to go. My client is waiting for me.”

“See you later. Remember, don't cum!” I say as I hang up the phone before she can hit me back with another one of her comebacks.

It's been a long time since a woman has had this much of a hold on my mind, but none of my drive has gone. The opposite, actually. I get so much work done in the afternoon that I'm ready to leave the office before six. The first time this has happened since I started working here a few weeks ago.



A black town car pulls up outside my building, and I get inside. Navigating Manhattan in a car requires a skill that I'm in no rush to take on. That's the biggest difference from my move. I've not driven my sports car in weeks.

As the driver gets me to the club, I pull out my phone. I've not heard from Chloe since our call, not that I was expecting to, but I don't know how she reacted to my present. I can't wait to see her wearing it.

The car pulls into the underground parking before security opens my door, and I'm let into the building. This is my preferred way of entering the club. I'm also hoping Chloe will let me sneak her out this way later. Walking up the flight of stairs, my mind runs to Chloe. I hope she was as excited and on edge as she was earlier.

I see Kieran at the end of the bar with Jacob, and they nod my way. "Hey," I say, shaking hands with them both. "Water," I say to the girl behind the bar.

Jacob and Kieran share a look, but I ignore it for the moment. I'm still trying to get a read on Kieran and Chloe. Do they have a past? If so, how far in the past? Then there was the mention of him going with her to Greyson's charity gala next weekend.

"Put him out of his misery."

I turn to Jacob—am I that transparent?

"But it was fun."

"Don't be a dick," Jacob says, glaring at his friend. Jacob is a great club manager, but he's an even better Dom. What he's doing right now is giving Kieran his 'I'm not impressed, Dom' look.

"We've never dated. I wanted to, though." That is all Kieran says before he smiles at me as he pats me on the back and heads toward the changing rooms.

Doms are not required to change unless they want to. I've never been into the whole leather thing. For the subs, if they are 'playing,' then fet-wear or underwear is expected.

I put my hand in my pocket and feel my last surprise for Chloe for the night. They will look amazing paired with the gift I sent her earlier.

"Is she here yet?" I ask Jacob.

“Yeah, I’m guessing she’s almost ready.”

I gulp down the rest of my water, then head towards the women’s changing room. Ready to wait for Chloe. My cock hardens, and I run my finger over the metal in my pocket.

CHLOE



I hold the bra up in front of me. I'm going to be exposed wearing this. I don't know why he even bothered if he wanted my nipples out for everyone to see, because they will. We might be 'playing' in one of the private rooms, but everyone here tonight will notice when I walk across the floor with the new guy. The new guy who a week ago I was looking at like he was my worst enemy—because a week ago he was.

I put it on along with the crotch-less panties. They fit me perfectly. Either Jaxson could guess my size, or he looked at my sizes on the app. The black material looks great against my skin, as I still had a glow from my vacation a couple of months ago. Back when Franchesca and I were still best friends. Now I don't know what to think. We've been closer than sisters for so long, but this radio silence she's giving me has shocked me as much as Jaxson.

Was I too quick to let him in? Maybe, but something about how he's handled this whole situation makes me regret not confiding in him back then. Could I have saved myself some serious heartache over the years? Maybe not. Maybe Jax and I were destined to have all this time apart so we could find ourselves. Why the hell am I acting like this is some great love story? This is sex. Great sex! And in a couple of months, we'll go our separate ways.

I walk out to the corridor like I've done a thousand times before. But this time feels different. It has nothing to do with the bra I'm wearing, with two holes where my nipples are poking through. I read through Jax's list of protocols. I walk

over to him, my eyes on the floor, until I see his shoes in front of me. I lower myself to my knees, keeping my eyes on his shoes until he speaks. It turns me on so much that I please him this way. He continues talking to the person beside him. I have no clue who it is. I lowered my eyes before I even left the room. I have this need to excel at everything. Being the best submissive in this place is no different. I'm drama-free. Most Doms love that about me.

“What’s your safe word?” Happy to hear Kieran behind me.

“Stone.”

“Good,” Kieran says.

I feel Jaxson’s hand on the top of my head as he runs his fingers through my hair. I moan my approval, loving the feel.

“Stand,” he says, his Dom voice firm and clear.

I do as he says, keeping my eyes lowered and concentrating on his feet.

“I have another present for you.” He lowers his head and takes one of my nipples into his mouth. Biting down hard.

I moan my approval. He knows pain is my friend. He knows it gives me my biggest endorphin high.

My other nipple hardens even though it’s still being neglected. He pulls something shiny out of his pocket, and I nearly cum on the spot. In his hand are two platinum nipple clamps.

I bite my lip to hold back my moan as he twists the first one onto the nipple he just had in his mouth. Boy, am I in trouble tonight. He moves his head to my other nipple and bites down hard again. I swear, this time, he does it harder. I flinch, but not because I’m upset. Because I’m so turned on, my body doesn’t know whether to be happy or angry. My sex pools with arousal; now I understand why he wanted me to wear these.

“I can smell your arousal from here,” he whispers in my ear. “Legs wide,” he says, this time for everyone to hear.

I do as he says. As I said, I like to aim high. I widen them, knowing exactly what he wants and needs.

“You were beautiful before, and now you look divine.”

I swallow, my pussy quivering. I can feel more eyes on me with each passing second. I knew we'd have an audience tonight.

Kieran hands Jax a card, which I know is for the VIP rooms. Jax must have pulled some strings. You can't usually get a VIP room with a day's notice. But I guess when you're friends with the owner and the manager.

“Come this way, Chloe. Keep your eyes down until we get in the room. Then I want you back on your knees and your hands on your thighs, as I saw you the other night.”

I forgot he was here that night. It feels like a lifetime ago. He holds on to my hand as he guides me through the bar and public play area towards the elevator on the far side. His fingers lace with mine, and I feel loved for the first time in a long time. I feel eyes on me everywhere we walk, and I'd love to see who is here, but I won't.

We step into the elevator, and he swipes the card against the pad. It's the only way to access the VIP floor. The air is charged. My body is on high alert. This man knows me intimately, but there is one side of me only a handful of people have experienced. Sure, everyone in this club has at some point seen me take some pretty painful punishments, but the aftercare is nowhere near as many. In fact, I can count that number on the one hand.

We're in the room before we know it, and I follow his instructions. I walk to the middle of the room and kneel on the floor. It's uncomfortable, but I guess that's the point. I take a deep breath to get myself in the right headspace. I adjust my legs so my pussy is exposed and rest my hands on my thighs, palms up.

I haven't heard him move the whole time we've been in the room. “Breathtaking.” He whispers as he rests his hand on my shoulder.

I inhale another breath. This time, his scent lingers in the air. It's not the same one he wore today or last night, but I've noticed that scent before. I inhale again. Does he have a different scent on when he's a Dom? He lets go of my shoulder, and I miss it instantly. I'm becoming obsessed with his touch. His shoes click across the floor before they stop, the armoire door creaking as it opens. Even without witnessing it, I already know that Jaxson Hill is one hell of a good Dom. He'd have done his research and read my file—excessively. I know this because I did the same thing. We're so alike it's scary.

There are several 'toys' in there he could use, and I've used every single one of them. Tonight, though, is about play and not in a therapeutic way to make me feel something. It's been a while since I've been here for a non-therapeutic reason. That makes me feel sadder than it should. He's going to pick something... middle of the road.

"I can hear you thinking from here."

It makes me jump a little. I was so lost inside my head. I keep my eyes on the floor and then see his shoes. His shiny, expensive-looking shoes. His two fingers come under my chin, and he lifts my head to look up at him. The man is sin personified. He's missing a couple of things, though: his tie, belt, and jacket. The sleeves on his expensive white shirt rolled up to perfection, just under his elbow.

"Open your mouth," he says.

All my submissive bones are on high alert once more. I open my mouth. My jaw relaxed, the tip of my tongue resting on my bottom lip. He surprises me when he brings a cloth to my mouth and shoves it in. Of course, I recognize them. They're the panties I couldn't find before I left his apartment last night. These smell clean, though. He raises his eyebrow as I stare back and try to keep my reaction neutral.

"If you need me to stop, spit out your panties."

I nod, showing him I understand.

He holds his hand out, and I take it as he helps me off the floor. “Hands behind your back.”

I follow his instruction quickly, and then I feel leather around my wrist, followed by the sound of a buckle. The actions repeated a second later on my other wrist. He’s cuffed my wrists together. I wish I could see how I look like this.

“Good.”

He pulls a wooden bench from the side of the room, the wood screeching across the hard floor. “Lean over,” he says, his voice hoarse with arousal.

He guides me to the bench, my body lining up with the padding. I rest my legs on either side. Let him use me how he wants, I want him to use me.

“Chloe, you look fucking amazing like this. I never thought I’d see you like this in a million years.”

My pussy clenches. It turns me on, knowing he’s pleased with me. I feel his hand stroke over the curve of my ass. I moan, the sound muffled by the panties he put in my mouth. He slaps my other ass cheek with his hand, and I don’t flinch—not one bit. He pulls away for a second, then it happens. He showers my ass and thighs, his slaps making my skin feel hot like the fire burning inside me. I’m guessing he has an amazing sight of pink marks all over my body. I feel the wetness at my opening, and if it wasn’t for the crotchless panties I’m wearing now, he’d see it dripping down my thighs.

He moves his hand away, and I miss it instantly. I miss his touch, but I still feel his eyes on me. My body is completely aware his full attention is only on me.

The armoire door opens again. I close my eyes, trying to prepare myself—hold back my arousal. If he’s not careful, I’m going to combust straight away. He hasn’t given me permission to cum, and I refuse to lose myself our first time ‘playing’ together.

I expect him to spank me with a prop. There are so many he could choose from. But I feel his hands as he pulls my

panties down, lifting my legs for me as he pulls them off completely. I'm wide open to him.

I moan as his tongue presses against my opening.

"Someone liked that."

Now I know why he gagged me with my panties. I feel his breath exhale before the wetness of his tongue slips through my opening. He swirls his tongue around my clit, his fingers digging into my ass cheeks as he holds on to my ass, eating my pussy like a man starved. My mouth fills with saliva. Without thinking, I roll my hips.

"Stop that, or I'll be forced to stop, and that would just be denying us both."

I stop again, freezing in place.

He moves his hands to my hips, and I feel him move his tongue north. He pulls my ass cheeks open slightly more, pushing his tongue through my back entrance. I've never had a guy's tongue—there. He pushes through my opening, and it feels so good. I moan again, the noise muffled by the panties currently soaked in my mouth from the saliva that has been building up this whole time.

"I can't wait to fuck this ass."

I feel my skin pebble, a shiver of need running down my spine. I'm about to combust. He pushes two fingers into my pussy. My body lifts off the bench. I'm that on edge.

"You definitely like that idea." He pulls his fingers out just as quickly as he pushes them in, and I feel empty without him. If my mouth wasn't already occupied, I have a feeling I would have failed, and I'd be begging him right now. Begging him to fuck me with his long, hard, thick shaft that gave me so much pleasure in his apartment.

"Turn over. I need to take the nipple clamps off."

He pulls me up, and my ass brushes past his erection that's pushed right up along his zipper. My eyes lower to his crotch.

Jax groans. "He's not coming out to play tonight."

My eyes fly up to him. It's the first time I've looked him in the eyes all night. It's the first time I've looked at his face, which feels strange. It feels strange to have been so intimate with a person for the first time, and only now am I looking into their eyes. He's sexy when he looks at me like that. Part amused, partly turned on.

"This is gonna sting a little—nothing you're not used to, though." He says, smiling at me. I know he's saying it to reassure me, but he doesn't need to. I've used nipple clamps before, though not ones as expensive or as beautiful as these. These have diamonds on the platinum bolts.

Jax twists it off, and he's not wrong. He swirls his tongue over my nipple, soothing it. He does the same to the other one. My eyes rolled to the back of my head both times. "Let's see if we can get this side of your body as pink as the other side."

He pulls the panties out of my mouth before putting them in his back pocket. "I want to hear every moan, and I want your eyes on me for this."

He lays me back against the bench. I'm not used to lying on it this way. I can still feel every swat of his hand as my body presses against the padding of the bench. My pussy is wide open for him to see. "Do you need me to move your handcuffs?"

"No, Sir," I say, my mouth suddenly dry. "I like feeling a little uncomfortable." I'm not lying. But it's also helping keep my ass slightly elevated off the bench.

JAX



Seeing Chloe submit is a sight to see. She's as much a natural at this as she is in a courtroom. Seeing her back pink under my touch has made my erection unbearable. I meant what I said, though. I'm not fucking her tonight. Not here, at least.

Her eyes haven't left mine since I spoke to her a moment ago. Her pupils are dilated, and I know she's close to reaching sub-space. I've never been close to reaching this with someone this quickly, not after spending so little time intimately with another person.

My eyes cast over her body, and her nipples harden. They know my attention is on them. She still has some redness from the clamps, but I'm not worried. That wouldn't have mattered to Chloe since she's a pain slut. I'd love to see her nipples pierced.

I groan audibly and lower my hand to my cock, adjusting him to try and make him more comfortable, even though I know THAT is a losing battle.

I move my eyes back up to her face and see she's biting her lips together.

"What were you thinking just then?" I ask, my eyebrows raised.

"I was going to ask you the same question. Are you sure you want to keep that thing in your pants?"

“I don’t, but you and I both know as soon I start fucking you, I’m going to want to do it all night. Tonight is not about sex. It’s about this.” I move my arms around the room. “I know we’re compatible in the bedroom. That was clear at my apartment. For us to have any relationship together, YOU need us to be compatible here too. I don’t want your mind or body to only associate this place with pain and use it as a crutch for therapeutic reasons. I want us to be able to enjoy coming here for fun sometimes. To let off steam, but in a fun and playful way, too.”

Her mouth opens, a clear O on her lips. I’ve done the impossible. I’ve made Chloe Lawson speechless. Never in all the years I’ve known her have I accomplished that particular feat.

“It’s important to me too, but you NEED this. If I can’t give you this, I’d be robbing you of a full life. You deserve to be completely happy.” She says, processing everything we’ve just laid out for each other.

I watch as her face takes on a sad look. If this were anyone else, they would have tears in their eyes, and they’d be falling. I know what she needs. I grab the flogger I took out of the armoire before and pepper her breasts, the whipping and crackling sound filling the room. Her skin pinkens under every touch. I move my hand faster over her body, the whooshing and slapping the only noises filling the room. I move lower, down her body, over her thighs. Her cunt is on display, and her arousal shows me she’s as turned on by all this as I am. I cover every part of her body except the one part I know she needs. That’s going to wait until I know the exact moment she needs to let go.

I increase my tempo, and for the first time in a while, I look into her eyes. She’s there, but she’s not there. She’s in the space she needs to be. My attention moves to her cunt. It’s time. I whip her with the flogger right on her cunt, her clit taking the brunt of the sting, and then she sings. Her body shakes as her arousal takes over her, and tears fall from her eyes as I pepper her body with the sting of the flogger.

Her body starts to come down from the high she just reached, and I drop the flogger on the floor. Moving to her quickly. I wrap my arms around her, and she moves her head to my chest. My chest, I hadn't realized, was glistening with sweat. I feel the tears as I hold her head tightly against me. I pull myself to sit on the floor, bringing Chloe with me. She straddles my hips, and I unfasten the cuffs as quickly as possible. Her arms are around my neck as soon as her wrists are free, and she starts kissing me. A kiss that speaks to how hungry she is for me.



I wake up and feel her head on my chest, her arm around me, and her cunt against my leg. I don't want to move. I like this feeling of her wrapped around me. As soon as we got back to my apartment last night, we were stripping out of our clothes, a race to see who could get naked first. Of course, Chloe won.

I run my thumb over her arm and feel her smile on my chest. She's awake too.

"I don't want to move," she whispers. Rubbing herself against my leg. Her body stills, and I realize she never intended to say that out loud.

"I don't either," I whisper in her hair.

She pulls away from me, moving away until I stop her, grabbing her waist.

"I need to go to my apartment and get ready for work. I should never have stayed the whole night."

I loosen my grip on her, looking at her back as she sits on the edge of the bed, gathering herself. I thought we'd moved past this place last night.

She stands up, obviously comfortable walking around naked. I watch as she picks up her clothes scattered across the room, leaving to pick up some more of her things.

The bathroom door closes quietly, and I hear the shower turn on. I'm tempted to barge in there, demanding she listen to me. Remind her that last night meant I was all in on this.

But she doesn't need that. I'm not handling her with kid gloves. I walk to my walk-in closet and start pulling out my clothes for the day.

I'm not ashamed to walk around my bedroom naked. I look over my shoulder and see Chloe walking out of the bathroom, her hair pinned up on top of her head and dressed in yesterday's clothes.

I turn back around to see Chloe looking through the sheets. She's obviously missing something. I turn around and lean against the drawers, my morning wood semi-erect.

Her eyes don't move from my cock, as her face pinks, and she wets her lips with her tongue.

"Looking for something?" My hand instinctively goes to my cock, and I pull on it.

"Erm..." she looks around. "No, never mind." Her eyes stay on my cock a moment longer before she pulls herself off the bed and straightens herself.

"I'll see you soon," she says to my cock.

"Count on it," I say, pulling on my cock.

She turns, leaving my bedroom, and I watch her ass as she walks into my living room, heading towards the front door of my apartment.

I walk into the bathroom, and it's still steamy from Chloe's shower. I groan at the thought of a soapy and naked Chloe touching herself in my shower.

I press the button, and the room steams. I stand under the heat as the water drips down my back. Lathering the soap in my hands, I grip my cock. I imagine Chloe with that look on her face when I made her lost for words, her mouth open. She's making me lose control. I slam my hand against the glass, my hands sliding slightly as I moan. My hand is a poor substitute for what I can only imagine is the paradise of

Chloe's lips around my cock. I need her again, and she only left my apartment ten minutes ago.

I close my eyes, and I see her wet underneath me, not a care in the world of the water running down her back. The only thing she's concentrating on is me. Kissing and sucking and handling my cock just the way I like it. She takes me like a greedy slut in her mouth, her hand handling my balls. She slips my cock out of her mouth, her eyes looking up at me as she kisses and sucks on my balls.

"FUCK." I shout, jerking my cock harder. "Ch-lo-e," I drag out as I cum all over my hand. The white sticky mess was all over my hand and the glass. I shouldn't have cum so hard. I'm surprised there was any cum left after the number of times we fucked last night.

I clean myself up and step out of the shower with a towel wrapped around my waist when I stop doing what I'm doing. Chloe is leaning against the wall with her phone on her chest, looking at me through the open door.

I thought she'd left.

CHLOE



I can't get the sound out of my head. It's had me distracted all afternoon. As soon as I headed to the door, I regretted the way I had left him. So I turned around, ready to kiss him senseless. What I wasn't ready for was walking past the bathroom and seeing him with his cock in hand. I take a sip of my bottled water as I remember the wetness pooling between my legs.

I'm aching for him again. I need a distraction.

I open the bottom drawer in my desk, pulling out my purse. My assistant usually makes a coffee run in the afternoon, but today, I need to stretch my legs and get out of the office for a bit.

"I'll get the coffee today. I need to stretch my legs." I say, not that my assistant needs me to give him a run-down of where I'm going.

"What does everyone order?" I ask as Adam's eyes bug out of his head.

"You think I don't know that you order for more than us?" I eye him, begging him to lie to me or not.

"It's just..."

"What, Adam?"

"I know you're not always this uptight..." he sighs, stopping himself.

"Finish that sentence," I say. Now I'm kinda pissed.

“People don’t exactly like you,” he has the gall to look at me sheepishly before adding, “but they don’t really know you.” The last bit he strings together like one whole word.

“I didn’t realize that in order to buy the team’s coffee, they had to like me.”

This hurts more than it should. I shouldn’t be surprised. I walk back into my office and grab my jacket. I’m taking an extended break. Hell, I might not even come back to the office.

I’m in the elevator doors before I realize I just left my office with no explanation to Adam.

The doors open, and people are talking in groups around the lobby. I scan my badge at the security desk and smile at the woman on duty. As I walk out of the building, I see a guy sitting on the floor on the opposite side of the street. He doesn’t look homeless, though, just like he’s waiting for someone. Something about him, though, makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up and alert me that I’m in danger and need to be alert. I feel like he’s staring me down but with the full beard, even if well maintained, and the baseball cap to his eyes. I can’t make out if I know him or not. I walk away from my building, but the guy is still sitting there staring at the building. But I’m on high alert now. My nerves were well and truly shot to hell.

I start walking and don’t realize where I’m headed until I end up half a block away from his law firm.

Shit. What am I thinking? We agreed to keep this quiet, whatever this is between us. But I need Jax. I need a Dom right now!

I pull up the HiddenSecrets app and find our private chat. Staring at it, like it’s going to open itself, all on its own magically.

CL: I need you.

I type and re-type the message what feels like a hundred times, with my back flat against the concrete wall. My chest is closing like I’m in the middle of a panic attack. I look up from

my phone, and the sidewalk is full of people just going about their day. It's been so long since a panic attack like this has taken over my body.

My phone buzzes, letting me know he's messaged me back. I've never been more thankful than I am right now that Jax works so close to my building.

JH: (wink emoji) You need me, huh?

Despite the tight feeling in my chest, Jax still manages to bring a smile to my face. With shaking hands, I slowly type into my phone.

CL: I'm around the corner from your office. I think I'm having a panic attack.

As soon as I hit send, I feel stupid and want to take it back. But my phone is buzzing and ringing in my hand before I have time to delete the message. Jaxson Hill, in large letters, is on the screen.

"Where are you?" he asks, concern in his voice before I can even get a single word out.

"Outside a flower shop around the corner from..."

"I know the one you mean. Don't move!" He's using his Dom voice again. He makes my body tingle with excitement, and I can't turn it off when he uses that voice, even if I was panicking a moment ago.

I put my phone back in my purse and close my eyes, my head still resting back against the wall.

I sense him near me without even opening my eyes. He pulls me into his arms, and I don't try to struggle. I breathe him in, my head resting perfectly on his chest. Taking in the scent of a man I'm quickly falling for. I feel his heartbeat beating a little quicker than usual, probably in his rush to get to me.

He holds onto my face, his fingers across my jawline, holding me in place so that I look into his eyes. I close my

eyes, not wanting him to see that I'm fighting a million different feelings.

"Open," he says in his demanding voice. That really is just Jax's usual voice. I guess he's in Dom mode more than I realized around me.

My eyes fly open as I bite my bottom lip. I don't like feeling vulnerable, but Jax has made me feel like it's okay to be vulnerable in the short time we've spent together. It's okay to let go. That it's okay if I don't always have my shit together.

He hails a cab, and we're in the back of it in no time. We still haven't spoken, but his body is in protective mode, as if he knows I need him to be there for me. My gaze falls to the window, and I look out of it, still not saying anything.

The journey is short—the joys of neither of us wanting to live too far away from where we work. I see he's brought me to my apartment, and without even realizing it, he's taken me to the one place I wanted him to take me. Well, apart from maybe Hidden Secrets. But subconsciously, I think I wanted him to bring me here.

I take his hand, and I feel his eyes on me. Looking out of the corner of my eye, I see a faint glimpse of a smile. I squeeze my fingers between his, and he squeezes them back.

"I'm sorry for pulling you out of work. I feel silly about it now." I say, opening the door.

"Never feel like you can't call on me. I'm glad your first thought was to come to me."

I look at him, confused. "Who else would I call?"

"Kieran."

I breathe out a loud breath. "Kieran?" I'm confused. I'd never dream of contacting Kieran in the middle of the day. Usually, I'd be bottling stuff up right about now and planning on going to Hidden Secrets. "I know you..."

"He's a friend. A good friend but..." He's right, though. I have been using Hidden Secrets as a crutch, which is unhealthy. I can't help but think that some of the changes at

HS are to help people like me. I can't be the only one. I need to start lowering some of these thick walls I've erected over the last decade.

"I'm glad you called. But I don't know what's got you like this." He says the last part, frantically moving his arms.

"Well, it's kind of embarrassing now," I say, sitting on my couch. "My assistant said something, and I thought he was better than that. Better than everyone else in that place. I guess I was wrong. I just started walking. And my walking ended up."

"At my building," he smiles.

"Yeah." I smile, looking at him as he sits down in the chair opposite my glass coffee table, the only thing between us.

"What else happened? You looked spooked and sounded; I don't want to say scared, but."

"A guy was looking at my firm's building. I swear he was looking at me, but I couldn't make him out."

Before I finish my train of thought, Jaxson has his phone out and walks out of the room. He comes back to me a minute later, and he looks pissed. What the fuck is happening?

He sits down again in the chair, and I wait. I wait for him to tell me what has him so pissed right now.

"It didn't look like Blake," I say.

"I think I know who it was," says Jax.

JAX



The fucking shit for brains. Why is he here? Why now? I hate seeing her look the way she does right now, and I know she will hate what comes out of my mouth next.

She's looking at me, waiting.

I don't want to upset her, but at the same time, she needs to know. I know this. I'm not stupid.

"Mac." I don't even get to finish before all the color leaves her face, and her mouth hangs open in shocked silence.

"How?"

"I've been looking into him. Greyson did a few years ago, but I've been having my guy look into him."

"I'm gonna be sick," she says, standing up as she runs to the bathroom.

I follow, knowing I don't want her to push me away. I know that's probably her strongest emotion right now. I stand by the door as she heaves in the toilet, ready to help if she's sick. I hate that this guy still has this effect on her after all these years. I hate myself more, though. The hell I must have put her through listening to Blake. Fucking Blake!

She stands up, ready to move, when she throws up for real this time.

I'm on my knees, pulling her hair back from her head. Both of her hands grip the bowl, and her breathing gets more

and more erratic. I keep her hair back and see the sweat glistening on her skin.

Once she finishes, I pull her back so she's sitting on my knees. She shivers in my arms.

“Why are you being so nice to me, Jax?”

Is she for real? In the short time I've been around her, I've seen this whole other side to her, one that I really fucking like. Dare I say I'm falling for her in a big way?

“Because I lo...” I say before she cuts me off.

“Don't say something you're gonna regret in another hour. I don't think I could handle that right now. Also, I know I can't say it back.” She puts her head on my chest, hiding her face from view.

I stroke my hand through her hair. “Shhh,” I whisper, kissing the top of her head.



Chloe is asleep on her bed, wrapped up in a blanket after taking a shower, when an intern from the office drops off my laptop and stuff. I keep looking over at her; she looks so restful in sleep. Way more so than she did an hour ago, holding onto me on the bathroom floor. I didn't like seeing her like that, weak and broken down. It's not a look I'm used to seeing on her. Chloe has always been a fighter. The damage I've done to her all these years—it's no wonder she hated me for as long as she has.

My personal email alert comes up on my phone, and I see it's off my investigator. I've been waiting for him to get back to me since I told him about Chloe's breakdown. I debated getting in touch with Greyson, but I needed to show him and Chloe that I could protect the people I love. There's that word again, LOVE. I love her, even if she doesn't think that's possible.

TO: Jaxson Hill

FROM: Cain Security Ltd

SUBJECT: Follow up on Mackenzie Hale

Jax,

You were right. I've checked his travel plans, and he is currently in New York. I'm waiting to get hold of the security cameras opposite Chloe's building. When you have more information, send it my way. The more I have to go on, the more I can help. Do you want me to reach out to Greyson Huntington?

Danny

CEO

Cain Security Ltd

TO: Danny Cain

FROM: Jaxson Hill

SUBJECT: Mackenzie Hale

Cain,

Thanks for getting back to me straight away. I'll speak to Greyson myself when we have more information. I'm taking care of this now. I want a guy on her at all times. I'll speak to her about it tonight.

Keep me updated.

Jax

Chloe starts to move on her bed, finally waking up from a lengthy nap. I put my laptop down on the floor. She deserves my full attention. She's the first woman I've been willing to drop everything for.

"Hey," she whispers, putting her arm over her eyes. "I didn't think I'd sleep."

“You needed it,” I say, sitting next to her on her bed.

“I don’t remember you having your laptop,” she raises her eyebrows at me.

“I got an intern to drop it off.”

“I thought...”

“They don’t know it was your apartment. I spoke to your doorman.”

“Nice to see he can be bought.” She looks pissed.

I’d have thought it was cute if I wasn’t so worried about her.

“Hardly. I’ve put him on a high alert. Nobody is getting past him to get to your apartment. I’m hiring you guys.”

“You not up to the job of satisfying me?” I see she’s trying to joke when I know she’s scared.

“Have you got any court appearances in the next few weeks?” I ask her as I sit with my back against the pillows next to the space in her bed.

“Nothing on the books.” She sits up and rests her head on my shoulder. “You really this worried?”

“Yeah, I am,” I say, kissing the top of her head.

“What haven’t you and Greyson told me?”

I groan, not wanting to have this conversation with her. “He’s in New York.”

I feel her body tense against me, and I hate that I’m the reason she feels like this. “We need to go to the club.”

She guts me with those words! Like a punch in the stomach.

She reaches for her phone on the nightstand.

“Stop!” I say using ‘that’ voice.

She stills and looks at me over her shoulder.

I stand up and pull my belt out of the loops. My eyes stay on Chloe. “You trust me? Without the need of the microphones

and cameras at Hidden Secrets?”

She gets on her knees, nodding her head.

“I need verbal agreement.”

“Yes, Sir.” She says before licking her now dry lips.

“I’m going to use the belt as a flogger,” I tell her.

I pull her towards me, kissing her hard on the lips as I pull up the tank top she put on after her shower.

“Every part of you turns me on, Chlo. Please tell me when you need something until I can work it out myself, and I will. When I do, you’ll be mine. In every damn way!”

I kiss down the side of her neck, stopping when I get to the dip where her neck and shoulder meet. “If you want me to hurt you, you can bet your ass I’m going to make you feel desired, too. Pleasure and pain.”

A moan slips through her lips, and I feel her chest vibrate as I make biting kisses along her breasts. She starts to wobble and grips my shoulders, her nails digging into my skin, my shirt the only barrier between us.

“Stand,” I say.

She pulls herself up, her hands in my hair as she stands on the bed. I take my time unhooking the clasp before pulling her pajama pants down. While I love it when Chloe is naked with my marks on her skin, I love seeing her as the well-put-together expensive lawyer even more. It gives me an instant hard-on. But I’m really enjoying the relaxed, casual look she’s sporting right now. I pull her pants down, and she lifts her feet as I move them out of the way. I kiss her from her knee up, stopping at her still-covered pussy. I rub my nose over her clit, her grip tightening on my hair. I yank her panties down, and she loses her balance. I push her back on the bed. “Safe word?”

“Stone.”

“Turn over.” I hear the gravel in my voice.

She turns over instantly, like the good submissive she is. I push a pillow under her, making her ass elevate from the bed.

“I’m going to use the belt, and I’m not going to go easy on you. I know you need this. But Chloe, I never want you going to anyone else again. Not for this, you get me? I’m all in.”

Her eyes widen as she looks at me over her shoulder.

The fact she hadn’t figured this out already was disappointing.

“Jax. Thank you!”

She guts me with those three little words. Needing the time to get myself together, I unfasten my cuffs, rolling my shirt sleeves up. I take my time. Making her wait. I watch her relax and know that I’m doing this as much for her as I am for myself. Without warning, I bring the belt back and swing it forward. The whooshing sound is the only noise we hear before it hits her ass with a loud smack. It leaves a lovely red mark instantly. I run my hand over the mark and feel the heat coming off her. But she doesn’t flinch, not even a little. I spent the next five minutes decorating her body with red marks, her back, ass, and thighs covered in various shades of red. Then I hear it and know she’s not only had enough, but I’ve given her just what she needs.

Her body shakes and breaks me a little after hearing the tears. But I know this is what she wants. What she needs to feel, and I’m seeing it with my own eyes. Of course, Kieran and Jacob had told me, but seeing it firsthand was something else completely.

CHLOE



I'm laying on my stomach, my knees tucked under me and my body like I'm curled up in a ball. Tears fall down my cheeks and my forehead on the pillow. I hear the belt fall to the floor. My eyes close as I feel Jaxson's hand on my body as he puts his arms around me. His arms are like a protective shield around my body. I curl up, and for the first time in my life, I let a man hold me when I feel like this. Usually, Kieran leaves me in the room, even though I know he hates it. I curl on my side and lean against him. He doesn't say a word; he holds me, and I like it. I close my eyes and feel myself nodding off. This is the only aftercare I need, Jax's arms holding me tight.



I look at the clock on the bedside table. I'm under the covers now, and the room is dark. I hear the TV in the other room and realize that Jax hasn't left. I grab a pair of shorts and a tank top lying on the floor and walk into the living room. Jaxson looks over at me as I walk toward him. For the slightest of seconds, he has concern on his face before he corrects himself.

"Hey," he smiles. He puts his laptop down on the couch next to him.

I walk over to him and straddle his lap. His hands instantly fall to my ass. Gently, he strokes my ass. “You feeling okay?”

“Great, thank you,” I say, holding onto his face as I kiss him on the lips.

“Turn around. I want to check you’re okay.”

I stand up and lower my shorts.

He kisses my ass. The marks are still there, but nothing lasting. I looked in the mirror before I came to find him. He kisses every mark. He pulls up my shorts, patting me on my ass.

“I’ve ordered food. I’m guessing by the look of your fridge and cupboards that your kitchen doesn’t get used much?”

“Not really,” I smile, biting my bottom lip. “But I’d bet yours is the same.”

“Touché,”

I watch as he picks his laptop up and closes it all in one move. Then it hits me. I’d have expected him to be long gone if this was any other guy. But I don’t want Jax to leave. I might still be feeling the effects of my orgasm high or even the endorphins of Jaxson’s belt peppering over my skin. But something feels like it’s shifted. It’s not something I’m used to feeling.

“Don’t go yet,” I say. My voice sounds so low I’m not even sure Jax heard me until I look over to him and see him looking at me, a smirk spreading over his face. It feels genuine and reminds me of the guy I used to know. The guy I got to know for the smallest of times. I’m instantly taken back to our first day in class together.

TEN YEARS AGO

I hate being late. This is how I find myself being the first person to get to my first class at Harvard. Fucking Harvard. I did it. Growing up, this only seemed like it could have been a dream. People in my family don't attend Ivy League colleges. Hell, they don't attend college at all. I've worked my ass off the last three years, keeping my grades perfect throughout my junior and senior years of high school. I never knew how much my life would change when people talked about scholarships one day. Then I remembered something my Mom had said to me just before she died. 'If you ever need anything, Mr. Huntington will help you.' That's the reason I'm here right now. Greyson Huntington is like my fairy-fucking-godmother, and I'm going to spend the next couple of years with my head down and my books open. I don't want to let Greyson down. He's taken a chance on me.

The room is empty, and the lecture room is just as I imagined. All rich-looking wooden desks were laid out in rows forming the perfect semi-circle. I debate sitting at the front, but I'm not much of an ass-kissing people-pleaser. So I pick my seat, middle row just off center.

I'm doodling about on my pad when a hot guy walks in, rocking the jeans and hoodie combo with a baseball cap look. I don't make eye contact, but follow his movements out of the corner of my eye. I laugh to myself as he seems to do the same as I did, eyeing up the seating in the room. I guess I'm not the only one eager for the first day. He takes his cap off, and I was right with my first impression of him. He is hot. I don't realize that I'm watching him until he clears his throat, then I see it. A smirk that I know has got this guy laid probably every week since he's been screwing in high school.

I feel my body getting hotter, my cheeks turning red like hot red. Boy, am I in trouble if this guy is going to be in my class for the next three years?

PRESENT DAY

“I’d love to know what you were just thinking about,” Jax says, his hands in his front pockets.

“The first time I saw you,” I say, fidgeting with my hands. “You had the same stupid look on your face you have now.”

“Really? Memorable day, huh?”

“Well, it was our first day in class together.”

“That wasn’t the first time we saw each other.”

“Yeah, it was. I would have...” I stop myself before I say something embarrassing. Of course, nothing gets past Jax.

“Would have what?” he says, and I didn’t think it was possible for the smile on his face to get cockier or bigger, but it does.

I laugh nervously. He has that effect on me so much. “Okay, so when was the first time you saw me?”

He sits back down on my couch, spreading his legs and getting comfy. “It was about twenty minutes before our first class. You were outside the building. You kept looking over at the building as if itching to get inside. Of course, now I know you have this constant need to be early every place you go.”

“So, what was your first impression of me? Because we all know things changed a few weeks later.”

I don’t miss the wince, and I instantly feel bad. I need to stop. I’ve forgiven him. I wouldn’t have let go in front of him like I just did otherwise. “Sorry.”

“Chlo, you never have to apologize. Do you hear me?”

Jax’s phone vibrates on the couch next to him. “Food’s arrived. I’ll go down and get it.”

While Jax goes down, I make myself useful and get us a drink from the kitchen. Grabbing a bottle of wine out of the cooler, that thing’s always full.

“That smells great,” I say as I walk back into the living room. Another guy is standing with Jax.

“Hi?” I say.

“Ms. Lawson,” he says, holding out his hand. He’s a big fucking guy, and I know instantly that this is the guy Jax has hired to, well, whatever he’s hired him for.

“This is Danny Cain. He’s going to be like a second skin to you.”

“Hi, Danny,” I say.

“He’s the guy in charge.”

I raise my eyebrows at him, a small laugh escaping me.

Jax leans down and whispers in my ear. “You’re all mine, but I don’t share.”

“Good to know,” I say, giving him a wink.

Danny has the grace to turn away from us and give us a minute.

“He’s got a team staying in the building. He or one of his guys will take you to work every day and anywhere else you want to go.”

Okay, now I’m fucking scared. “Isn’t this a little overkill?”

Danny and Jax stare at each other. “Ms. Lawson, when Jax contacted me, I was already aware of your case. Mr. Huntington has had us keeping an eye on things on and off for the last couple of years.”

I lower myself to sit down on my couch. “Why?” I whisper.

“Mr. Huntington was worried. Jax didn’t want to deal with a new work up. We were familiar with all the moving parts in this case. We know who we’re looking for.”

“Thanks, and Danny, it’s Chloe. If we’re spending a lot of time together, we may as well be on a first-name basis.”

“As you wish, Chloe.”

“I have one of the guys stationed on the floor. I’ll pick you up in the morning to take you to work. Tomorrow, the rest of the team will be coming into town, and I’ll introduce you to everyone then.”

“Okay,” I whisper.

I watch as Jax walks Danny out of the apartment. We eat our food in silence, and it shows just how hungry I am that I’m still able to eat after all this.

Chloe: Greyson, we need to talk.

Chloe: Jax just introduced me to Danny.

Chloe: Call me when you get this.

“He’s probably in a meeting or something,” Jax says, knowing exactly who I was trying to get hold of. “What’s the story with you two, anyway? The official story. There has to be more to it than what I was able to pick up on over the years.”

“He’s not my dad.” As soon as I say it, I know the thought has crossed his mind. “It’s usually that, or they think I’ve boned him. It’s neither, by the way.” A shiver goes down her body, and I know she’s not lying. The thought of boning Greyson freaks her out.

“Never thought you’d slept with him.”

I laugh, knowing from his choice of words that he did think he could have been my Dad. “I met him when I was fifteen. I’d heard about a scholarship that his company offers every year. I decided to go one step further. I made an appointment to meet him. You’d have to ask Greyson why he took a chance on me, but he told me it was because he liked how I took the bull by the horns and went after what I wanted. Said it reminded him of himself.”

I look up when I hear Jax laugh.

“What?”

“We’re more alike than I thought. No wonder we spent our whole time rubbing each other the wrong way.”

I laugh because I know Jax’s story. I’d never made the connection before, but I guess we are alike.

“Can you stay the night?” I ask as I rest my head on his shoulder.

“Yeah, I’ll leave before you in the morning.”

“Okay,” is all I say as Jax strokes my head and we sit in the most comfortable silence I’ve ever experienced.

JAX



I needed that confirmation more than I knew. I'd suspected Greyson was Chloe's dad in college, but that thought only intensified in the last few weeks. They have a bond like no other, and I believe her, I really do. Greyson, though, he's so protective of her. It wouldn't surprise me if he were hiding the truth from her.

I walk out of the shower and see Chloe getting ready for work. I watch her from where I'm standing, the voyeur in me loving just watching her. She hasn't noticed me yet, and it's nice seeing her lost in her thoughts. She's stunning. Sensing I'm watching her, she smiles at me in the mirror.

"Jax?"

"Yeah?"

"How do you feel about staying here for a couple more nights? This whole thing has me spooked, but somehow I managed to sleep well because I knew you were here."

This is music to my ears. I wish she wanted me around for something other than because she's scared. But hearing she feels safe around me...

"I'll swing by my apartment after work then," I smile, noticing her checking out my ass as I put on my boxers. "Don't look at me like that, gorgeous, or we're both going to be late for work."

She sits at her vanity, and my dick hardens as she swipes the red lipstick over her bottom lip. I never thought watching a

woman do something so normal would look so incredibly hot.

“Fuck!” I whisper, hard-on activated. I mean, everything about her turns me on, it seems.

She looks at me in the mirror, giving me a wink as she swipes it over the top lip. She obviously knows the effect she is having on me.

“I’ll suck you off tonight,” she says, standing up and walking towards me. “Leaving my mark all over your cock.” She whispers before kissing me on the neck, just under my right ear.

She looks down at my—now—fully hard cock and bites her lip. With an extra wiggle of her ass, she walks out of the bedroom.

Getting dressed without her in the room is a damn sight easier. This I could get used to, though. I didn’t know how much I’d enjoy the domesticity of just being with someone, sharing the same space with a significant other.

I walk into her kitchen, and she has her back to me, the skin-tight dress she’s wearing hugging her curves that I enjoyed sinking my fingers in last night. She looks lost in thought as she looks at her phone. I know she was waiting for Greyson’s call last night. Last I knew, he hadn’t been in touch. He and I are going to have words if he doesn’t get in touch with her soon.

She’s wearing a dress today, and I wish I’d gotten out of the shower earlier and seen what she was rocking under that dress. I’m sure it would distract me all day.

I clear my throat.

She turns around and offers me a weak smile, but I don’t miss her eyes giving me a cursory once over, checking me out in the blue three-piece suit I had in my office that I got someone to bring around last night with my work things.

“That color suits you.” She says, biting her bottom lip.

“Good to know,” I say back as I approach. “I’ll make sure to fill my wardrobe with that color.”

“I have a spare travel mug unless you... I like to take my coffee with me. I have a spare. Of course, you do whatever you want.” She rambles on.

It’s cute. I love that she still does this, even after all these years, getting everyone who will listen to use recycled and not disposable cups.

She can talk most people into doing what she wants them to do or needs them to do. She’s a powerful woman now, and I know many grown men who rest easier when they know Chloe isn’t on the opposing counsel.

“I’ll take the spare,” I smile. “So remember, Danny is taking you to work and staying with you all day. Do not try to lose him.”

“I’m not stupid. This isn’t my first protective detail.” She says. I want to know more, but we don’t have time now, but we will talk later.

A knock on the door stops us, and I watch as Chloe walks to her door.

“Who is it?” she shouts at the door.

“Danny,” he says.

I watch as Chloe opens the door and lets Danny in.

“Good, you passed my first test,” said Danny. “Something tells me this isn’t the first time this has happened.”

“No, my old boss’ team had a case that went sideways last year. We all had a protective detail for a week.”

“That wasn’t relayed to me.” Danny looks pissed.

“The firm hired someone. I never told Greyson. He was working in London at the time.”

“He’s going to be pissed you didn’t tell him.”

“Yeah, well, he can wait in line. I’m pissed with him right now, too.”

I pour coffee into my travel cup and kiss Chloe on the cheek. “I’ll see you later. I need to stop by my apartment on

the way home, but I should be here by seven-thirty at the latest.”

“Okay, see you later.” She kisses me back.

“Danny, look after my girl, okay?”

I don’t need to look at Chloe to see her eye roll. I can hear it from here.



Greyson’s name flashes on my caller ID as my phone buzzes about on my desk.

“Greyson,” I say, answering the call. My tone strained. I’m usually friendly with Greyson. Over the years, we’ve gotten to know each other. But I could still see that look on Chloe’s face this morning when she checked her phone to see if he’d been in contact with her.

“What the fuck is going on?” He shouts down the phone.

“I don’t know what...”

“Don’t mess me around, Jax. What’s this I hear about Danny returning my cheque?”

“Oh yeah. I’ll be taking over that account. Chloe is my responsibility now.”

“Why are you fucking with her? She’s going to see right through you.”

“Greyson, he was outside her firm’s building.”

The line goes quiet. I check my phone to see that he’s still on the line. I seem to have shut him up for the first time—ever.

“When?”

“Yesterday. It shook her up.”

“She told you?” He asked, and I swear he sounded like a distraught parent.

“Yeah, we’ve gotten close the last couple of weeks.”

“Franchesca didn’t say anything.”

“Yeah, I don’t know what happened, but I think they’ve fallen out.”

Franchesca was a poison to the group in college. I’m lucky I’ve had very limited contact with her. Of course, it helped me to live a million miles away. Ryan, I, and the guys usually hang out without the wives and girlfriends.

“Why did you never tell me the truth?” I say, and I realize that Greyson could have told me years ago. He could have pulled me up on my jack-ass behavior. I’ve been friends with his son-in-law since college.

The six of us all met in that class. *His* class!

“It wasn’t my story to tell. I also thought hell would freeze over before you two would be in the same room as each other.”

He has a point. After college, I moved to Miami for a couple of years until Bryan got me a job in L.A. I always wanted the New York office, though. Bryan said I needed to prove I deserved this job.

I proved that last year with the cases I handled. He may not have wanted me to leave the

L.A. office, but he couldn’t argue that I no longer deserved to be here in New York.

“I landed an hour ago. I’m on my way to see Chloe.”

“She’s pissed and not with me for a change, so you might want to wear body armor.”

He laughs weakly down the phone.

“We’ll talk later,” I say as another call comes through my phone. A call I need to take.

“Speak to you later.” He says, hanging up the phone.

“Jax,” says Bryan as I hit the green answer button.

“I’m coming into the city tomorrow. I need you to come to my meeting with Adrien since you worked on a lot of the L.A. stuff.”

“Okay, I’ll get in touch with my assistant, and she’ll put it on my calendar.”

“Okay, see you tomorrow.”

When I worked in L.A., I did a lot of work for Bryan. Hell, more than he did on his best friend’s account. I can’t complain too much, though. It’s how I met Mike, and even though Bryan was pissed, I poached Mike from him. He didn’t have the time, especially being on a different coast. Of course, that’s worked in my favor now that Mike has bought Hidden Secrets.

CHLOE



Living with Jax, the last week has been different from what I'd expected. For a start, and in no way surprising, he works as crazy as I do. He has a better work-life balance than I do, though. My dress has just been delivered for the charity event in a few days. It's the first time Franchesca and I will be in the same room. She's been radio silent since our argument weeks ago. The hardest thing about all this is going to be not touching Jax.

I still feel like we need to keep our distance. I'm not ready for the firm to know we're a couple yet. I have no fucking idea how that is going to go down, but we've not had a case against each other since he first moved. Our offices have, but we haven't. Greyson's company has been keeping me busy with one problem after another. I make a note to arrange a meeting between the two producers on one of Greyson's shows to come in for mediation.

I leave Danny at my front door and walk into my apartment, and I know Jax is home already. 'Jax is home' why does that have such a good ring to it? I've never wanted to share my personal space with anyone before, but Jax... I can smell food cooking before I walk into the kitchen. I stop in my tracks to enjoy the view.

Jaxson Hill is standing in my kitchen with gray sweatpants and nothing else. What more could a girl want? I lean against the archway and perve on the guy. When he said he wouldn't be here till around seven, I didn't think he would beat me home.

I'm mentally undressing what little clothes he has on. He's made himself at home and would make a good house-husband. Twice this week, getting home before me and cooking for us. My kitchen has been used more while Jax has been staying with me than ever before. I should feel bad, but cooking is not something I'm good at. Something Jax took great enjoyment in realizing, something he was one hundred percent better at than I am.

Did I look at taking a cooking class when all this is over? Maybe. Jax brings out all my competitiveness in me.

"Are you going to stand there all night?" he asks, as he continues to dice some vegetables on the chopping board—I didn't even know I owned a chopping board.

"Just admiring the view," I say without moving a muscle.

He throws the cut-up vegetables into a pan, making a sizzling noise that makes me jump at first.

Jax laughs at me as he approaches, stopping just in front of me. "You were working late tonight."

"Yeah, I was on a conference call," I say. Neither of us can talk about work, so we play this game of talking about our day in code.

He kisses me on my forehead before reaching behind me and unzipping the top of my dress. "Dinner won't be ready for a while. Have a shower and get into something more comfortable."

"I'm going to miss having my own personal chef when you leave," I say, putting my arms around his neck and kissing him hard.

He laughs.

"I'm sure you could hire a personal chef if you wanted," he says, turning back to stir the vegetables around the pan.

I walk back to the bedroom and see Jax's stuff everywhere. I really should have made some room for him in my space. Abandoning the shower, I get changed into yoga pants and my worn Harvard hoodie. I tie my hair on top of my head and

work on moving some of my stuff around. It takes me a surprisingly short amount of time to move stuff, and I have three empty drawers. I start putting Jax's stuff in them.

I'm in the middle of dancing to my playlist when I look up and see it's Jax watching me.

"I was hoping to find you naked. What's all this?" He asks, looking around the room and finding his stuff no longer piled up everywhere.

"I've made some space for you," I say, slightly embarrassed. "I should have done this the first night you stayed. I'm a bad host."

"Not at all." He says, fighting back a smile, which tells me he agrees. "You can have these three drawers. The only place I let you have your stuff was in the bathroom."

He comes over to me and wraps his arms around me. I am still in his arms and close my eyes as I breathe him in. He smells really good.

"Food's ready," he whispers, kissing me on my forehead.

"Great, I'm starving. I've hardly eaten all day." As soon as the words are out of my mouth, I know I'm going to regret it.

He holds my face in his hands, scowling at me a little. "You need to look after yourself, Chlo."

"I know. Work just got crazy busy, then the guys all went..."

"Chlo, you need to stop hiding away from everyone."

"But I don't like anyone."

He raises his eyebrows at me, and I smile.

"You know what I mean."

"Is it really that bad?" he asks, and now he looks concerned.

I feel stupid now, putting that worried look on his face. I should never have told him how much I hate the firm I'm at.

"It's not as bad as college," I say as I walk out of the room.

Do I feel bad walking away? A little, but he asked the question. He should never have asked if he didn't want to hear the answer.



Jax is sitting in bed next to me, reading through something on his iPad. He's been distant since earlier. I know I'm a bitch, and I keep throwing it back in his face. I don't know why I do it. I guess I'm not as over it as I thought. I really have forgiven him.

"I'm not mad at you," I say, keeping my eyes on the book in front of me. I don't know why I'm bothering. I've read the same page five times.

I feel him stiffen next to me.

"I really have forgiven you. Franchesca and I have never gone this long without talking. She's who I can't forgive."

He puts the iPad down, and I feel him watching me, but I keep my eyes on my book.

"We've not spoken since we saw you in the restaurant a few weeks ago."

He moves the stuff off his lap and puts them on the side of the bed. "Come here," he motions to his lap.

I turn to look at him for the first time. He gives me a weak smile. I put my bookmark in my book and then move to face him. I watch as his chest rises and falls as he's relaxed. He rubs his hands up and down my thighs, trying to relax me now, and it's working.

"You forgave me. Why can't you forgive her?"

"Because she's hurt me more than you ever did." I shock myself with the words coming out of my mouth. My chest starts to feel tighter, and my fingers tremble a little.

He pulls my tank top over my head. “Keep talking, get it all off your chest, and I’ll give you what you need to feel.”

My eyes fill with tears. He gets me. He really fucking gets me.

“Open the side drawer,” I whisper to him, looking down at my knees.

He moves me with him slightly as he stretches.

“There are some nipple clamps that have a real bite to them. I usually...”

I can’t finish the sentence; I know I don’t need to. He puts them on the bed next to him. “Look at me,” he says, his voice hoarse.

“I trust you,” I say as I look him in the eyes, my tears fighting to fall, but I know they won’t. Not until I started to feel the pain.

“Good,” he says, taking one breast in his mouth.

He bites down on my nipple, and I wince a little until I feel his tongue flicking me with his tongue.

“Keep talking, or I’ll stop,” he says, doing the same to my other nipple.

“It hurt more because we’ve become closer than sisters in the last fifteen years, ever since I met her at her dad’s office. She’s been lying to me all this time. How am I...” I say before stopping for a moment as he tightens one of the nipple clamps to me. “...to ever trust her ever again after this.”

He twists the nipple clamp, and I nearly come on the spot. I move on his lap.

“Like that, huh?” he smiles. “Let go, Chloe. Then I can make you feel really fucking good.”

He’s right. I know he is. “She hurt me more than you ever did because she’s lied and talked behind my back—I don’t know if I can ever trust her again.”

I feel his hand go under the waistband of my shorts.

“I don’t know how we come back from this.”

A small tear falls from my right eye as my eyes move to look at Jax. He must have something in his hand as he clips something to my clit and twists. My ass lifts off the bed, but in the best possible way.

“She was the person I trusted, the only person I trusted. She knows all my secrets, and now I’m questioning every conversation I’ve ever had with her.”

He doesn’t stop twisting one of my nipples and clit until the tears fall from my eyes.

JAX



I pull her sleep shorts down and see the clip I found in the drawer attached to her clit. We both look at it before she rests her head back on the bed and closes her eyes. The tears streamed down her face.

She's letting go more with me now. I wish she weren't hurting so much that she still needs the pain. She may always need the pain. I meant what I said, though. If this is going to work with us, you can bet your ass I'm going to make her feel pleasure as well.

I take the clamp off her nipples, slowly sucking and swirling my tongue around them to soothe some pain, and put them on the bed beside me. I climb over her, my face level with her own, licking and kissing away her tears. Tears I wish she didn't have to shed.

"Open for me, beautiful," I say, pulling her arms above her head and into my hand.

She widens her legs for me—not what I wanted her to open.

"I meant your gorgeous green eyes."

She opens them immediately, a smile slowly spreading across her face. I kiss her lips, my tongue slowly pushing through. I could worship every part of her body all night, but her lips, her kisses—they're something else.

Neediness comes over her, and our kisses become harder, both of us fighting as if trying to dominate each other. I roll

my hips, hitting her in just the right spot as a moan escapes her.

“More,” she mumbles as I push into her more, and our kisses become more hurried. “I need more, Jax.”

I pull away from her, both of us breathing heavily. I pull my sweats off, kicking them off so that a large chunk of my body can still be in contact with her.

I pull her up, resting my back against the headboard, and she smiles.

“Really?” she asks.

I smile as I nod at her, taking my cock in my hand.

“I think you need to take what you want. I was thinking about it the other day.”

She climbs on top of me and pushes my hand away. A laugh escapes me as I grip her hips tightly. I’m not used to giving up control, but I think Chloe needs to take some control when she feels like this sexually.

“I’m not sure...”

“Be the take charge woman I love so much in the courtroom or boardroom.”

She lines my cock to her opening, the tip of me feeling the wetness between her legs.

“Take what you want.”

“But I like it when you dominate me.”

“I know.” I bite her bottom lip.

I see the moment realization comes over her, and it’s a sight to see. She pushes herself down on my cock, her eyes on me the whole time.

“Jax, grip me tighter,” she says, biting her bottom lip.

I do as she says. She’s going to feel my handprints on her all night.

She rolls her hips, and it’s my turn to hiss now. She feels so good and looks so good looking at me the way she is.

“Jax, I need you to use me.”

I move her body in slow moves, but every time I pull her down on my cock, I see the look of need on her face. Her mouth is open wide, and she looks almost in pain as I thrust her hard on my cock.

“God, you’re so deep like this,” she mewls. “I don’t think anyone has ever...”

She grips my shoulders tighter with each thrust, each one coming faster and harder than the last.

She moans as I’ve never heard her before.

“Jax, I’m going to...” She cums on my cock, her whole body flushing in a pale pink color.

She opens her eyes and grabs onto my face, kissing me hard.

“You’re still...” She looks down at where my cock is nestled in her warm, wet cunt. A gasp escapes from her lips.

“This wasn’t about me. This was what you needed. You needed to take something for you and only you.”

“But I don’t want that.” She rocks her hips. My cock really fucking likes the way her cunt feels right now, all wet with her arousal. “Jaxson, if I asked you to do something right now, would you do it?”

“Anything for you, beautiful.”

“I’ve never watched a guy masturbate in front of me willingly.” She swallows, a weak smile coming over her lips.

She floors me with that comment. I should lose my hard-on with that comment, but her hips haven’t stopped once rolling, and my cock knows Chloe is the girl we’ve wanted for too fucking long.

“We’re going to have a conversation about this later,” I say, my tone serious. I can’t let her keep distracting me with sex like this.

She nods at me as she bites down on her bottom lip and dismounts off my dick.

I stand up, my lubricated cock in hand, and I slowly but tightly grip my cock in my hand.

“I’ll always give you what you want, Chlo.”

She leans back on the bed, holding herself up on her elbows. Her eyes don’t move from the movement of my hand. The movement transfixes her.

“Open those legs for me.”

This is what I love about Chloe; she’s not shy about her sexuality. She just needs to feel safe to let go.

“I want to go to the club tomorrow night,” she says, licking her lips, her eyes still on my cock.

She has not wanted to go to Hidden Secrets since finding out dickhead was in town. It was making me nervous, knowing he was in town. Danny has a guy following his every move, and on the two occasions he’s been near Chloe’s office building, Danny’s guy has spoken to him. Chloe doesn’t know. Her decision. She didn’t want to be looking over her shoulder all the time, and she said she trusted Danny and me to let her know when something was serious enough to tell her.

“I’ll book us a room.”

She fidgets on the bed, a playful look on her face.

“Unless...” I say, trying to read her body language.

“See if there’s any public play available,” she bites on her lip.

“I’ll speak to Jacob. Now scoot to the end of the bed and show me that gorgeous cunt of yours.”

As I stroke my cock harder and faster, the slapping noise is the only noise in the room. I move my other hand onto her knee to steady myself and open her legs a little wider.

“So fucking hot,” she whispers. It’s barely audible. I’m not sure she’s aware she was talking out loud.

I groan. “You’re good for a guy’s ego.”

“Cum on my pussy, Jax.” She’s seductive, and it’s one of the hottest things she said to me.

I close my eyes for a moment, trying to make this last longer for her. Let her enjoy the show.

“Make my cunt wet,” she says.

My eyes fly open as I feel my balls tighten. I start to cum, my hand moving faster with each stroke. Ropes of cum leaked from my cock and spurted from the tip, not wanting to disappoint her. I direct it at her cunt, stray drops falling on her stomach and breasts. I’ve not cum this hard from my own hand since I was a horny teenager with morning wood.

She falls back onto the bed, her right hand moving down her body to her cunt. She takes my cum and rubs it, using it as a lubricant on her clit as she plays with herself. I’m going to get hard again real quick if she keeps this up.

I tighten my grip on both of her knees as I watch. She plays with her body like a musical instrument. Her eyes are closed, but I want them on me. I need her looking at me as she makes herself climax.

“Eyes on me,” I stroke her knees, and it takes everything in me not to take over.

She opens them almost sleepily, a moan escaping from her mouth.

“Jax.”

“I’m right here, beautiful.”

CHLOE



Jaxson is going to get bored with me real quick. It can't be fun for a guy like him to deal with all the baggage and trauma I'm bringing to this 'relationship.' But the look in his eyes as he pleased himself was something else. He didn't seem freaked out by what I'd just told him, but I'm sure I've given him more questions than answers. But I'm not ready. I'm not ready to tell him that all my sexual activities have taken place in the club—consensual ones, anyway.

Our professor tormented me for the whole first year. It wasn't until Greyson pulled me to the side and demanded to know what the matter was. He and his wife had noticed me being withdrawn, and that I was no longer the vibrant person I was when I started at Harvard.

I'd gotten to know the Huntingtons a lot since I first walked into his office. My mom was Greyson's dad's secretary back when I was young, but my mom died when I was thirteen, and I was left to live with my Aunt, but she worked two jobs to keep us with heating and clean clothes on our backs. She never had children of her own, and her drunk ex-husband died a year before my mom. Looking back now, I see my aunt was depressed, but she loved me like a daughter. Just like my mom would have wanted. But I knew I needed to go to college if I wanted to get out of Jersey and make a better life for myself.

"If you're not going to aim high, sweetheart, what's the point?" My Mom used to say that all the time. My Mom loved working for the Huntington's right up to the day she died. I've

never met the older Huntington, but from what I've gathered from Greyson and online, he died around the same time as my mom.

"Where did you go? What's going on in that head of yours?" Jax asks as I take him in, in all his naked glory.

"You don't want to know," I smile.

He holds his hand out to me. I grab onto him, and he pulls me into his arms, my body against his. I snake my arms around him as he kisses the crown of my head. I love the feeling being in his arms gives me. I feel so protected.

I feel his cock start to harden as he smells my hair.

"Really?" I laugh into his chest.

"What can I say? He really fucking likes you." He says as he hardens some more, pushing between my stomach and his body. "Come on. I'll take care of him in the shower."

"No, you won't," I smile, pulling away from him and gripping his hand as I pull him toward my bathroom. "But I will."

I don't need to look at Jax to know he's smiling like an idiot. This is what I love about him. He makes me laugh, and he's fun. In another life, he could have been my best friend in college. Not my worst enemy. I let go of his hand long enough to be a couple of steps ahead and shake my ass at him.

"Don't tempt me," he says, using his Dom voice and having the desired effect on me.

"I'm surprised you've not breached it yet," I say over my shoulder as I turn the water on and see him grabbing some towels from the cupboard near the door.

"I wasn't sure it was on the menu."

"I thought you'd read my profile," I say, putting my arms around his neck.

"Kieran..."

My jaw comes slack.

“Kieran may have had sex with me occasionally over the years.”

His jaw looks tight. He doesn't like thinking of me having sex with other guys. Or is this because it's Kieran? I'm under no illusion he's probably slept with half of L.A. over the last couple of years, so I don't understand why the thoughts of Kieran having me get him so angry.

“But it was always at the club and pretty boring, especially by our standards. He might know my body and exactly what I need to make me feel, but he doesn't know my body like you do. He doesn't know what I've been thinking about for weeks. That I've been thinking I want, no need, you to take me that way. Kieran has never taken me there with his cock.” I add the last part like some throwaway line, but it's not. It means everything to me.

“Have you ever?”

“I presume you took a detailed look at my toy drawer.”

He smiles at me, and I want to melt. His smile is the definition of panty-melting.

“I had a peek. You left it slightly open one day.”

I can't help but laugh. I know the day he's talking about. I did it on purpose, hoping he'd snoop.

“I didn't want to get caught with my hand in the proverbial cookie jar.”

“I wanted you to look.”

Jax rubs his jaw, his hand scratching against the stubble that's starting to grow.

“What will I find in there?” he asks, approaching me, his eyes on me like I'm prey, and he can't wait to pounce on me—to feed off me.

“I don't want to spoil the surprise,” I laugh as I open the door to the shower and instantly get hit with a cloud of steam as I enter.

He pushes me into the shower as my back hits the wall, sweating with water from the droplets from the shower and the steam from the enclosed space.

I smile up at him as he cages me in. His hands were flat against the tile right next to my head. His lips meet mine as he possesses my mouth. This kiss is controlling, the type of kiss that dominates, just like the man. I lower my eyes slightly. I'm not sure if it's the submissive in me or because I want to look at his cock. That's how I gauge how he really feels.

His cock starts to leak with pre-cum, and I can't help but bite my top lip, a moan escaping from my mouth, letting him know just how much of an effect his cock and that kiss had on me.

Before he can make another move on me. I drop to my knees and kiss the tip, my tongue swirling around, licking up the cum that was there a moment ago. I wrap my hand around the base, taking his cock to the back of my throat. I look up at him. His eyes are watching me, possession and dominance fire in his eyes. I gulp because I know he's not going to be gentle with me. I wouldn't want him to be, but right now, it's taking all of his control not to fuck my face. I love it when I have him like this, by his literal balls.

“Start sucking me like a good girl, or I'm going to fuck your mouth like I took your cunt last night.”

A shiver runs right down my spine. He doesn't miss a thing. He breathes out a breath that lets me know I'm on really thin ice right now. I keep my eyes on him as I gaze up at his body as droplets of water travel down his defined muscles. The guy is a work of art. I slowly, teasingly, take him in my mouth, his tall body stopping the water from spraying in my face. I hum as I take him further and swallow so as not to gag and take him as deep as he'll go.

He pushes a couple of strands of hair that have fallen in front of my face. Gripping my head tightly. He moves his fingers, scratching at my scalp.

I close my eyes, moaning in pleasure with each movement of his fingers, every little scratch.

“This is your last warning,” he groans. His voice is hoarse, and I can feel the tension in his hands as he grips my hair tighter.

I pull my head back only slightly, and I still have half his cock resting on my tongue. I inhale and take in his scent, the arousal coming off him, and it feels like a drug I can't get enough of. I move my hand from the base of his cock and brush my hand against his balls.

He flinches, proving my point that he's so on edge right now. He closes his eyes, and for the first time, he's not looking at me. When he opens them again seconds later, something has changed. His whole body feels stronger somehow, and in that second, I know he's about to follow through on his threat.

I smile up at him because I think a small part of me wants this. I love it when he dominates me and takes what he wants when I push him too far that his basic instincts take over, and he loses himself in me. I keep my hand on his balls, my nails scratching the thin layer of skin.

I move my head bobbing slowly, egging on to claim me. I squeeze his balls slightly, and then it happens.

He pulls all my hair back, scooping it away from my face. He's rough, and I love it. I move my free hand to his hip. If he's going to claim me, I'm going to need something to hold on to. I could hold on to the tile bench along the shower wall, but where would the fun in that be?

“Hold on tight,” he says, slowly moving my hand that's on his balls to his other hip.

I smile up at him and swirl my tongue around the crown of his beautiful cock, the only part of his cock still in my mouth.

He forces his cock all the way into my mouth as I hold my jaw open for him to take me. My hands move from his hips as I grab onto his ass, my nails digging into his skin. We moan in unison as he fucks my mouth, drool flooding out of my mouth and down my chin. I breathe through my nose; the water continues to flow down his back, and I slowly get an idea in my head. I move my hands further around his ass.

He fucks me harder in my mouth than he did in my cunt, proving his point. Tears fall from my eyes, but I keep them on him. He needs my eyes on him. He needs to know I'm okay. I swallow him. Loving him taking me like this. I inch my finger slowly to his ass and breach his opening just as his cock jerks in my mouth.

He groans aloud, cuming down my throat as I push my finger into his ass.

JAX



The office is in a commotion after HR dropped a bomb in everyone's e-mail this morning. Of course, I knew it was coming, which is why Bryan wanted my ear in this office. Bryan and the other named partner are due in the office any minute.

Chloe: Hope today goes okay.

Jax: Thanks. The office is crazy.

Chloe: Word has hit here. Just FYI.

Chloe: Apparently, one of the junior associates was in the coffee shop at the time of the email blast.

Jax: Great, Bryan is going to hit the roof.

Chloe: See you tonight.

I sit, re-reading the message for the thousandth time since she sent it less than half an hour ago. Bryan would have my balls in a vice if he found out I'd told anyone what was going on. Let alone a competing firm. But I trust Chloe. I've slowly been trying to convince her to move here since she's not exactly happy at the firm she is at. The timing was less than ideal with Greyson's charity event tomorrow night. A couple of the partners are going to be there. I'm not looking forward to not being able to spend time with Chloe all night.

Bryan opens my door, the only person in the office I let walk in. I put my phone back down on the table, face down.

“Is she coming tomorrow night?” he asks, sitting in one of the chairs facing my desk.

“Who?” I ask, knowing what he’s trying to get out of me.

“Whoever it is that’s been taking up all of your time. You’ve been a different guy for weeks.”

“I’m going solo,” I say. The less I say on the matter, the better. I don’t like lying to him. He’s been so good to me over the years.

“Why? You ashamed to be seen in public?” He laughs, then he seems to sober up. “She’s not married, is she? Jax, I thought you were ready to settle down. No more sowing your oats and sleeping with...”

I could let him finish, but this is painful to watch. “No, she’s not married. She’s got an event of her own.”

He eyes me suspiciously, and I’m convinced he knows something. He’s like the Yoda of finding stuff out.

“Okay. But I want to meet her soon.” He stands up and fastens his jacket. “I’ll be in the conference room all day. Come and find me later. We’ll do lunch.”

“Okay, I will do.”



Bryan has been bugging me since yesterday when he came to my office, and I’m ready to spill until I spot Chloe and Kieran walking into the ballroom. He’s standing to my left with his wife, Catherine, while I can’t keep my eyes off the woman I’ve been sharing a bed with for over a week. I can’t keep my hands off her, and it’s killing me that we can’t be out in public with each other. This is the same woman who gave me epic head two hours before she pushed me out of her

apartment door, saying she would never be ready in time if I stayed in the apartment. So I didn't get the bonus of seeing her get dressed or see what she was wearing underneath that tight-sexy-as-sin dress. I gulp down the half glass of champagne and grab a new flute from a passing waiter.

Catherine gives me a look, the same look she gave me last night when I wasn't as forthcoming with information as she'd have liked over dinner. "Who's that?" She asks, sipping from her glass.

"Nobody," I groan, downing the whole flute of champagne.

"Liar," Catherine smiles, whispering to me. "You've not taken your eyes off the couple standing on the other side of the room."

"Wait a minute," Bryan says, turning his attention from Chloe and Kieran on the other side of the room. I feel Bryan's eyes on me and know he has a thousand questions. He saw my reaction to her a couple of weeks ago when she was having dinner with Franchesca. He knows exactly who she is. I continue to avoid looking at my friend.

Chloe has turned around, so her back is to us. For the first time, I get the full effect of the dress, or lack thereof, from the back. There is nothing there, and her back is fully exposed down to her ass, where it's resting. The dress leaves nothing to the imagination, and I know she's not being a good girl tonight. Quite the opposite. I can't wait to spank her ass when I get home. Home. I've been calling her apartment home in my head for a week now, and it feels good.

"...is that Chloe Lawson?" asks Bryan. He knows the answer. The guy is more in the know about things than he lets on. He chooses to act clueless to what's going on around him when really nothing gets past him. He's all-knowing.

"She's hot!" Catherine says, sipping her drink.

"No, these guys are enemies," Bryan says, looking from Chloe to me, then back again. However, he doesn't exactly sound convinced with what he's saying.

“You’re so clueless. That is not the look of hate on his face.”

But she’s wrong. I’m feeling hate right now, and it’s all aimed at Kieran. His hand is on her lower back. He’s lucky his hand isn’t lower, resting on her ass, or I may have had to cut off his hand. I’ve never been this possessive about a woman before in my life.

“We have a complicated past,” I whisper. Bryan has been great to me since I graduated, which also means Catherine has been good to me over the years. I turn, giving Catherine my full attention, so I no longer look at Chloe. I need to stop looking at her. Otherwise, I’m going to want to go over to her and show everyone who is here tonight that Chloe Lawson is mine. I wasn’t lying when I told her I don’t share. It’s not a hard limit. I’m always open to trying new things, and maybe with someone else, I could. But the power Chloe has over me, I know I’d have a hard time if another guy so much as laid a stroke on her.

“Meaning?” she asks. Catherine loves nothing more than gossip and trying to fix people up. Also, this is good gossip, so it’s like blood in the water, and she’s a shark swimming around me.

“They knew each other in college and hated each other,” Bryan smirks. Catherine, though, she’s smart. Too smart for a guy like Bryan.

“They may have hated each other in college, but that was a long time ago. Now he’s looking at her like... Well, not hate. Let’s put it that way.”

“No, it’s still there. You didn’t see them at the deposition a while ago. Pure animosity!”

“Maybe, but Jax is about ten minutes away from going all Ryan Atwood on that guy’s ass..” Catherine smiles my way. She’s onto me, so I need to be careful the rest of the night.

As I turn to take in the room, I see Franchesca and her husband. What’s surprising is the looks she’s giving Chloe. It’s strange. The looks she’s giving her don’t sit well with me.

“I was a dick to her without knowing the full picture. She deserved better.” I’m this close to spilling when I feel a strong hand squeezing my shoulder.

“Jaxson, glad you could come. Bryan, good to finally meet you, and this must be your better half, Catherine.” Greyson greets our little trio.

My phone vibrates in my pocket. I move away from Greyson, nodding as I pull out my phone. Leaving them to talk amongst themselves. I look around the room, looking for Chloe, but I can’t see her anywhere. Maybe that’s a good thing since Catherine is pretty much onto us. My bosses wouldn’t like that we’ve been sneaking around for the last couple of weeks. I pull my phone out of my pocket when I hear and feel the buzzing in my pocket.

CL: Stop staring at me like you want to rip my dress off.

JH: Now I know why you kicked me out while you were getting ready.

CL: Exactly. I’ve been coming to black-tie events for years.

JH: I hope all the other dresses covered more skin.

CL: Sorry, at what point did you become my dad?

JH: Fuck Chloe!

CL: Oh my god!

CL: Do you have a kink you’ve not shared with me?

CL: Why have you gone quiet?

JH: I’m trying to find you.

CL: We can’t. My boss nearly had a coronary when you and Bryan turned up.

CL: He thinks you're trying to poach Greyson off us. I won't repeat what else he said.

What the actual fuck! Chloe's boss is going to be a problem when we go public, which, if I had my way, we would have done before tonight. But we need to move at Chloe's pace. It's the least I can do.

CHLOE



As soon as I send the message, I regret it. I look up from my phone long enough to see Kieran approaching me with two flutes of champagne. I open my clutch and place my phone inside. My back rested against the marble pillar I was hiding behind. I wasn't lying to Jax. We can't be seen together. Not when his eyes are on me. Anyone would be able to tell that all he wants to do is claim me in the dress I'm wearing.

"You're flushed," Kieran smiles at me as he hands over one of the glasses. "Just give me the signal if you want to sneak off somewhere with him."

I fight back a smile. Turning away from him, the smile creeps, covering more of my face.

"I'm glad you're finally happy, Chloe."

"Yeah. Well, I'm still holding him at arm's length."

"Yeah, I don't know why you're doing that?"

"My..."

"You couldn't care less what your boss thinks."

He's right. I've been using that as an excuse. I just don't want to get my heart hurt.

"He's really stepped up." Kieran looks at me over his glass.

"I know. I'm just waiting for the other shoe to drop. When he's not staying with me because he thinks I'm in some kind of danger."

“Chloe, Jaxson is not staying with you because he wants to be your Knight in shining armor.”

“I know,” I whisper. I feel stupid. We should have come to this thing together. It’s an event I look forward to every year. I spot the guy on my security detail for tonight from the other side of the room, and a shiver goes down my spine.

“Do you want me to go and find Jax?” Kieran asks with a smile trying to break free.

“Yeah, I’m just going to go and see Franchesca,” I say, taking a deep breath. I shouldn’t have to psych myself up to speak to my best friend. We need to have a long overdue chat. Even if it’s the last one we ever have.

“Okay, remember, don’t go anywhere without your shadow,” he nods at one of the guys on my team. “I really don’t want to get on Jax’s bad side.”

“I know.” I give him a weak smile before handing off my empty glass to a waiter passing by.

Dread and a terrible feeling in my stomach make me nervous as I approach Franchesca. It’s the first time all night she’s been alone. I didn’t want to have this conversation with Ryan in earshot. She arrived with her husband and has been talking to a man they both arrived with for most of the night. I’ve not been able to get a look at his face all night, but something tells me it’s someone I know. I hope to god it’s not Blake. Surely, even Franchesca is not that stupid. Greyson always has security at these things, but he insisted on vetting the guest list for the first time—ever. Franchesca took over planning this event after her Mom and dad divorced five years ago. From what I was able to gather from Jax, she was pissed. Franchesca has her back to me as she stands close to one of the elevators randomly placed around the room. Kieran and I originally came to this area to get a breather from the function room before we got called for dinner and the charity auction started.

My heels click against the marble floor, but her back is still to me. “Franchesca,” I say like the lady boss I am. Channeling

the Ice Queen just a little. My defenses are up, and it's the first time I've ever felt like this in all the years I've known her.

She slowly turns around, giving me her full attention. "I was surprised you'd be here tonight. My dad tells me you're the reason we have more security this year."

"I've never missed this event, Franchesca, you know that."

"Yeah, my dad said the same thing." She says. She has a look on her face, and I can't make out if it's disgust or whatever it is, but she's not happy.

"I'm surprised you've not followed my dad around all night."

"Why would I?" I ask, a little confused. I know a good chunk of the people in this room. While I'm not a socialite or a household name, I'm a respected lawyer in the city. My client list is one of the best in the city. I definitely have one of the best client lists within my firm, not only because I have Greyson and Huntington Group in my portfolio.

"You and my dad..."

I take a deep breath. I thought Franchesca was better than this, better than the gossip and rumor mill. I guess I was wrong before, and I'm obviously wrong again.

"Your dad is a client and close friend, that is all."

"You keep telling yourself that."

I turn to walk away from her. I do not need this in my life. The elevator door next to us opens, and I feel Franchesca grip my wrist, pulling me into the enclosed space. My body becomes hyper-aware that I'm in danger right now. I can only hope that someone on my security team saw her drag me into the elevator. 'Don't panic, Chloe.' I hear Jax in my head.

"Hello, Chloe Lawson."

I freeze in place. The voice I prayed I was never going to hear again. Bile threatens to bring up the champagne I was drinking not ten minutes ago. My back hits the metal wall, and he corners me, hands on both sides of my head. My fight or flight is kicking in, and while I want to knee the bastard in the

balls, I'm also in an enclosed space and outnumbered. I don't have time to process that Franchesca and my old professor know each other. He looks different. But I know it's him from his voice alone.

The doors open, and Franchesca steps out like she owns the place. Which I guess she does, technically. Well, her husband does. I'm so fucking screwed right now. The only thing I have in my favor is that I know Jax is looking for me. When he can't find me, I know he's going to do everything in his power and beat down every door in this place to find me.

I'm so distracted thinking about Jax. I don't see what the dick does to me, but I feel it, the prick in the arm. Before I know what's happening, my vision becomes blurry, and the last face I see is him. The dick who raped and tormented me during my first semester at Harvard. He looks a lot different, even different than he did a couple of weeks ago when I saw him outside my firm's building. I don't see or feel anything as blackness takes over me.

JAX



I get stopped too often in the ballroom where tonight's event will be. There are guys from Danny's security team around the room, but I can't see Chloe or Kieran anywhere. When I find Chloe, I'm going to make her see that us together in public doesn't bother me. I know it won't bother Bryan. He already kind of suspects after all the whispering Catherine was doing in his ear. She can be like a dog with a bone sometimes.

"Sorry," I say as someone else tries to stop and talk to me. I need to find Chloe, and I need to find her now. Drag her into an empty room and turn into the alpha asshole she loves so much.

"Where's Chloe?" I ask.

The guy smirks at me. "Took you long enough." He presses his earpiece. "Eyes on Chloe, he's come to his senses." He laughs. In seconds, his demeanor changes, and his whole body stiffens up.

I spin around, my eyes scanning the room. Every security guy and girl in the room has their hand on their earpiece, frantically looking around the room.

Danny comes running into the room, a panicked but angry look on his face. He comes running towards us, and I know what he's about to say is not good.

"Where is she?" I ask, getting in his face.

"Hannah hasn't checked in. The guy to last see her got distracted, but she was talking to Franchesca the last time he

saw her.”

“Where is Franchesca now?” I ask. I can feel my blood pressure rising.

I pull out my phone and call Greyson. It keeps ringing, but no answer. That’s unusual. Greyson has that phone on him at all times. You don’t own a billion-dollar empire by not making yourself available to everyone twenty-four-seven. I end the call as soon as it goes to voice mail, pressing the call again and again. Something is seriously up.

“I can’t get hold of Greyson,” I say, taking in my surroundings.

Bryan and Catherine walk over to me, obviously reading my body language from across the room.

“What’s going on?” Asks Bryan.

“Chloe is missing,” is all I say.

Bryan takes a second to process what I’ve just said, and I know he’s going to have a million questions, but thankfully he can read the fucking room and hold back.

“I saw her maybe ten minutes ago, and she was talking to some woman. They obviously knew each other.”

“What do you mean you’ve just noticed the cameras are on a loop.?” Danny’s voice breaks through my thoughts. The place is covered with cameras. We should be able to find everyone easily.

My stomach hits the floor. Something bad is going down, and I know somehow Franchesca has something to do with it. “Who was the person who came with Franchesca and Ryan tonight?”

“Lock the building down.” I hear Danny say.

All eyes turn to Danny as he looks me in the eye. Something bad has happened.

“Is she breathing?” He asks, but he’s not looking at me.

Bryan holds onto my shoulder before I do something stupid. Not holding me back; it’s more of a reassuring squeeze.

“It’s not Chloe,” whispers the guy standing next to me. I breathe a small sigh of relief, but that’s short-lived. “It’s Hannah. She’s been found propped up in the stairwell. She’s been knocked out.”

“Later,” Bryan says, standing in front of me, looking me in the eye.

It has to mean something Greyson and Chloe are both missing. “How is Greyson related to Chloe?” I ask, looking Danny in the eye.

He runs his hand over his chin.

“Danny, remember, I’m the guy paying you.”

Bryan and Catherine share a look next to me, and I know I’ve added another ten questions to the ones they already had.

I grab onto his shirt, and nobody tries to pull me away this time.

“Is he her dad?” I ask, the anger laced in my words as I spit them out.

Danny closes his eyes before opening them and looking me dead in the eyes.

“He deserves to know,” says the guy who’s been with us this whole time.

I turn my attention to him.

“He’s her brother.”

Shock hits me. Her brother. I stagger back. I was so convinced that he was her dad. “Does...?” I whisper.

“Chloe doesn’t know.”

Man, Chloe is going to be pissed when she finds out. I mean, she has trust issues already, but this is going to hurt. Greyson has a hell of a lot of explaining to do.

CHLOE



“Shut up, shut up, shut up,” I hear Franchesca screaming as I open my eyes.

It takes me a minute for my eyes to adjust. I turn to my right and see Greyson tied to a chair next to me. His face is swollen, and his lip has a cut on the lip. Greyson is groaning in pain while Blake plays the role of a ‘thug’ right now, punching him. He has to have a broken rib.

My head is killing me, but I don’t appear to be hurt anywhere else. I have no idea how long I was out with the drugs they’d given me, but it’s long enough for Greyson to be in a hell of a lot of pain.

“I’m not her dad,” he says angrily. I watch as he looks to the far side of the room.

Blake takes a swing at him. Fuck, is this some weird college reunion?

I look around the room, and my skin starts to crawl as I see him staring at me. Like he remembers every disgusting thing, he did to me all those years ago. I try not to react. I don’t want to give him any kind of pleasure. I know he’d get off that. He always got off on my tears. It’s one reason I’m as fucked up as I am now.

Before I know what’s happening, bile rises, and I throw up all over my dress. I guess I’m never wearing this again.

“Look who’s awake,” Franchesca says excitedly. “You were out for a long time. I was worried we’d given you too

much.”

“What did you give me?” It’s then I notice that my arms are tied to the arm of the chair. They look tight, but I still move about a little, which gives me some hope that I might get out of here.

“I don’t know, and I don’t really care. I was just told it would knock you out real good.”

“What do you want?” I ask, spitting out the taste of the vomit on the floor in front of me.

“Daddy dearest here was about to tell us the truth, that he’s your dad.”

My eyes fly to Greyson, and he shakes his head.

“Franchesca, when will you get it into your stupid brain and listen to what I’m saying?” Greyson grits his teeth as he tries to break free of the rope tied around his wrists.

“She’s in your will.” she spits.

That has my attention. My old boss was the person to draw up the will. Probate isn’t something I’ve ever dealt with, so when he used one of the other partners at the firm, I didn’t think anything of it.

“How do you know what’s in my will?” he asks. If looks could kill right now, Franchesca would have me a massacred mess on the floor right in front of us.

“I saw some notes you wrote down in your office.” She spits out like venom at her dad.

“You’re as stupid as your mother.” Greyson throws back at her.

Everyone in New York knew how dirty their divorce was five years ago. It became tabloid fodder. From what I remember, she had to sign an iron-clad non-disclosure agreement that extends even to her daughter. If she’s broken that...

“I’m not telling you shit.” He says before looking at me. I know from that look he has something he wants to tell me. I’m

trying to think of a thousand legal things he could want to tell me that he hasn't already, and not one of them would be worth the pain Blake is putting him through right now. So it must be something personal. He's already said he's not my dad. Could he be lying? Fuck. I hate this. All of it.

Greyson has always denied he was my dad, but a small part of me thought he was lying. Like he was trying to protect me in some way. Protecting my friendship with Franchesca. That's gone out of the window right now. Somehow, friends don't come back from a kidnapping.

I look across the room and see the creep hasn't taken his eyes off me the whole time. It's making my skin crawl and taking everything in me not to react.

"Jax'll be looking for us," I whisper, while the others are on the other side of the room. Huddled together, discussing something.

"He'll be turning the building upside down, but they're not going to find us. They moved us straight away." Greyson whispers back, trying to break free again.

"Stop, it's not going to budge. They're tied too tight to the chair." I look at the broken skin on his wrists, which are bleeding because he's rubbed them raw. "What aren't you telling me?"

He closes his eyes and turns his head to look at the others. "I don't want to tell you like this."

"Not to be all doom and gloom, but if they've moved us, the chances of them finding us anytime soon are slim." I want him to tell me the truth. "No more lies, yeah?"

"Technically, it's not a lie. You asked if I'm your dad, and I'm not."

"Did you know my dad?"

He laughs. "Yeah, I knew your dad. Your Mom worked for the company long before she died."

"Yeah. From what I can remember, you worked there for some of her last years. You'd have been around the same age."

“I’m not your Dad, Chloe.” He groans as he looks around the room. He really doesn’t want to tell me like this. I respect him so much more now because of it, and I respected him a hell of a lot before.

“Okay. When we get out of here, I’m going to need you to tell me.”

“I know,” he nods. “What do you say we try to get our way out here?”

“What do you have in mind?” I whisper.

JAX



“Our sources close to billionaire Greyson Huntington and CEO of Huntington Media Group have said he’s been kidnapped. It’s unsure at this moment if a ransom demand has been requested,” says a woman on the news.

“This is bad,” whispers Catherine to Bryan.

“Where the hell is she?” shouts a guy as he walks into the room. “I need her now!” My phone is blowing up. Chloe is his lawyer. She needs to get ahead of this.

Who the hell is this jackass? My fist is twitching at the side of my body.

“That’s her boss,” whispers Bryan, getting in front of him.

“Bryan, what the hell are you doing here? Greyson is our fucking client.” Then he notices me for the first time. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“I know,” Bryan says, trying to guide him out of the room.

I can’t fucking deal with this shit right now. She needs to get out of that place. We need something to go in our favor because I’m tired of waiting around here.

My phone vibrates in my pocket, and I ignore all the messages like I have been doing for the last hour since we formed this war room in the hotel’s conference room. Danny’s team has laptops and phones spread out all across the table. I take this call, though. “Mike now’s not a...”

“It’s Kate,” a female voice says.

Fuck! Chloe likes Kate and will not want me to lie to her.

“I know Chloe is probably super stressed right now. I know she’s close to Greyson. I just want to know she’s-”

“Kate,” I stop her before she rambles on anymore. “I need to tell you something.” I pause. This is the hardest conversation I’ve had all night. “She’s with Greyson.”

The line goes quiet, and I worry for a minute the call has ended.

“What did he just say?” I hear Mike say. He was obviously further away from the phone.

“Jax.”

“Whoever has Greyson has Chloe too.”

“Rumored to be with the media CEO is his lawyer, Chloe Lawson.” The person on the news says. Heads are going to fucking roll when I find out who’s spoken to the press.

“Jax, do you need anything?”

“No. Danny is here.”

“That was quick.”

“He’s been working for me for a couple of weeks.”

“Jacob said it was nothing to worry about.”

“It’s been quiet for weeks. I guess they were waiting for tonight. Chloe is the reason he started this event.”

“Call me when this is over.” He says thoughtfully.

“I will. I’ll get Chloe to call Kate. She’ll be the first call.”

“Jax, hang in there. She’s strong and a fighter, but she will need you when all this is over. We’ll see you in a few hours.”

“What?”

“I spoke to Adrien, and the plane will be ready for us when we get to the airport.” I’m not sure if this is directed at Mike or me. I’m so glad Chloe, and she gelled. I need my friends around to deal with the after-effects of all this.



I look around the room, and everyone looks tired. The FBI turned up an hour ago and was pretty pissed that the first time they heard about it was on the news. Danny went off to deal with them.

I walked over to the far side of the room, where the hotel left us a carafe to make drinks. The coffee isn't great, but I'm not leaving this room to get a better cup of coffee. I've been messaging Ryan, trying to see if he'll take my call, but so far, he's not playing. Of course, I don't know how much they know about Chloe and me being a couple.

One of the tech guys keeps looking over my way. It's making me nervous. He's tapping his finger on the key like it's some kind of nervous twitch.

Danny walks into the room and approaches the tech guy immediately, and they both look at me. Now I'm definitely nervous.

The pair talk in hushed tones, but part of me is fucking worried about going over there. As I approach them, Danny moves away and tries to approach me, intersecting me.

"What have you found?" I ask as I try to push away from him.

Danny is strong, but my adrenaline has kicked in, and I push him off me and make a beeline for the tech guy. He presses a couple of buttons on this keyboard, and the screen changes, so I can't see what they were both looking at a minute ago.

"Jax," he gruffs. "You don't want to see it."

"It can't be any worse than what my imagination has been playing on a loop for the last couple of hours."

"Chloe wouldn't want you to see her like this," Hannah says from her seat at the table. She refused to go back to the

apartment, saying she wanted to be here when it was time to move on Chloe. I know she feels bad and thinks she let Chloe down, but we wouldn't have known Franchesca was involved without her.

Watching that scared look on her face when we finally got our eyes on the elevator footage made me go crazy. Seeing the pair of them together. The only thing keeping me sane is knowing that Greyson is with her. I'm certain he will protect her as much as he can, especially in light of the family connection.

“With all respect, nobody in this room knows her better than I do.”

A voice clears on the other side of the room, and I look up to see Kieran on his phone. “Show him. He'll need to know if and how to help her through this.” He stands up and makes his way over to the coffee station. I am glad Kieran refused to leave a couple of hours ago, even though I haven't been here long enough to bond with any of the other guys. I only know Jacob because of his ‘thing’ with Mike and Kate, which still blows my mind. Their relationship is strong. I never in a million years thought Mike would share once he and Kate got together, but I think they both get off on having him in the room.

The tech guy presses a couple of buttons on his keyboard, and the screen comes up with what must be security footage. It then registers what Kieran had just said; he must have known about the feed.

“When did you get this?” I ask, looking at the room. Greyson is sitting in a chair, his chin resting on his chest, and he's passed out.

Chloe's dress has been cut up to her waist, and her arms tied to a chair. He has a knife to her throat, pressed to her skin, but there's no blood. She's looking him dead in the eyes. Not backing down. He licks the side of her face, sniffing her hair before he pulls away. We can't see her face from the angle we have, and that might be a blessing in disguise.

I want to murder the guy.

Kieran puts his hand on my shoulder, and I know he's trying to be reassuring, but I want this thing over with. I want Chlo in my arms.

One of the other tech guy's computers starts making a noise, and the room goes into a frenzy.

Danny runs into the room with the two FBI guys.

CHLOE



I've slowly been moving my wrists under the rope, but the sweat from being here for a couple of hours has made red marks appear on my skin. These are going to hurt like a bitch after Jax gets me out of here.

They've been holding us in this apartment for hours. It's expensive, judging by the size of the place. We're still in Manhattan, though, and that surprises me. I'd have thought that they'd have moved us off the island.

The sky out of the huge floor-to-ceiling window is starting to get light. I have a better idea of where we are now that the daylight is casting its glow on the Hudson.

Greyson passed out a couple of hours ago, and I'm equally glad and scared shitless. I look across the room and see Marco twirling the knife, spinning it around and around, pinching the very end of the handle. He always did love that fucking knife. That's what stopped me from reporting him all those years ago. He threatened me with that knife more than he could have done by touching and using any part of his anatomy. He's never broken skin, though. I guess the emotional damage lasts way longer than any physical damage. I mean, where would the fun be if I had physical scars on me? Scars that people, my friends, would see. I've learned the value of shutting down. I would have done that already, but I need to be ready when Jax and Danny's team get here. Jax doesn't know this. I begged Danny and Hannah not to say anything to Jax, but we thought something like this could happen. Hannah and I had a 'safeword,' if you will. But we didn't have a chance to use it. I

thought something would happen in a way more low-key fashion than what went down tonight.

I've not seen Franchesca for a couple of hours, not since her dad passed out. I don't understand why the pair of them are working together. I knew what Franchesca, and I had experienced was hard to come back from, but this was next level even for her.

The weakest link in this whole thing is Ryan. He looked ready to cave the last time I saw him a couple of hours ago.

He strides over to me with that fucking knife in his hand. Moving his wrist in circles, so the light hits the blade. That's where my attention is, not on him. I can switch off just enough if I don't look at him. I learned that the hard way all those years ago.

"You were always my favorite." The creep whispers in my ear as he moves in front of me. He grabs onto my chin, forcing me to look at him.

He cuts through the material of my dress, my breasts rising and falling now my breathing has changed. I'm naked in front of him except for the barely there thong I'm wearing.

"I've missed these," he says, grabbing one of my breasts.

I close my eyes, not wanting to see the excited look on his face. I hear movement as a door opens, and I see Franchesca walk in. She's changed into jeans and a sweater. She smiles at me as she watches this creep manhandle me. I like pain, but this isn't the good kind of pain, and my head and body know this isn't for pleasure. My body knows this isn't some kinky scene playing out.

"She likes it rough," she laughs.

He laughs maniacally before bringing his hand and slapping me across the face.

I look at her with disgust. How she managed to con me for so long is confusing to me. He puts the knife down on the ground before pulling the rest of my dress away from my skin so he can have more access to me. A smile spreads over her

face. That look hurts way more than anything this creep has done to me or is doing to me right now.

There's a bang, and before I know what's happening, he's cutting the rope on my wrist and dragging me in front of him, his knife to my throat. Of course, now I'm naked and in nothing but a thong.

Hannah and Danny have guns drawn with their eyes on him. I look at Hannah, she's the only girl on the team, and I zero in on her as someone in an FBI black bulletproof vest drags Francesca quietly and quickly out of the room. The other FBI agent stays his gun drawn too.

I watch Hannah's foot and remember everything she told me. She'd expected something like this to happen. I watch her foot, waiting for her tap. I told her that if it came down to it, he would probably use me as a human shield. So far, I've been right.

There's talking going on around me, but I'm zoning it all out, except Hannah. He tightens his grip on the arm he's holding behind my back.

Hannah taps her foot once, twice as she taps the third time; I pull on the arm he's holding onto and pull myself down so everyone has a clear shot.

"Put the knife down," the FBI guy says, and I crawl out of his reach and move toward Greyson.

I press my fingers to Greyson's neck. They beat him badly, but he refused to tell her what she wanted.

"I said, put the knife down," the FBI guy says, firmer this time as he takes a step closer.

I close my eyes as I rest my head on Greyson's arm. My eyes shield me from what's happening.

I hear the knife fall to the wooden floor, and Danny and the FBI agent move toward him. Hannah pulls off her vest as she walks towards me and unzips her jacket, wrapping it over my shoulders.

The room starts to fill with people, including paramedics, who start working on Greyson.

“I’m going to the hospital with him,” I tell them.

They nod as they shine a light in his eyes.

I burst into tears when I see Jax walk into the room with a blanket in his hand. I walk towards him and cry into his chest and feel his heart beating a mile a minute.

“Let’s get you out of here,” he whispers.

I nod my head. All the energy and adrenaline I’ve been holding onto leaving my body. I tighten my grip on his dress pants and belt, noticing he’s still in his suit from last night, minus the tie.

I hear a groan from Greyson as the paramedics put him on a stretcher.

“You...” the paramedic starts to say.

“Yeah, we’re coming.” Jax puts his arm around my shoulder as I tighten the blanket around me.



“**T**hey’re going to want to check you out, too,” the paramedic says as she gushes a needle into Greyson’s arm.

“I’m fine,” I say, leaning against Jax as the ambulance pulls up at the hospital.

The doors open, and a couple of doctors are waiting for us.

Two go with Greyson while the paramedic tells them a bunch of medical stuff that goes way over my head.

Jax pulls me close as we walk into the hospital and kisses the top of my head.

“Ms. Lawson,” the female doctor guides me into a private room. “We’ll give you a shout,” she says to Jax.

It’s then I realize they want me on my own. Well, that’s not happening. “I want Jax to come.”

I didn’t realize how tense he was until the tension left his body next to me. He squeezes my shoulder.

“There are a series of-”

“Look, I know you’re just doing your job. I know that. But I am fine. There’s not a scratch on my body,” I say, looking at my wrists, “well, except for these.”

“Chloe. I can wait outside. I mean, I’d prefer to be with you, you know that.”

I do know that. He’s been amazing ever since he came running into my building weeks ago when he found out Blake was in the building. “I want him to stay.”

The doctor closes the door and shuts the blinds on the window.

“What is your relationship with Mr. Huntington?” She asks as she starts to clean the wounds on my wrists.

“Well, technically, I’m his lawyer. But he’s my guardian angel, I guess.”

She smiles at me. “He’s going to be okay.”

“I guess I’m technically his next of kin since his daughter has been arrested.” I feel Jax’s tension from here.

I turn to look at him. “You know?” I ask.

“He wants to tell you himself. I’m not going to deny him that.” Jax smiles at me. “He deserves it after the fight he put up and not giving them what they wanted.”

“He’s so stubborn. He should have just told Francesca what she wanted.” I say the last part under my breath.



The doctor takes us up to Greyson's room, and I've changed into scrubs one of the other doctors brought in for me. He gives me a weak smile when Jax and I walk into the room.

"Oh my god, thank god you're okay," I breathe a sigh of relief.

"I told you he was okay," whispers Jax, the smile spreading over his face.

"Jax, good to see you." He nods.

"I'll leave you two to talk. I'll go and get us all something to drink."

I give Jax a weak smile. I don't know how he knows. Whenever he found out, it was while I'd been kidnapped.

"Chloe, I'm sorry for what Franchesca put you through."

"Don't be. She put you through it too. You should have told her what she wanted. Nothing was worth three broken ribs, internal bleeding, and a concussion."

"This did," he winces as he sits up a little straighter in the bed.

"I used to hope you were my dad," I whisper, and it's the first time in my life I've uttered those words out loud. I feel a small tear run down my cheek. Everything is setting me off crying tonight.

"We are family," he groans.

I'm confused. Greyson was an only child.

"I'm your brother," he says as our eyes meet.

What! I guess this is the definition of speechless. I was so convinced he was my dad, my brain never even... wow. So my mom must have...

"Your mom was my dad's, our dad's, secretary for a long time. She was there before I even started at the company. He was lonely. His marriage to my Mom was, let's just say, they

no longer loved each other, if they ever did. She gave him an heir for the company to grow after him.”

“Did he know about me?”

He winces at my question. I have my answer there.

“Ironically, I found out about a week before you turned up at my office.” He presses a button on the drip attached to him. He must be in a lot of pain. I should let him rest.

“My Dad’s lawyer dropped off a letter. I’d not seen him in years. Dad’s lawyer gave me the letter, and I knew instantly I was going to do everything I could to help you. I remember you as a kid when you’d come and sit at your Mom’s desk when you were younger. But Dad was still married at the time. Divorce wasn’t an option, and your Mom respected that. But he loved your Mom. They were finally going to be together when her accident happened.”



“Have you never realized this before?”

A door opens, and I smell Jax without needing to turn around and see him.

“They were in the same car crash. They were together at the time.” Greyson’s voice takes over the room. I didn’t realize until this very moment that I’d been waiting for Jax to come back. Everything feels better when Jax is in the vicinity.

He squeezes my shoulder, and I love the reassuring way he non-verbally checks in with me. I rest my chin on his hand, closing my eyes, needing him close.

“We don’t have to get into everything now,” Greyson says, giving me a look that I know screams that he’s worried about me.

JAX



I look through the window of Greyson’s hospital room. I can’t help but see the similarities between the pair. I guess that’s why people presumed they were father and daughter over the years. Chloe looks completely out of it, and I know I should have taken her home hours ago. She’s hardly eaten all day, and what little food she orders, she leaves half of it.

Mike, and by Mike, I mean Kate, has been blowing up my phone all day. She’s worried about Chloe, I know.

Bryan’s name flashes on my screen again, and I silence my call. I’m not ready to get into all of this with him yet. I look at Chloe one more time before opening the door and walking in—she looks like she’s just going through the motions at this point.

I squeeze her shoulder, and she instantly moves toward me. I was worried she would push me away after everything that had happened. Pushing me away seems to be the last thing she wants.

“I’m going to take Chloe home. Do you need anything before we leave?”

“No,” he whispers, shaking his head. Concern etched over his face.

“Chlo,” I whisper, reaching for her. “Let’s get you home.”

“I’ll come by tomorrow,” she says, hugging Greyson, who winces in pain. “Thanks for finally telling me the truth.”

“I’m just,” she points to the bathroom. I don’t want to let her out of my sight again, but even I’m not that possessive, I need to follow her into the bathroom.

“I’m worried about her,” Greyson says. Careful not to raise his voice so Chloe can’t hear.

“She’s been through a lot the last twenty-four hours with no sleep.” I need to show Greyson that he may be ‘family,’ but Chloe is my whole fucking world. I will prove to her that I’ll always have her back. She’s my number one priority.

It dawns on me in that second that Chloe and I, I guess, are the closest thing he has to family. “You going to be okay?” I rein in some of my feelings from a moment ago.

He smiles and tries to sit up, even though I can see it hurts like a bitch. “I’ll be fine. Look after Chloe. I’m glad you two finally kissed and made up. You shouldn’t have been apart all this time.”

“Thanks. We’ll be back tomorrow to check on you.”

Chloe comes out of the bathroom, and she looks shattered.

“Let’s get you home.”



Once we get back to her apartment, she makes a beeline for the bathroom, and I hear the shower. Something tells me to go into the bathroom, and I don’t know why. But I see Chloe sitting on the tiled bench in the shower, crying into her hands. I take off my clothes quickly, kicking everything out of the way. I sit beside her as the water continues to shower us from all the different nozzles.

“It’s over,” she whispers. “It’s finally over.”

I squeeze her knee. “I’m proud of you.” My voice sounds hoarse, all my emotions from the last twenty-four hours catching up with me.

“He fucked with my head again,” she says, looking at me with tears in her eyes.

“I know,” I whisper, wrapping my arms around her. “They had eyes in the room. I don’t know for how long. I found out by chance.”

“Yeah, Hannah told me Ryan sent them the feed. He figured Danny’s team would be able to work out where.” Chloe stands up and turns off the shower. “Jax, I need you inside me. I need to get lost in you. I need you to remind my body that you can’t get enough of me. That I’m not damaged. I fucking hate that term ‘damaged,’”

She moves to open the glass door, but I spin her around before she can open it. A moan escapes her as I pull her towards my body. My cock starts to harden as she rubs her tits against my chest.

“I love you, Jax.” The words hit me like a bullet. I’ve said the words to her many times over the last month. But this is the first time she’s uttered the words to me. I bite down hard on her lip, and she wraps her left leg around my waist. Opening her cunt for my access.

“Claim me, Jax,” she whispers, rubbing her cunt against my cock.

I moan into her mouth, moving her other leg, so her heels dig into my ass.

“Who’s in charge here?” I moan, holding back from pushing myself inside her.

“Always you.” She smiles.

Her back slides up and down the glass as she rubs her cunt up and down my length as it’s pressed to my stomach.

“Say it again,” I say, my cock in hand, the tip pressed against her opening, but I refuse to push inside her until I hear the words from her again.

“I love you, Jax.”

I push inside her, and she moans her approval.

EPILOGUE

SIX MONTHS LATER - CHLOE

Christmas Day

I stand in the archway between the kitchen and the living room, coffee in hand, watching as Jax pulls the presents from under the tree. We've been living with each other since I needed a bodyguard. The day after the kidnapping, I told him I wanted him to move in. I'd gotten used to him sleeping in my bed. Which is weird because he's the only guy I've shared a bed with all night.

I'm still slightly sore from the Christmas party we had at the club last night, but in the best possible way. Of course, Jax carried the party back to our apartment. I'm getting wet just thinking about the fun we had. I need to not think about that, not when we have a guest on their way over.

"As pretty as my ass is, I'd rather be looking at yours." He says, never once turning to look at me.

I laugh, carrying our coffee over to him. He pulls me to the couch just as my hands leave the coffee, so I'm straddling him.

"We don't have time," I say as his hand moves up my polar bear Christmas t-shirt. "Greyson will be here any minute."

"Your brother can wait." Jax groans as he moves to lift my t-shirt over my head.

"Why do you insist on calling him that?"

"Because you're both the only family you have."

"Please don't talk about Greyson while you're looking at my tits."

The buzzer sounds in the apartment.

He laughs and pulls my t-shirt down.

"Might want to hide that," I say, looking down at him. His hard-on is tenting in his grey sweats. I move my mouth to his ear as the buzzer sounds again. "You can stick it—anywhere—"

after he's gone," I whisper as I answer the buzzer and tell the doorman to let him up.

Jax stands and makes his way to the bedroom while I let Greyson in.

"Chloe," he says, hugging me with a couple of bags in his hands. "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas, Greyson."

He makes his way into the living room. Greyson is a regular fixture in our apartment. He's around for dinner at least once a week. Of course, I always see him when he's in the New York office.

I left the firm the day after the kidnapping when I found out my boss was the one who went to the press and told them about Greyson being kidnapped. Now I have a floor at Huntington Media where I deal with all the in-house legal issues, as well as having a couple of clients of my own. It's my own little law firm with a couple of paralegals taking up office space.

Jax walks into the living room with a small bag in his hand, and I eye him suspiciously. I thought all the presents had been under the tree.

We sit around eating Christmas cookies Greyson brought with him as we open our presents.

Jax hands me the bag I saw him with earlier, and I open it to find a long box. My hand shakes. I can't believe he's giving me this in front of Greyson. I open the box slowly. Inside is a diamond and platinum 'necklace.' We'll go with necklace since Greyson is in the room. I look at him and see the glee in his eyes. I nod my head at him.

"I love you, Jax," I say as I put it on the coffee table, wishing Greyson wasn't here now so I could thank my Master properly.

T HE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa M. Miller is a romance author living in the U.K. She loves to get lost in the worlds she has created. When she is not writing about alpha males with kinks, she can be found reading or listening to her favourite audiobooks or podcasts. She usually has a cup of tea or glass of wine close to hand.

You can find all my links on my [linker.ee](#)

Facebook Group: [Lisa M. Miller's Bossy Boys](#)



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