

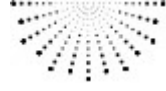
BAYLEIGH RAE



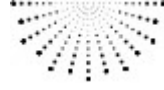
Margo

LAS VEGAS LITTLES BOOK ONE

MARGO



LAS VEGAS LITTLES, BOOK 1



BAYLEIGH RAE



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Las Vegas Littles

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, places, locales, and events are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, and events are purely coincidental.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a complete novella of 45,000 words and all the information you need is contained within these pages. However, if you would like to read the story of how Baze and Luna met, and how exactly Baze became House Daddy to a group of homeless Littles, [you can download Las Vegas Littles: The Prequel for free by joining my newsletter](#)

CHAPTER ONE

December 25th

Margo

Margo didn't think of herself as an overly sentimental person, but she couldn't help but tear up as she watched her best friend Luna marry her Daddy and the love of her life, Baze Patrick, in a beautiful Christmas-night ceremony. She'd been sniffing throughout the ceremony, but when the officiant pronounced them man and wife, and Baze dipped Luna to hold her in his arms and kiss her, the waterworks started. Maybe it was the super romantic moment, or maybe it was her reflecting on how much their lives had all changed since the moment Baze and Luna met a few short months before.

Or *maybe* it was because Margo knew that everything, *everything*, was about to change, not just in Luna's life but in hers as well. Because as soon as Baze took Luna in his arms, and Margo wiped her leaking eyes with the back of her hand, she caught the gaze of Knox Remington, the construction foreman who'd made the last-minute wedding possible by flying from Montana to Nevada to renovate a conference room into a chapel. He winked at her, and her tummy twisted into a whole acrobatic performance because she and Knox had made a deal, and that kiss Baze and Luna shared had sealed it up. Knox, whom she'd been flirting with and courting for the last six weeks, was now her Daddy.

And that meant... Well, Margo wasn't entirely sure what exactly that meant, but she knew that at the very least, she'd

agreed to submit to a spanking for spending weeks lying to him about being naughty and breaking rules when she wasn't.

He locked eyes with her and held her gaze, the corners of his mouth turning up in a smirk. The kiss finally ended, and the wedding recessional music started.

Ahead of her, Baze and Luna locked arms and danced down the aisle as their friends and family looked on. Next, Baze's best friend and best man, Alan Dukakis, locked arms with his wife, Lacy, who'd served as Luna's matron of honor, and followed the bride and groom out of the chapel.

Derek, the owner of Rawhide Ranch, the BDSM resort in Montana where Baze had proposed to Luna and Margo had met Knox, followed, escorting Margo's roommate Jilly, and her friend Jade. Baze's brother Zane walked with twins Tessa and Ellie, and then it was Knox's turn. He met Margo and Mariah in the center of the aisle and locked arms with each of them, Margo on his right side and Mariah on his left.

Margo plastered on a bright smile that was forced without being fake, and stared straight ahead, mentally willing Knox to be silent until they'd made it out of the chapel and it was just the two of them. Sure, Mariah, like all their other friends, knew about the terms of her arrangement with Knox, but that didn't mean she needed an audience for those first moments.

Thankfully, the chapel was small and the aisle was short, and they were out in the hallway before she knew it, swept into a wave of well-wishers gathering around to congratulate Luna and Baze.

Margo was used to crowds and accustomed to getting swept up in throngs of people; she lived in Las Vegas for goodness sake, but her emotions were high. Anxiety rose in her chest and breathing became difficult as the crowd separated her from Knox and Mariah.

The people began to swim in front of her in a haze as her vision blurred. She balanced herself with a hand on each knee and bent at the waist, gasping for air.

Several people bumped into her and she almost fell over more than once, unable to cry out a word of warning.

Suddenly, a hand wrapped around the curve of her waist, and she went flying through the air, her legs coming out from under her as a strong arm folded around the backs of her knees. She gasped, and cried out, and then looked into the bright blue eyes of Knox Remington, the man who was now her Daddy.

If Santa ever wore a tux and dyed his beard red and shaved his head bald, Knox would be a dead ringer. His eyes sparkled as he stared into hers, and his red cheeks dimpled when he smiled. His belly wasn't quite as big as the jolly old man's, but it was big enough.

"Well, hello there, little one," he said with a chuckle as he held her in his arms like a baby, tucked close to his broad chest. "You okay?"

Margo nodded. "Yeah, I'm okay." And she was. The second she'd recognized that it was Knox's arms that had swept her up, her heart had stopped pounding and her breathing had returned to normal.

Knox peered down at her beneath bushy, furrowed brows. "Are you sure? You didn't look okay just a second ago."

Margo blushed, lowering her gaze. "I was having a little bit of a panic attack, I think, but I'm okay now. You can put me down."

He leveled her with a dubious stare and shook his head. "A panic attack, huh? What's that about?"

"I don't know. There was a lot of people, a lot of emotion... it was just... a lot." She made a sweeping motion in the air with her hand. "It's over now. I'm all right. You can put me down."

Knox didn't comply. Instead, he carried her through the now dispersing crowd, past the large meeting hall where the reception was being held, down a corridor and into the empty casino. He grabbed a chair from behind a machine, and sat, settling her in his lap in much the same fashion that a child

would sit on Santa's knee to tell him what she wanted for Christmas.

"I didn't know you had panic attacks." Knox's voice was lower and more soothing than usual, like he was putting forth a concentrated effort not to spook her.

Margo rolled her eyes. "I don't normally. I haven't had one in a long time. Probably years."

"Then why now?"

Margo shrugged. "I don't know. There was just a lot of feelings and then a lot of people all around, crowding me, and my brain and body just went into overload." Margo hoped he'd accept the explanation for what it was. She was embarrassed and didn't really want to get into everything that had been going through her brain.

Knox, however, wasn't really good at taking a hint or reading between the lines. The last six weeks had proven that in spades. Margo wasn't really surprised when he missed the cue and pushed the issue.

"Tell Daddy what's wrong, little one." He pushed a stray curl out of her eyes and tucked it behind her ear, his knuckles grazing her cheek as he did so. Her heart started to pound and her palms went damp. She took a deep breath and willed herself not to hyperventilate or get too worked up.

Too late. Fear spilled from between her lips before she could even process the words coming out of her mouth. "It's that. Everything is changing so fast. Now Baze and Luna are married, and... and... and..." she trailed off, cursing under her breath when a tear slipped down the side of her face, hot, sticky and unwelcome.

"And what, babygirl? Tell Daddy what's wrong."

"And that... that... is what's wrong. The Daddy thing. Oh god. Please don't take this the wrong way." Tears fell in earnest now, fast and furious before she could stop them. "It's just... I... oh god. You're exactly my type. You're literally everything I've always wanted. And I know I've been pushing for this for weeks. I wasn't trying to lead you on. This is what

I want. I want it so badly. I want it too much. I haven't been letting myself think about it, about the reality of our agreement, and then suddenly it was here and it was real. My dream was coming true. And I just got this rush of panic because I just knew... I just know I'm going to do something stupid or come on too strong or play too hard to get and push you away, or I don't know... something... just anything to mess it all up really, because that's what I do."

Knox's eyes had widened in his face with every sentence she spoke and now they were bulging as he stared back at her with a bewildered expression.

"Margo, little one..." He paused, seeming to be at a loss for words.

Margo hung her head, feeling sick to her stomach, angry with herself for spewing panic vomit and mad at him for not leaving well enough alone. She shoved off his lap ready to find a bathroom and continue her meltdown alone, but he caught her around the waist and held her.

"Margo, I want to be your Daddy. I've been looking forward to this moment of it being official all week. That being said, if you're not ready, I can hold off. We can step back and reassess. I don't want to do something that's going to cause you this much hurt."

Margo opened her mouth to protest, but she wasn't sure what to say, and Knox cut her off before she could say anything.

"But before you decide, let me assure you that I've thought long and hard about this and I'm confident that I'm ready to be your Daddy and to face whatever challenges that may bring. You aren't going to push too hard and run me off. I don't scare easily, and I'm sure we're both going to mess up at times. Nobody is perfect. I promise to forgive you if you promise to forgive me."

Margo sniffled. It was such a perfect Daddy-type response. She could feel her heart swelling up with happiness and hope bubbling in her chest. Could it really be that simple?

Just as she tried to allow herself to believe it, the long list of men throughout her life who had made her promises only to let her down reared its ugly head. Bile rose in her throat. Not all men were like that. She knew that. Baze was proof. And Knox was more like Baze than any of the men in her past.

Tears welling again in the corner of her eyes, she shook her head and laid it on Knox's chest. "I want it so bad," she sniffled. "But I don't know if I'm ready. I don't know if you're ready. I know you think you are... but... I need you to *know*."

"Little one." He spoke in a tone that was sharp and conveyed confidence. "I do know. I am ready."

Margo pulled her head away from his chest and blinked up at him. "Daddddyyy," she said with a woeful moan, "I don't think I am."

And before he could reassure her, she rose off his lap, bunching her long, swishy skirt in her hands and ran off toward the reception hall.

With a groan, Knox pulled himself to his feet and followed at a distance. This complicated things. More than she knew.

Knox

Margo needed space. He was new to the Daddy game, but it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. He'd listened, and reassured, and done everything he could but he was certain that the demons she was fighting had very little to do with him.

He had no problem giving her the space she needed. While he was excited to finally be her Daddy and already feeling the loss from her outburst, there was a much bigger problem looming. He'd just agreed, *just*, as in, Margo didn't even know yet, to step in as House Daddy for Baze to Margo and the other Littles while Baze and Luna were on their honeymoon.

Baze planned on telling them all tonight after the reception, or maybe during if he could manage to get them all in one place for long enough to do so. Knox was supposed to

stay the night in the penthouse with all of them so Luna and Baze could leave at the crack of dawn without waking anyone up.

There was no way to go back on the plan, and no other possible substitute for Baze, but he was pretty sure Margo would go nuclear when she found out. He had to try to get a minute to talk to Baze about what had just happened and where to go from here.

Entering the reception hall, he spotted Margo in the corner with the other Littles in Baze's care and several of the staff from Rawhide Ranch who'd flown in tonight just for the wedding and would fly out again in the morning to attend another wedding on New Year's Eve at Rawhide. Apparently holiday weddings were a big thing with Littles.

He saw Baze and Luna surrounded by friends, deep in conversation. Baze looked at peace and Luna was glowing. He didn't want to interrupt them, so he scanned the room until his eyes landed on the next best thing. Derek Hawkins, his ex-boss and the owner of Rawhide Ranch. Derek had become somewhat of a mentor to him since he'd first realized he had an interest in the DDLG lifestyle and a certain Little redhead.

Decision made, he beelined for the older man who was sitting at a table in the corner by himself, sipping champagne and keeping a close, watchful eye on his own Little, his wife, Sadie.

Knox reached the table and pulled out a chair across from Derek, sitting down hard. He grabbed a glass of champagne from a nearby server and chugged it down, wrinkling his nose when the bubbles tickled his throat. He really was more of a beer guy, but sometimes a drink was a drink. This was one of those times. He finished the glass and set it down on the table with a clink.

Derek looked at him with a bemused expression and raised brows. "Everything okay, Knox?"

"No, boss. It's not. It's really not. Truth be told, I could use some advice."

Derek nodded, listening intently as Knox poured out the whole story starting a few days before when he'd laid out his terms, continuing to when Margo had accepted his terms this morning with the caveat that nothing became official until after Baze and Luna said I do, and ending with her panic attack meltdown and the predicament he was now in.

"Wow." Derek huffed out a breath when he finished. "That certainly is a dilemma, but it's not an insurmountable one, and the answer isn't that complicated."

"It's not?"

"No, it's not. You made a commitment to Baze and there is no one to take your place. He can't cancel his honeymoon at such late notice and neither of you could have foreseen this hiccup in the plans."

"Right." Knox felt a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. When you looked at it that way, it was pretty black and white and left Margo out of the equation completely. That didn't work for him because she was part of the equation, and as Derek had once told him, not that long ago, Littles had to be handled with care.

"Knox." His mentor's voice broke through his fog. "That part of the situation is what it is. Nothing can be done to change it. And Margo's feelings being different than you thought, that's a complication for sure. It's going to make the next week more difficult and certainly different than you anticipated, but it might end up being a good thing. It will be a practice run for you both so to speak, and it will take some of the pressure off Margo because your attention won't be solely focused on her, but she'll get a chance to see you in action. It might go a long way toward easing her fears."

Right. Knox nodded as if what Derek was saying made perfect sense, but he couldn't help but feel like the older man was putting way too much faith in his abilities to not flub it all up and make the situation worse. His unease must have shown on his face because Derek stood and clapped him on the back. "It's gonna be okay. Just talk to Baze the first chance you get. And talk to Margo too, so she isn't blindsided."

It was a solid, sensible, reasonable plan. The kind of good advice that was nothing less than he'd expected from a man whose life revolved around caring for broken Littles. Taking a deep breath and forcing a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes, he nodded. "Okay, boss. Will do. Thank you"

"Good talk. Go have a chat with Baze. I'm gonna take my wife on a spin around the dance floor before she has a chance to devise any nefarious plans. Trouble seems to follow that one."

Knox chuckled. He didn't know Derek's wife, Sadie, well, but her reputation was well enough known that he knew Derek wasn't exaggerating. "Go. Have fun. I'll be fine. And I'll take your advice and talk to them both and try not to overthink."

Derek left, and Knox waited until Baze had a break from well-wishers and was standing alone with Luna before he went over.

"Hey, boss. Can I talk to you for a minute?"

Baze excused himself from Luna with a kiss on her cheek, and when they were alone, Knox laid out the problem.

Baze didn't seem overly concerned. "That's unfortunate, but it is what it is, and honestly, that's just Margo. She has a hard time trusting the good things that happen to her sometimes."

"Understood. And yeah, I'm sure I can work around it. I just don't want to create more anxiety for her and make her have like... a setback that you'll have to deal with when you return."

"Nah. If that happens, then it happens and I'll deal with it, but staying the course and not letting her fear run you off is going to be the thing that gets her through her anxiety. Margo needs understanding, but not hesitation. She needs strong and steadfast, and she needs to know she can freak out without scaring you off."

Knox furrowed his brows. "Respectfully, boss, you didn't see her. It was pretty bad. I can't come at her all gung-ho, big man, a deal's a deal."

“That’s not what I’m saying. Don’t come at her all gung ho, but you also can’t let her run you off with your tail between your legs. Because she will try. And if you let her do it, you’ll lose her respect forever.”

“Okay. Yeah. That makes sense.” It did, kind of, although Knox had no idea how that advice would play out in their current situation.

Baze looked at his watch. “We have to do the dance, and the cake cutting and photos, but we’re probably going to call it a night shortly after that. I’ll go tell the girls what’s up now. Come with me.”

Knox didn’t think that was a very good idea, but Baze was still his boss, and he wasn’t going to argue with the man on his wedding day, so when Baze cut across the reception hall to where the girls were huddled in the corner of the room, Knox followed. What else could he do?”

He could feel Margo’s death stare on him as Baze got their attention.

Baze waited until all eyes were on him, and then started to speak, outlining the plan.

“I’ve decided to take my bride on a honeymoon after all. We will be gone ten days, and during those ten days, Knox will be staying in the penthouse with you, and he will be in charge. I expect you to continue to follow all your rules, but the consent you give Knox is up to you. He’s not going to come in heavy-handed and start dishing out spankings. If you earn punishments, it will be up to you whether you will take them then or wait until I get home. Since you are good Little girls who are used to being independent while I am away, the same law of consent will apply to your daily care. You can wear Pull-ups and handle your hygiene on your own, and Knox will only be there to help and make sure everyone is taking care of themselves the way they should.”

The Littles were nodding their heads, taking the announcement way better than Knox had anticipated. Of course, he wasn’t looking at Margo. He should have been.

Baze cleared his throat and then continued, “Everything I just said applies to everyone but Margo. Margo, if you earn a punishment, Knox will deal with it then and there, however he decides to, within reason.”

There was a collective gasp from the group and then Margo’s indignant voice cut through the silence. “Mister Daddy!” she protested, using the special title the girls had given Baze when he’d taken them under his care.

Before she could go on, Baze put up a hand to quiet her. “If you don’t like it, be a good girl and don’t get in trouble.”

Knox closed his eyes and sighed. He hadn’t been expecting that little addendum any more than Margo had. He reminded himself that Baze knew the girls, including Margo, better than he did, and opened his eyes to find Margo staring at him.

Cutting his gaze to hers, he mouthed, “I’m sorry.”

CHAPTER TWO

Margo

Baze walked away, with Knox and Luna following and all the rest of the girls turned their attention to Margo with wide eyes.

“Well, ain’t them some apples,” Jade finally quipped, falling back on her southern heritage.

“Rotten, wormy apples!” Margo exclaimed. “I can’t believe they just ganged up on me like that and forced my hand. What I said was I wasn’t ready, so Knox complains to Baze and Baze decides to go on a honeymoon and not give me a choice? Of all the underhanded, skeezy, entitled—”

“Now hold on just a minute.” It was Jade who spoke up, often acting as the voice of reason in situations like these. “I don’t think that’s what happened. I’m pretty sure Baze didn’t just all of a sudden decide to take Luna on a honeymoon just so he could leave Knox in charge. It usually takes more than five minutes of planning. And like, I know money talks and Baze has lots of it, but I feel like he deserves the benefit of the doubt here.”

“Okay, fine,” Margo conceded. “I’ll give him the benefit of the doubt where the honeymoon planning is involved. Even the leaving Knox in charge part is understandable if it wasn’t just a spur of the moment decision. But why did he have to single me out like that? Consent is important for everyone but Margo? That’s basically what he said! It’s so unfair!”

Her friends all gawked at her, their mouths hanging open.

It was Mariah who finally spoke up. “You’re kidding, right?”

“What? No! I’m not kidding. That was totally unfair and uncalled for!”

“Except for the fact that you love to challenge authority, spankings are your love language, and as of an hour ago, Knox was supposed to be your Daddy. Baze knew that just as well as the rest of us,” Mariah pointed out, ticking her points off on her fingers as she made them. “Just because you got scared and chickened out doesn’t change the facts.”

Margo flushed, anger heating her cheeks. “Just... shut up!” she cried. They were supposed to be her friends, on her side!

Mariah got mad at being told to shut up and took a menacing step forward. Jilly stepped between the two of them.

“That’s enough. Margo, Mariah’s not wrong and you know it. And neither was Baze. You are still in control of the situation. If you don’t want Knox to punish you, you just need to behave.”

“Easier said than done,” Tessa scoffed in the background.

Jilly shot her a glare. “You’re not helping.”

Turning back to Margo, she wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “What’s done is done. We can’t change anything. We’ve submitted to Baze’s care and authority and we trust him to do what’s best for us, even in times like this where we don’t understand it. All we can do now is not let it ruin the rest of our evening. Our friend got married tonight. We should be celebrating. Come on, let’s go dance.”

Without giving Margo a chance to protest, Jilly led her onto the dance floor. A slow song was playing, and Jilly wrapped her arms around Margo’s waist. Margo rested her head on Jilly’s shoulder, thankful for the comforting contact.

They moved in time to the music, neither of them speaking. Margo closed her eyes and drowned out the busyness around them.

It worked until she felt a tap on her shoulder and looked up to find Knox standing there.

“May I cut in?”

Margo lifted her head off Jilly’s shoulder and looked her in the eyes. Jilly shrugged, her eyes wide.

Letting go of her waist, Margo nodded and took a step backward. Jilly backed away and Knox took her place. Taking one of Margo’s hands in his, he placed his other hand on the curve of her waist. She didn’t lean into him the way she had with Jilly, dancing awkwardly, without speaking.

“Did you know?” she finally asked.

“I knew that Baze was going to take Luna on a honeymoon and leave me in charge if that’s what you’re asking. Given the circumstances, or what he thought the circumstances were, I’m sure he didn’t think it was a big deal or see the need to tell anyone. It’s my understanding that he surprised Luna with the honeymoon news shortly before the wedding. So that’s probably why he didn’t mention it.”

“I get that,” Margo conceded. “But it’s kinda BS the way he threw me under the bus and singled me out. Consent applies to everyone but me?”

“You’d already given consent, Margo. You know it and I know it.”

Margo pursed her lips and pouted. “It’s still not fair. And it doesn’t mean you’re my Daddy. That’s still on hold.”

Knox nodded, his expression serious. “I understand.”

“I guess it will be good. Like a practice run. You’ll be able to see that I wasn’t kidding when I said I’ll just do what I do and ruin everything.”

“And you’ll be able to see that I wasn’t kidding when I said that I’m ready and I don’t scare easily,” he countered.

Margo let out a soft sigh of relief and laid her head on his shoulder. He’d given the exact perfect response, and her stress about him being left in charge was fading away. A practice run wouldn’t be so bad, would it?

The song ended and the DJ announced that it was time for the bride and groom to cut the cake and have their first dance. Knox guided her off the dance floor with his hand on the small of her back and returned her to her friends, taking a seat a few tables away.

Margo could feel him watching her but was thankful he was giving her space.

Knox

That had gone better than he'd hoped, Knox thought as he watched the obligatory wedding traditions take place. They had their first dance, and then Baze and Luna cut the cake with Baze feeding a piece nicely to Luna and Luna smashing her piece in Baze's face. Next, Baze's friends Lacy and Alan made sweet and poignant toasts, followed by toasts from Mariah and Baze's brother, Zane. The garter and bouquet were tossed, caught by Mariah and someone Knox didn't recognize. Then more dancing. This time the songs were fast, with Luna, Baze and the other Littles doing the macarena, the electric slide and others. Knox wasn't much of a dancer, so he sat and watched from a distance. Swaying with a pretty girl in his arms he could do, but when it came to anything more involved than that, he pretty much had two left feet.

The music came to a stop when all the dancers were panting and breathless, bent over with their hands on their knees.

The DJ cracked a few jokes, read off some well-wishes and congratulations to the happy couple, and then paused, looked out at the crowd, and grinned.

“At the bride's request, before this evening comes to a close, I'm going to ask that everyone, every single one of you, come out to the dance floor and join us.”

Knox grimaced. If Luna was involved, this could not be anything good. As everyone around him rose to their feet and shuffled to the dance floor, he remained seated.

He thought he'd gotten away with it until Margo appeared in front of him, grabbing his hands and attempting to pull him to his feet.

He had a good sixty pounds and six inches on her and despite her best efforts, he remained butt in chair.

Giving up physical force, Margo changed methods and crossed her arms in front of her chest, puffing out her lower lip and batting her eyelashes at him.

"C'mon, Knox! Please... Luna wants everyone out there. That includes you."

"Trust me. Everyone will be better off if I remain right where I am," Knox quipped.

Margo rolled her eyes. "She said everyone! And I said please! Please, Knox, come dance with me?"

He softened. When she put it that way... for her he would do almost anything, including making a fool of himself on the dance floor. He stood and let her drag him to the dance floor. He immediately regretted his decision when the familiar sounds of the chicken dance song came bursting through the speakers.

"Oh come on, really?" He groaned and tried to make a run for it, but Margo blocked his path, and the rest of the Littles surrounded her.

"Be a good sport and do the chicken dance," Margo demanded, wagging her finger at him. Her friends, all five of them, followed suit.

"You're really not gonna give in on this are you?"

"Nope."

"Oh fine." Knox shook his head and bent his arms at the elbows tucking his hands into his armpits to form "wings" as the rest of them did the same and danced around him.

Margo giggled. "You make a funny-looking chicken."

He looked over at her. "Yeah, well, this isn't exactly how I pictured my night ending, making a fool out of myself doing

the chicken dance.”

Margo cocked her head and gave him the side eye. “How did you picture your night ending?”

“With a certain dishonest Little over my knee getting her just deserts,” he answered, making reference to part of the deal they’d had for after the wedding.

She shouldn’t have been shocked by his answer, but she apparently was. She stopped dancing, her arms still tucked into wings and stared at him with her mouth open in a soft “O” of surprise.

“Who’s the chicken now?” he asked with a wink, before chicken-dancing away.

Margo

She stopped still and stared after Knox. Had he really just called her a chicken?

Once she stopped being shocked at his very un-Daddy-like behavior, she chased after him. It took her a while to find him as he’d disappeared into the crowd, which dispersed when the music stopped as the DJ called the night to an end, and everyone began to say their goodbyes and gather their things.

After being waylaid a ton of times, she finally found him outside the elevator bank in the casino, towing a rolling suitcase.

Grateful that Luna had them wear flats and not heels, she stormed up to him, and planted her hand on her hip.

“I am *not* a chicken!”

Knox looked like he was trying hard not to laugh. “Are you sure? I’m certain I just saw you clucking, pecking and flapping on the dance floor.”

“Ha freaking ha! You know exactly what I mean, and it has nothing to do with a dance! You called me a chicken and then you disappeared like a... like a... like a chicken! Well, you

know what? I'm no chicken and I resent you calling me one. And to prove to you that you are wrong, I accept your dare!"

Knox raised his eyebrows. "You accept my dare, huh? Well, that's admirable I guess, aside from the fact that I didn't issue any dare."

"You did though. You brought up that you were supposed to spank me tonight and then called me a chicken."

"That's not a dare. And I was teasing."

"It's basically a dare. You basically dared me to let you spank me. And to show you that I'm no chicken, I accept your dare."

"I didn't dare you."

Margo frowned. It had felt like a dare, but she guessed he was right. He hadn't really dared her. But now she was fired up. "Well, then... then I dare you!"

"You dare me to what?"

Margo's heart skipped a beat, like it was telling her to pause before she said something she'd regret. She didn't listen.

"I dare you to spank me!"

Knox blinked. "That's not really how that works, little one."

"It is if I say it is!"

"That's not how that works, either." Knox took a step closer and grabbed her hand. "You're the one who said you weren't ready, little one."

Margo yanked her hand away like she'd set it on top of a hot burner. She didn't like his tenderness, not when she was spoiling for a fight. "You're a chicken, Knox Remington."

Was she trying to goad him into spanking her? Maybe. Probably. It was her MO.

"I'm not a chicken, but you are a Little girl who can't make her mind up about what she wants. One minute you're mad because Baze singled you out and said the consent

expectation didn't apply to you, and the next you're chasing me down and begging me to spank you. It doesn't make sense. You said you weren't ready, remember that? It was only a few hours ago."

"I said I wasn't ready for a Daddy," Margo explained, exasperated. "I'm always ready for a spanking."

Knox grinned. "At least you're honest. If you want a spanking from me, you'll have to do something else to earn one. Because that particular spanking is tied to me becoming your Daddy and that isn't changing."

Margo scowled. This was not how this was supposed to go.

Knox just winked at her. "The good news is we're together for the next ten days, so you'll have plenty of opportunities."

Before she could come up with any sort of comeback, Mariah rushed toward them with Tessa and Ellie right behind her, Jade and Jilly straggling a few feet back, and Baze and Luna bringing up the rear.

"That was a fabulous day," Baze said when he reached them. His smile beamed from ear to ear. "And now it's time to go upstairs and get ready for bed. Luna and I have an early flight tomorrow."

CHAPTER THREE

December 26th

Knox

Knox woke up at 4 a.m. on the couch in the common area of the penthouse just as Baze and Luna were leaving to catch their flight.

When the door closed behind them, the weight of what he'd agreed to, becoming a pseudo, stand-in house Daddy for six Littles, for ten days, sunk in and he knew he wouldn't be sleeping anymore today.

Sitting, he swung his legs over the side of the couch and reached for the binder Baze had left him. It contained fifteen pages of rules, schedules, allergies, histories, and likes and dislikes for the Littles left in his care.

He looked at the rules first. They were pretty basic. Bedtime, chores, permissions, safety, no cussing, all the rules he'd expect Little girls to have to follow.

Next he looked at the schedule. According to this, everyone was supposed to be up and dressed by eight and it was Mariah's turn to help him make and serve breakfast, which he could do up here or in the main kitchen downstairs. According to Baze, both were fully stocked.

After breakfast, Knox was able to work, and the Little girls were expected to do their chores before they had free time to play.

Lunch was at 12:30 and Jilly was in charge of making the food they would eat.

Again, they were allowed to have free time while Knox worked. At 5 p.m. Mariah would help him make dinner again, and dinner was at six. After cleaning up, the rest of the evening was taken up with baths, pajamas, a movie if there was time and everyone had to be in their rooms with lights off by 9:30. If there were any transgressions that needed to be dealt with they could be done during this time. Knox planned to use the first evening to meet with each girl separately and discuss consent and expectations, both his and theirs.

Flipping the pages, he turned to the information Baze had compiled about Margo, and read, his heart pounding in his chest. This information had been left for him, but it almost felt like he was reading her private diary.

For backstory, Baze hadn't collected much information on Margo yet. That didn't really surprise him. The fiercely loyal and temperamental Little seemed the type to hold her cards close to her chest. Baze had made note of the information he had gleaned after three months of knowing her. Margo had been raised by an addict mother and had a string of abusive "stepdads". She was taken in after her mother's death by her grandfather who was also abusive. She ran away at the age of sixteen and couch-hopped with various friends until she was eighteen. Then she became homeless.

Knox's heart broke as he tried to picture a younger, more innocent version of Margo being hurt and betrayed by everyone she loved and should have been able to trust. It seemed to explain a lot about why she was the way she was, and why she'd panicked at the reality of having a Daddy of her very own.

He vowed to do everything he could to prove to her he was up to the task.

Moving on from the history section, he read her list of likes and dislikes.

Likes: Squishmallows, animal movies, owls and dinosaurs.
No surprise there.

Dislikes: cereal, birds, spiders, following rules. Baze's scrawled addition made him chuckle.

Allergies: shellfish and strawberries

Favorite foods: chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes, chicken noodle soup with Ritz crackers

Baze had collected pages of information on each of the Littles in his care. Knox spent over an hour studying them, getting to know everything he could about each of the girls, and trying to figure out how on earth Baze took care of all of them on a daily basis. The man had to be a saint.

Knox decided his only option was to tackle it headfirst and hope for the best, while preparing himself for the worst, so he stood and stretched, heading for the shower to start his day. He had a feeling it was gonna be a long one.

Margo

As soon as her alarm went off, Margo reached for her phone to text Knox the way she had been doing every morning since they'd worked out their new normal a week ago. And then she remembered. She'd freaked out and pushed him away in typical Margo fashion because if things were going good in her life for once, she knew she couldn't trust it. Closing her eyes, she shuddered and grimaced at her own stupidity. It had likely been the wedding that had spooked her. Or the combination of the wedding and being on the cusp of everything she'd ever wanted with a man she knew was perfect for her.

Groaning, she buried her face in her hands and mentally berated herself for freaking out. Knox probably hated her. She would hate her if she were him. She'd pushed and pushed for a relationship and when it was finally about to happen, she'd freaked and backed out.

"Psst," Jilly hissed at her from the other bed.

Margo peeked at her from between her fingers. "What?"

"Are you still mad? About last night?"

Margo dropped her hands, staring at Jilly as horror dawned. “Oh god, I forgot about last night! Oh no, no, no, no,” she moaned, and buried her face in her hands again.

Knox was here. Baze had left him in charge, and she had no choice but to be good or submit to his punishments.

She wanted that. To submit to him. To know what it would really feel like to be his Little girl. She wanted to be helpless over his knees, getting her just desserts for any number of naughty transgressions. She wanted to hear his gravelly voice call her a naughty little girl and put her in her place. She wanted him to use the implements she’d given him as a Christmas present a mere few hours before her freak-out.

He’d taunted her last night, teasing her with the reminder that that was exactly what had been supposed to happen, and then teasingly called her a chicken on the dance floor.

And then... she’d chased him down and pretty much begged him to spank her. What had she been thinking?

Just remembering it, she wanted to crawl under the covers and stay there until Baze and Luna returned.

For a moment she entertained the idea that maybe she could do that—pretend to be sick and avoid everyone, just stay in bed for the next ten days and avoid any and all contact with Knox or anybody else, except Jilly of course. If one doesn’t get out of bed, one doesn’t have too many opportunities to get into trouble, she reasoned. It sounded good, and seriously tempting until she realized that pretending to be sick would be lying, and when she got found out, as she undoubtedly would, she’d be in much bigger trouble than she wanted to be in. Plus, Daddy-types didn’t tend to take illness at face value and leave you alone to be sick by yourself. Daddy-types liked to do things like drag you to the doctor and take your temperature the hard way. Margo gulped. Just thinking about Knox bending her over and sticking a thermometer in her bottom only to find out she wasn’t sick after all was enough to put all her hide-in-bed, sick-day fantasies to rest. But not enough to actually make her get out of bed and face the day. Or Knox.

She slumped against the pillows and pulled the covers over her head. Her bed was warm and cozy... and Daddy free.

Mico, her stuffed owl Squishmallow Baze had given her on the night that they'd met, was under the covers, ambushed from a night of being squeezed beneath her as she tossed and turned. Grabbing him, she fluffed him back up. "Sorry, Mico," she whispered.

Mico just stared at her with his wide, knowing owl eyes.

"Don't you think we should just stay in bed today?" Margo asked. Even as she said it, she was thinking about how she had to be up and ready and have her bed made by eight and how she really did need to be an angel so Knox didn't have a reason to spank her. If he didn't want to, she didn't want him to. "What was that, Mico?" She grabbed the owl and held him up to her ear, then sighed.

"Ugh. I know. I know. You're right. You're so smart, Mico. Okay fine, I'm getting out of bed, but I don't like it."

She threw back the covers and sat up in bed. Jilly was already up and dressed for the day, making her bed. As Margo watched, she fluffed her pillow, positioned the comforter over it and arranged her stuffies, a bright green frog from Baze, and a cheap pink puppy Mariah had won for her out of a claw machine, on her pillow.

"I need to take lessons from you on how to be good," Margo muttered, watching her.

Jilly grinned and sat down on the edge of Margo's bed. "You don't need lessons. You can do it. You just don't like to."

"Well, of course not. Who likes to behave? Where's the fun in that?" Margo hopped out of bed and gave Jilly a playful shove. "Get up. You're in my way."

Jilly rolled her eyes as she stood, and Margo quickly made her bed, giving Mico the place of honor, propped up against her pillows. When her bed was made, she picked out her clothes for the day, a sparkly blue tutu over black leggings and a black sweater with blue stars all over it with blue star

barrettes for her hair. She grabbed a fresh Pull-up and went into their bathroom to change.

When she came out, all dressed up, with her hair done, Jilly raised her eyebrows.

“Well, don’t you look extra nice today? I’m sure Knox will think so too.”

Margo scowled, blush rising up her cheeks. “I don’t care what Knox thinks. Maybe I just felt like dressing up a bit today.”

“Uh-huh. Sure.”

“Oh, just... hush up.”

“Margo and Knox, sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g,” Jilly sang.

Anger rushed through Margo, but she tried to brush it off. Normally she’d hit Jilly with a pillow or tell her off, but she had no doubt that Jilly would use every excuse to get her in trouble if given half a chance.

She shook her head. “Just be quiet.”

There was a knock on the door, and Knox poked his head in. “Ten-minute warning.” He looked around the room. “Oh, you’re already up and dressed with your chores started. Good girls.”

Before either of them could react or respond, he left.

Margo felt her tummy flip when he called them good girls and tried to ignore the aching in her pussy.

Jilly looked over at her with a knowing grin.

“Just shush,” Margo said again. “I’m going to go do my chores. You should do the same. Unless of course, you want to be in trouble.” She left the room, closing the door behind her before Jilly could answer.

Her heart was racing, her cheeks were hot, her palms were sweaty, and her pussy was tingling. It was going to be the longest ten days ever.

CHAPTER FOUR

Knox

By the time he got all the girls up and going, Mariah was already down in the big kitchen working on breakfast prep. He knew the girls were capable adults who had taken care of themselves for far too long, but they were still Littles. Littles should not be left alone to cook in his opinion. There were knives and hot pans and too many dangers. As soon as he could, he joined her.

She was already well started, a big bowl of pancake batter in front of her, and a strainer full of strawberries next to the sink.

“What needs to be done?” he asked, grabbing an apron off the rack and tying it behind his back. Mariah was already wearing one.

“Um... I don’t really need help,” Mariah said, looking around the room, blankly. He could tell he was messing up her vibe.

“Well, regardless, I’m here to help,” Knox said. He nodded to the strawberries. “How about I cut those for you? Little girls really shouldn’t play with knives.”

Mariah giggled and rolled her eyes. “Cutting berries and playing with knives aren’t really the same thing.”

“True, but still. If you girls were mine, you wouldn’t be cooking by yourselves or even with help. Little girls shouldn’t be using knives or cooking on a hot stove. It’s too dangerous.”

“If you had a Little girl, you’d do all the cooking for her?”
Mariah asked.

He could tell her interest was piqued as she shoved the cutting board and bowl of strawberries toward him.

“I would. Or, if I was in the situation Baze was in, I’d probably hire someone. Baze should probably do that soon anyway. As he starts building, there will be more and more people here, and he’s gonna need a cook eventually.”

Mariah looked thoughtful. “Margo hates to cook,” she finally said. “But I like it. I used to do it a lot at home, and it’s kinda therapeutic. Plus, I hate feeling useless. I wish Baze would let us work.”

“Maybe if you tell him that, he’ll give you a job. I mean, there aren’t really any jobs right now, but there will be eventually. Maybe when he hires a cook, you can get a job as a kitchen assistant. A sous chef.”

“I thought Little girls shouldn’t play with knives or hot stoves,” Mariah teased, tossing his earlier admonition back at him.

Knox just shrugged. “Unless they are under the supervision of a Daddy. Then I suppose it would be okay.”

“Well, what if the chef Baze hires isn’t a Daddy?”

“I don’t really see that happening. Anyone Baze hires to work here on a daily basis will have to at least be tolerant of the lifestyle. I don’t see that going any other way,” Knox mused as he sliced strawberries.

Mariah was just standing there, looking unsure of what to do. Knox knew it was his presence making her unsure, not her kitchen abilities.

“Why don’t you get out the bacon and get it going in the oven?”

“In the oven?” Mariah sounded scandalized by his suggestion.

“It’s easier and less messy. Preheat the oven to 400 and line an edged cookie sheet with aluminum foil, then just lay

the bacon out on the sheet and pop it in the oven for eighteen to twenty minutes.”

“Will it still taste the same?” Mariah started to do as she was told, but she looked skeptical while doing it.

“I promise you, this tip is gonna change your life,” Knox swore.

Mariah giggled. “Change my life huh? I feel like that’s a lot to ask from a kitchen hack.”

“It will, though, you’ll see,” Knox promised.

Mariah finished laying out the bacon on two lined trays, popped them in the oven and set the timer. “Now what?”

“Now....” Knox looked around the kitchen. There wasn’t much left to do in the way of food prep. “Now you can start cleaning up and putting things away while I start the pancakes.”

Mariah groaned. “I like cooking a lot more than I like cleaning up,” she announced.

“Don’t we all?”

“Not all of us. I think Margo would rather do dishes than cook all day long. She’s a really bad cook.”

“Good to know.” Knox filed away that info in his head, saving it for a rainy day.

They worked in silence for a few minutes, Mariah flitting around the kitchen, getting everything put away before she started the dishes.

When she was standing at the sink and he was a few feet away working the griddle, she looked over at him. “Mister Knox?”

“Yes, Mariah?”

“What if... what if we’re naughty and we don’t want to wait for Baze to get home to punish us?”

Knox frowned. He hadn’t been expecting that question. “Why wouldn’t you want to wait?”

Mariah shrugged and didn't look at him when she answered. "Waiting sucks. Having to deal with a whole pileup of things at once instead of just one thing really sucks."

It made sense, but Knox honestly hadn't considered that. He'd assumed all the girls would want to wait for Baze and the extent of his job with any of the girls outside of Margo would be making sure they followed rules to the best of their ability, passing out lines and CT—aka corner-time—and writing down offenses for Baze to deal with when he got home.

Taking the question and her answer seriously, he looked at Mariah and answered carefully, "Let's save this conversation for later. I want to meet with each of you separately and make sure we are all on the same page."

Mariah looked uneasy. "When are you gonna do that?"

"Right after breakfast cleanup," Knox promised. He'd planned to wait until the end of the day, but he could already see that wasn't a good idea. Littles didn't do well with uncertainty. It made them feel insecure and they'd flounder, and that wouldn't be good for him. It was better to get any uncertainties out of the way now and let them know how things would work with him in charge. Plus, it would give him another opportunity to talk to Margo, without her having an excuse to avoid him—which he could already tell she planned on doing as much as possible.

Knox

After breakfast, Knox sat at the dining table upstairs with his hands folded in his lap, and Baze's notes in front of him. He fully expected these meetings to be a hundred percent formality only with no real surprises. He'd remind them of the rules and expectations, and they would say that they wanted any infractions to be saved for when Baze got home. Easy peasy lemon squeezy. The only possible exceptions to this probable outcome were Mariah who, like his Margo, had a bit of a troublemaker streak, and Jade who just seemed too cool to care half the time.

But Jilly was first, and Jilly he was sure, would be easy. She was quiet and timid and not much trouble most of the time unless she let Luna or one of the others talk her into participating in one of their schemes. He knew all the girls, Margo especially, were super protective of her and would probably have his head on a platter if he laid a hand on her—even if she deserved it.

The meeting started exactly how he'd anticipated. Jilly shuffled in, her eyes cast to the floor and took the seat across from him.

“It’s okay. You can look at me,” he joked, his tone gentle. “I don’t bite.”

Jilly smiled but didn’t look up. “I’m sorry, I’m nervous.”

“Nothing to be nervous about. You’re in charge here, Jillian.”

When he used her full name, her head jerked up, her eyes blazing. “Don’t use my full name... please.” She tacked on please like an afterthought, her voice louder than he’d ever heard it. He knew immediately that he’d triggered her and made a mental note to add that to Baze’s notes.

He reached across the table and laid his hand on top of hers. “I’m really sorry, Jilly. I can see that really upset you. It won’t happen again. I promise.”

“Thank you.” She was back to looking down, not meeting his eyes. “Getting back to what you said, I know I have the control, technically. I know I could say that I only consent to non-physical punishments like lines and corner time but...” She paused and sighed deeply. “Waiting for a spanking is the worst. It makes me physically ill. It will be all I can think about. It’s not the spanking itself,” she clarified. “Just the waiting.” She shook her head. “I don’t want to wait ten days. So if I earn a punishment, I consent to you spanking me.”

“Okay.” Knox nodded. “Understood. Now can I tell you my boundaries?”

Jilly gasped softly and when she looked up at him he could see the surprise etched on her features. “You have

boundaries?”

“I do. Everyone should. Mine is that I’m not able to do physical intimate caretaking. I expect all of you girls to dress yourself, put on and take off your own Pull-ups if you choose to wear them and be responsible for your own baths.”

“Ooooh. Thank you. That’s my boundary too. I was gonna say that. I was just trying to figure out how to phrase it.”

“I’m glad we’re on the same page. Is there anything else we need to discuss?”

“No, I don’t think so. I’m pretty sure that’s everything. I’ll try to be a good girl and not make you hafta punish me.”

“I know you will,” he told her warmly as she stood, scooting in her chair. “Send Mariah in next, please.”

He’d expected a few holdouts, but every single girl had expressed the same sentiment Jilly had. Waiting was the worst, and they didn’t want to wait ten days if they had the option not to. It wasn’t at all what he’d expected but he was honored by their trust.

Now there was only one girl left: Margo herself. He knew this conversation was not going to go as smoothly as the others had. Margo had barely spoken to him last night after he’d refused to spank her and told her she was topping from the bottom and had gone out of her way to avoid him all day so far.

She sulked in with her arms crossed over her chest and glared at him from across the table. It was exactly what he’d expected, and he even felt guilty for what he was about to say, but Baze had been very clear in his instructions to both of them.

“Margo,” he began, firmly. “You know why you’re here. You know what Baze said. You heard him yourself. If you choose to break the rules, then you will be punished by me.”

“It’s not fair. I don’t wanna,” Margo grumbled.

He didn’t point out that that wasn’t what she’d said last night in front of the elevators. He knew something had

changed since then.

“It’s not up to you. You gave your consent to me a while ago, and everyone including Baze knows it. This is what he thinks is best for you.”

“It’s not fair.” She pouted. “I’m supposed to have control. You told all the other girls they did.”

“And all the other girls gave me their consent regardless. They trust me, and so do you.” It was herself she didn’t trust. He knew it and so did she.

“At least they gotta choose.”

“You and I have a different relationship. Mark my words, little girl, I will be your Daddy one day soon.”

“If you say so.” He saw a hint of a smile play on her lips but she immediately covered it with a scowl. “Okay, I get it. I have no control. You and Baze are big mean bossy butts who made my choice for me. Can I go now?”

He didn’t correct her. He didn’t bother pointing out what she knew deep down. She’d given her consent already and then tried to renege when the frying pan was in the fire. He didn’t want to argue that point, and he didn’t want to go back on what Baze had said. He knew that if he gave Margo an inch and agreed not to spank her, she’d take a mile and spend the next ten days terrorizing him and making him regret his moment of weakness. He decided to take a different approach.

“You can go,” he conceded. “But before you do, I just want to remind you that you do still hold the control in this situation.”

She was already walking away, but when she heard that, she turned to face him. “I do?”

“Yes, you do. If you don’t want me to punish you, you can choose to be a good girl and not break the rules.”

“That sucks donkey dicks,” Margo informed him. “But fine, challenge accepted.” With that, she turned and walked from the room.

Margo

“Stupid, mean, bossy heads,” Margo grumbled under her breath as she threw herself down on the bed, dramatically.

“Knox is really nice,” Jilly disagreed. “He’ll make a really good Daddy, Margo.”

“I told you, I don’t want a Daddy,” Margo snapped. “I changed my mind.”

Jilly hopped off her own bed and crossed over to Margo’s sitting down on the edge of it. “I know you don’t really mean that and you’re saying it because you’re scared. But I’m really sorry you’re upset.”

Margo looked up at her to see genuine concern on her face.

“What did Knox say?” Jilly asked.

“The usual stupid bossy Daddy stuff.” Margo sighed, rolling onto her back to stare up at the ceiling. “He said if I didn’t want to be punished, I could be a good girl and follow the rules.”

“Oh.” Jilly looked down at her with a bemused expression. “That’s true I suppose, but you’d hate that. You’d be miserable.”

“Maybe. Probably,” Margo agreed. “It’s gonna suck big time, but I’m still gonna do it.”

“You are?” Jilly looked shocked. “Are you sure you can?”

“Of course I can,” Margo answered, sounding doubtful even to her own ears. “I mean, I think I can. Ugh. It’s gonna suck. But I won’t give Knox the satisfaction of spanking me, so I’m sure as heck gonna try.”

“God help us all,” Jilly muttered under her breath.

Margo

“Where’s Knox?” Margo asked Jilly, coming out of her room with her favorite Care Bear jammies on. She’d watched the clock all day, making sure to follow every rule to a tee, and

avoid Knox as much as possible. She had about an hour before lights out, and she was already fully ready for bed, and surprisingly tired.

Apparently being good all the time was exhausting.

Jilly raised her eyebrows as she took in Margo's pajamas, braided hair and minty fresh breath, but she didn't say a word about it, only answering Margo's question. "He's in Tessa and Ellie's room. I think they are getting spankings."

"What?" Margo shrieked. "What did they do?" She figured it had to be something bad for Knox to have decided not to wait for Baze and to punish them himself.

Jilly shrugged. "I don't know. Broke a rule, I guess?"

"But... why isn't he just giving them lines or a timeout and writing it down for Baze?"

Jilly looked down and traced the pattern on her bedspread with her finger. "Margo"—she sucked in a breath—"I don't know how to tell you this but... nobody wanted to have to wait for Baze. We all gave Knox permission to spank us if we are naughty."

Margo's heart skipped a beat as she stared at her friend in horror. "What?" she shrieked. "You all did? Even you?" Now that she heard it out loud from Jilly, she vaguely remembered Knox mentioning it at their "meeting," but she'd been too upset to really hear what he was saying. Now she felt blindsided. She had not seen that coming. Her friends were supposed to be her friends. They were supposed to stand with her in solidarity. They were supposed to give Knox a hard time and be as good as possible, and instead, they'd just rolled over and... and given in. They had betrayed her.

She looked at Jilly, a hot tear running down her face. "How could you?"

Jilly looked back at her with wide eyes, seemingly startled by her hurt and anger. "Margo... we didn't think you'd care. And waiting for a punishment really sucks."

"So?" Margo cried, wiping her tears with the back of her hand. She hated that she was so upset, hated that she was

showing weakness. The fact that the thought of Knox spanking her friends had her so tied in knots just made her angrier. At him, at herself and at them. “So what? Why can’t you just do what you told me to do and behave? What happened to being in control and controlling the situation by being good? What about what’s good for the goose being good for the gander and all that?” Her voice cracked. “What about solidarity?”

Jilly crossed the room and sat next to Margo on her bed, wrapping her arms around her. “Margo,” she whispered, “to be fair, we had no idea you would feel this way. Plus,” she added. “I was good, so you’re yelling at the wrong person.”

Margo didn’t want to hear it, shrugging out from under Jilly’s hug. “That was probably a coincidence. If you really cared about how I felt, you wouldn’t have given him consent, and you would have told the others to behave too.”

Jilly stood. “Margo,” she said none too gently. “I’m sorry you’re hurting. But my consent is mine to give, and you have no control over it.”

Margo knew she was right, and there was even a part of her that was proud of Jilly for standing up for herself, but mostly she was mad and didn’t want to hear it. “Whatever,” she harrumphed, throwing back her covers and burrowing under them so she didn’t have to have this conversation. “I’m going to bed.”

“Margo, Margo,” Jilly gently called her name, trying to coax her out from under the covers, but Margo stayed where she was, and turned away from Jilly, making it known that she didn’t want to talk.

She cried herself to sleep.

Knox

After getting all the girls settled for the evening, Knox walked through the hall, making sure lights were off, and there were no sounds of mischief or whispering or late-night giggle fests. As he paused outside the room Margo and Jilly shared, a soft noise stopped him in his tracks. Seeing that the door wasn’t

quite closed, he leaned closer to the door and held his breath as he listened.

His heart hitched as he recognized the sound of Margo crying. His hand reached for the doorknob before their last conversation replayed in his mind.

“You can go,” he conceded. “But before you do, I just want to remind you that you do still hold the control in this situation.”

She was already walking away, but when she heard that, she turned to face him. “I do?”

“Yes, you do. If you don’t want me to punish you, you can choose to be a good girl and not break the rules.”

“That sucks donkey dicks,” Margo informed him. “But fine, challenge accepted.” With that, she turned and walked from the room.

As much as the Daddy inside him wanted to go inside, scoop her into his arms and cuddle her, she was not yet ready.

“You’re right, little one,” he murmured softly to himself. “This really does suck donkey dicks.”

Releasing the door, he walked away. He’d meant it when he’d said she had the control in this situation. All he could do was wait and see what her next move would be.

CHAPTER FIVE

December 27th

Margo

Margo waited in the hallway across from the room that Jade and Mariah shared, with her arms crossed over her chest.

Knox was in there spanking Mariah for some reason unbeknownst to Margo, and even though she knew she shouldn't care, she was obsessing. She'd been shocked when every single one of her friends had given Knox consent to spank them while Baze was gone, stabbing her in the back.

She held her breath and tried to listen, but she couldn't hear a thing. The soundproofing Baze'd had done was too good.

She was driving herself crazy imagining her friend across Knox's lap, his hard hand splayed across her freckled bottom. How many would he do? Would he use an implement or just his hand? Would he bare her bottom, and if he did, would she like it? Would he?

Margo liked being spanked. Period. But when Knox did it, it felt different. Her pussy ached and her nipples pebbled. Desire rushed through her body, setting her nerves on fire. The thought of Knox spanking anyone else made her green with jealousy. She knew it made no sense. Luna shared Baze with all of them, and never got jealous. Then again, Baze had only had eyes for Luna from day one. Knox was interested in Margo, obviously, but she'd panicked and turned him down. What if he decided to choose a Little who was a lot less

trouble? What if he gave up on her and ended up with one of her friends? She knew she wouldn't be able to bear that. Especially if he moved to Utopia. If that happened, she'd have to run away. She wouldn't be able to stay. She'd be too mad at him, and at herself and at whichever friend he ended up with.

Tears pricked her eyes, and she wiped them with the back of her hand, annoyed at herself for getting so worked up. She'd turned Knox down, not the other way around.

She'd almost managed to talk herself out of caring so much when the door to Mariah's bedroom door swung open.

Crap on a cracker. She didn't want him to see her spying, so she ducked into her room, and stood behind the door, watching as he went into the living room. A few more minutes passed, and Mariah exited, her hair mussed and her eyes red-rimmed and puffy.

Margo took one look at her, and emotion bubbled in her chest. She jumped out in front of Mariah, pointing a finger in her face.

"What did you do to get yourself spanked?" she hissed, her tone accusatory.

Mariah stopped short, taken aback. "I... I didn't do my chore today. Not that it's any of your business."

"What was your chore?" Margo tried to remember, visualizing the chore chart in her head.

"I was supposed to clean the bathroom," Mariah answered with a sigh.

It made sense. Aside from laundry, that was the most hated chore. Whoever had it almost always ended up needing the "extra motivation" to get it done. But Margo wasn't appeased.

"Did you honestly forget or did you not do it on purpose?"

Mariah frowned, looking annoyed. "I don't know. I just kept putting it off and then I ran out of time."

"Well, what did Knox say? Did he spank you or give you some other punishment?"

“He did exactly what Baze would have done. Spanked me and told me that now I have to do it with a hot bottom. Which is what I’m trying to do. If you’ll excuse me, I have to finish it before bedtime, or I’ll be in even more trouble.”

She walked away, into the large main bathroom, and Margo followed her.

“Well, how did he do it? Did he use his hand or an implement?” She leaned against the door frame and crossed her arms over her chest.

Mariah opened the cabinet under the sink and took out the cleaning spray. She took out the Windex and paper towels and started on the massive bathroom mirror. “He used my hairbrush. Why does it matter?”

Margo ignored her question and answered with one of her own. “Did he spank you on the bare?”

“Do Daddies spank any other way?” Mariah answered with a sigh.

Margo could tell she was getting annoyed, but she didn’t care. She had questions and she wanted answers, dammit. “Well, how did it feel? Did you like it? Did he get hard? Was his voice growly?”

Mariah stopped what she was doing and stared at her, blinking slowly. “I... you... Margo, I am not doing this with you. If you want to know how Knox spansks, do something to earn one.”

Margo scowled. Mariah seemed to have forgotten that she’d already been spanked by Knox. “I know how he spansks me,” she explained, exasperated. “I want to know how he spanked you.”

“Well... want in one hand and poop in the other and see which one fills up faster,” Mariah said, then shoved Margo out of the doorway and shut the door in her face.

Margo’s jaw dropped open as the lock clicked into place. “Rude!” she yelled.

“You’re being rude! Just so you know, jealousy isn’t a good look on you!” Mariah yelled through the closed door.

Margo just stood there, pissed as hell. Mariah was supposed to be her friend. She was supposed to be Team Margo. It shouldn’t have been a big deal to answer a few simple questions. Mariah didn’t need to slam the door in her face, and she certainly didn’t need to imply that Margo was jealous.

As she stood there, staring at the closed door, Knox came out of the room Margo shared with Jilly. Margo turned from staring at the door and gawked at him, confused. The last time she’d seen him, he’d been headed into the living room. When had he ended up in her room, and why? When he saw her, he stopped, raising his eyebrows with a look of concern. “Everything okay, Margo?”

“Everything is fine,” Margo answered. Not meeting his gaze, she rushed past him and into her own room, closing the door firmly, with a satisfying thud, stopping just short of slamming it, and looked at her crying roommate with a smile. If she couldn’t get answers from Mariah, she’d get them from Jilly. Piece of cake.

CHAPTER SIX

December 29th

Margo

Thump!

The sound shook the floor, waking Margo, and she jumped out of bed. She hadn't been sleeping well since Mister Daddy Baze had left for his honeymoon leaving Knox in charge, so she'd gone back to bed after breakfast. It wasn't naptime, but there was nothing in the rules that said she couldn't go back to bed. If Knox noticed, which he probably wouldn't, and asked, she'd tell the truth. She wasn't feeling good.

Everyone else had probably spent free time playing and doing chores, and now, from the sounds of it, they were getting into trouble. Either that or somebody was hurt.

Padding out to the common area, she opened the door and was immediately hit with a handful of crayons. Her mouth dropped open as she surveyed the scene in front of her. One of the bookshelves where they kept all their games, toys, and puzzles was facedown on the floor with boxes smashed underneath. Toys littered the floor, and a huge Tupperware container was currently being used as an ammo cache, crayons and markers grabbed out to be hurled at each other from close range. A second handful hit Margo in the chest and without thinking, she bent down and picked them up, hurling them back at Jade. "What the heck is going on in here?" she hollered.

Her friends turned to stare at her, and then looked back at each other. Chaos ensued. Margo wasn't imagining things. She'd gone from innocent bystander to main target as all manner of things hit her all over her body from every direction. Game and puzzle boxes were ripped open and discarded, the contents being used as weapons. Puzzle pieces didn't exactly hurt when they hit you, but they sure made a mess.

"Hey! Stop it! What the heck?" she cried. "Why are you ganging up on me? I didn't do anything!"

"Exactly!" Mariah yelled back. "You haven't done anything! You have a perfectly good Daddy who wants to spank you and spoil you and love you, and you are ignoring his very existence!"

Margo glared at her and stomped across the room. Grabbing a handful of children's paperback chapter books off the shelf, she pitched them one by one at Mariah's head. "Maybe you should mind your own dang business!" she hollered.

Tessa stomped up beside Mariah with a stack of puzzle boxes that she opened over the top of Margo's head. Tiny cardboard pieces rained down, covering her.

"What the hell?" Margo screeched, dancing around to shake the stray pieces off her sweater. "Oh my gosh! What is wrong with you? Look at the huge mess you're making! What in the world do you think you're going to accomplish besides getting us all spanked? You guys are all stupid!" Tears of frustration pooled in the corners of her eyes as she dropped to her knees and started to pick up puzzle pieces. They were all mixed together.

Jilly, who hated conflict and generally tried to stay out of real trouble, walked up and sat beside Margo. "Maybe that's exactly what we are trying to accomplish," she said softly.

Margo halted her desperate attempt at cleaning and stared at her. When she'd interrogated her roomie as to why Knox had been in their room the other night, she'd discovered that it wasn't the piece of cake she'd imagined. Shy, quiet Jilly had

remained firm, refusing to discuss it while Margo just fumed. And now Jilly was speaking absolute nonsense. “Wait... what? Why? You’ve all... you’ve all been in trouble lately.”

“Yeah. And you haven’t. You’ve been stomping around with a giant chip on your shoulder, angry at all of us because we are getting spanked by Knox and you aren’t. You barely talk to us except to give us the third degree about our punishments, and we’re honestly just sick of it. So... we decided to do something about it.” It was Jade who spoke up with an explanation.

Margo couldn’t believe what she was hearing. She had every right to be upset. And yeah, maybe she was acting a little jealous, and maybe she was grumpy from having to be good all the time, but who did they think they were, starting trouble just so they could implicate her so Knox would finally have a reason to spank her? Rage filled her, blinding her senses. Before anyone could stop her, she lunged at Jade, tackling her legs until she fell to the floor.

“Arrgh!” Jade screamed as she went down. She attempted to get to her feet, but Margo rolled on top of her.

“It’s not your problem to do anything about!” Margo cried, grabbing a fistful of Jade’s braids and giving them a good tug.

“Well, you weren’t going to do anything!” Jade argued. “You have a perfectly good man who wants to be your Daddy and you’re being a selfish idiot and pushing him away!” She got a grasp of Margo’s curls and held them tightly, wrapping her fist around them as she tried to roll out from under her.

“Selfish!” Margo huffed, panting from the exertion of trying to keep Jade pinned beneath her. “How am I being selfish? It’s my life and I have every right to make my own decisions about who I do and don’t want in it!”

She leaned down so that her face was close to Jade’s and for a moment, she considered spitting.

“Get. Off. Me.” Jade growled. “If you don’t, I’m gonna knock you out.”

“I’d like to see you try!”

A few feet away Jilly started to cry, blubbering loudly as she frantically tried to clean the mess. Ellie got annoyed with her, and made it bigger, continuing to dump boxes while the two of them sniped at each other.

Mariah decided she'd had enough, and attempted to pull Jade and Margo apart, getting elbowed in the face in the process.

"Owie! I'm bleeding! You hurt me!" Mariah lost it then, her cries mingling with Jilly's.

"That's enough!" Tessa roared. "Stop it before someone else gets hurt!"

Jade and Margo ignored her, and Ellie dumped over the custom dollhouse that Baze had gotten them for Christmas, sending dolls, miniature furniture, and tiny clothes flying everywhere.

"Knox is coming!" Tessa cried.

Margo flew into a panic, leaping to her feet, and rushing to try to clean the mess. She really didn't want to get blamed for this, and she knew she would be even though she hadn't started it.

Everyone else froze and stared at the door. Nothing happened. Knox didn't come.

"Where is he?" Jilly whispered.

"I thought you said you heard him coming," Ellie accused.

"That's not what I said," Tessa snapped. "Maybe you should get your ears checked. Maybe your hearing is bad. Or maybe you're just too dumb to understand!"

"Hey!" Ellie protested, her eyes welling with tears.

Margo looked around the room and felt like crying herself. What in the world had happened to them and how had it gotten started? Ellie and Tessa were twin sisters and best friends. They never fought. Mariah was bleeding, albeit just a tiny droplet of blood on her lip where one of her teeth had knocked into it when Margo's elbow made contact. Jade was sitting on the floor hugging her knees, looking like she might attack at

any moment, and Jilly was tearfully attempting to sort puzzle pieces into the correct boxes.

And Margo... Well, she didn't know how to feel. Confused at how things had escalated so quickly, sad that her friends were all upset and fighting, worried about what Knox would do when he saw the mess, and mad as hell that she'd basically been set up.

She looked at Tessa. "So is he coming or not?"

Tessa shrugged. "I mean... I didn't hear him or anything. But he will be eventually. Look at the clock."

They all swung their gaze to the oversized clock on the back wall. Margo's heart sank. It was almost 12:30. Tessa was right. Knox would be here any minute to make them lunch.

"Crap on a cracker," Margo swore. "You guys all suck. Seriously. If I get blamed, I'm never gonna forgive you for this."

She regretted it almost instantly, but she didn't take it back. Nobody else said a word. They all tried to clean, but it was futile. The mess they'd made would take days to properly clean up. Not minutes. Finally they heard the ding of the elevator, followed by the heavy footsteps of Knox's work boots. The doorknob twisted. Margo held her breath and squeezed her eyes shut.

"What in the world?" Knox roared, his voice louder and meaner than Margo had ever heard him sound.

"Girls!" he barked. "Please tell me I missed an earthquake or some other perfectly logical explanation for such chaos."

Nobody spoke, and Margo heard him move closer, stomping toward them. "For heaven's sake. Is that... is Mariah bleeding?"

"It's just a little bit. I bit my lip. It's okay!" Mariah squeaked. Nobody else said a word.

"Somebody start explaining right now!"

Still nobody spoke. Margo's stomach churned and bile rose up in her throat.

“Okay. If we have to do this the hard way, we will. Line up in a row in front of me.”

Margo’s legs felt like Jell-O as she pulled herself to her feet, taking her place in the center of the line with Jilly and Mariah on either side of her, Jade beside Jilly and Tessa and Ellie on the other side of Mariah.

“Somebody explain now,” he commanded. “I don’t really care who it is.”

Margo shifted from side to side, a whimper escaping her lips. She couldn’t believe her friends weren’t speaking up. She sure wasn’t gonna. It wasn’t her fault.

Knox

“Oh, you’ve done it now, haven’t you?” Knox looked out at the row of guilt-ridden faces, zeroing in on one in particular. Margo squirmed underneath his gaze, but like the others she said nothing, clamping her lips tightly together.

Knox wasn’t sure what to make of the disaster he’d walked into. It wasn’t just the mess. There was a tense undercurrent in the room that he couldn’t quite put his finger on. Were they just refusing to cooperate because they erroneously thought it would keep them out of trouble, or was it something else?

He looked down the line of girls again and tried to determine who looked the guiltiest. If he went by facial expressions, it was Jilly, but she always looked guilty when there was trouble. It was because she was so sensitive and tender-hearted. Moving on from her, he studied them all again. If he went by body language, Margo looked the guiltiest and given her reputation, she was a safe bet.

If he went after her, and he was wrong, and she wasn’t behind it, accusing her would be a good way to smoke the other girls out. They were all fiercely protective and quick to stick up for each other. Hedging his bets, he took a step closer, singling her out.

“I knew you wouldn’t be able to keep up the good girl act for long. After all, spankings are your love language. Prepare to feel very loved, little one. Go into my room and wait for me.”

Margo stared him down for a full minute before stomping off. He frowned. Something felt off. He addressed the other girls.

“The rest of you march your butts to your rooms and stick your noses in a corner. I’m setting a timer for ten minutes. After that, you’re all writing your naughties down in your journal for Mister Daddy to read about when he comes home, getting yourselves changed and going down for a nap.”

“What about lunch?” Jade asked quietly.

“You’ll spend lunchtime reflecting on your behavior instead of eating,” he informed them sternly.

Again, he waited for some sort of protest or explanation that would point a finger at someone. Obviously, whatever had happened had not happened in a vacuum, but there had to be a catalyst. If anyone knew what it was, they weren’t saying.

Mariah opened her mouth, and he inhaled, waiting to see what she would say, where she would place blame, and who she would stick up for.

“But Margo doesn’t have to have a nap?” Mariah pouted. “That’s not really fair.”

That was all she said. Knox blinked but didn’t let it throw him off course.

“Oh, Miss Margo will be getting a nap,” he answered. “I promise you that. She’ll just be having her nap with a very sore bottom.”

“And the rest of us?”

“You’ll go to bed with sore bottoms tonight once I get to the bottom of exactly what happened.”

“Yes, Mister Knox.”

“Go on now. Corners, all of you. Hurry up. I’m not setting the timer until everyone is ready.”

They all scattered, rushing to their rooms to obey, and he stuck his head into the room he was using to give Margo the same instruction as everyone else.

He checked on them all before starting the timer, then went back to the common room and stared out at the mess. What the hell had happened? Every puzzle and game had been upended, with the pieces thrown about the room. Crayons and markers littered the floor with doll clothes thrown in for good measure. It looked like they’d had a massive food fight of sorts, but with toys. He shook his head. If it was even possible, it would take them days to clean up the mess, sorting game and puzzle pieces into the correct boxes. And if it wasn’t possible, he’d recommend Baze take the price out of their hides.

The timer went off and he stood in the hallway between the rooms. “All of you write in your naughty journals about what happened today. Then change your pull-ups and get into bed. Oh, and by the way, you’ve all lost any semblance of free time until further notice. Any free time you were supposed to have will be spent cleaning up your mess. I want every single game or puzzle piece put back exactly where it belongs.”

Ellie gasped. “But that will take days!”

Knox nodded, unfazed by her protest. “Yes, I expect it will. Should have thought about that before you did it. Baze has spent tons of time and money building you a nice play area with lots of toys and games and things to do, and you trashed it. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves.”

His words were met with more startled gasps and a symphony of guilty tears, but Knox wasn’t swayed. He spoke the truth.

“If you’re gonna spank us tonight, then why do we have to write it down in our journals?” Mariah protested.

“Because it’s good for you to reflect on your behavior and your punishment and because this is serious enough that spanking or no, Baze will be hearing about it.” Knox was still

surprised that all of the girls had given their consent for him to spank them, citing the reason that waiting all day for a punishment was excruciating enough but waiting ten days would be torture.

It had given him a whole new level of appreciation for Baze. Taking care of seven naughty Littles every day was a full-time job all by itself. He had no idea how the man managed it with such ease while keeping up with everything else he did.

He waited until all the girls had done what they were told and the doors to their rooms closed, indicating they were changing. He would check on them again after he took care of Margo to make sure they were napping.

Entering Baze and Luna's room, he found Margo sitting cross-armed and cross-legged on the bed, looking sullen.

"Well, little one. What do you have to say for yourself?"

"It was an ambush!" Margo cried, her eyes blazing with anger.

Knox raised his eyebrows. It wasn't the answer he'd been expecting. From what he knew of Margo's reputation she was usually the first one to instigate a shenanigan and never shied away from copping to her part in things. "An ambush?" he repeated. "Explain."

"I was being good. I've followed every rule and done my chores and stayed out of fights and cleaned my messes and gone to bed on time and haven't said any naughty words!"

Knox nodded. "You have been very good. Why is that?"

"Because!" Margo huffed. "I didn't want you to spank me. Everyone else had a choice in the matter, but not me. My only choice was to be a perfect angel so that's what I did."

Once again, he chose not to point out that only a couple days before she'd all but begged him to spank her and he'd turned her down and told her that if she wanted a spanking from him, she'd have to do something else to earn one. He'd expected her to do exactly that, and right away, but she'd gone the other direction and turned into a perfect little angel.

Margo wasn't the angelic type—she was a brat through and through—and it was easy to see that being so good was wearing on her. When he came home for lunch and saw the mess they'd made, he'd assumed her good streak had finally broken her and that she'd been the main instigator. Now, she was claiming that wasn't the case, and he was worried.

Knox crossed the room and took a seat next to her on the bed. "Who started it?"

"I don't know," Margo muttered, still looking cross. "I heard a commotion, and I went in there to see if everything was okay, and I got pelted with a handful of crayons. I threw them back and that's when the fight really started."

"The fight?" He zeroed in on the words she used. "Were there words spoken, or just things thrown?"

"Both."

He waited for her to expand, but she didn't.

"What was being said?"

"Lots of stuff, okay? I don't wanna talk about it. It's just not my fault but everyone assumes it is, and I'm always the first one to get in trouble. They knew that would happen, so they planned it."

Knox frowned. From what Margo was saying, it sounded like her friends were as anxious for him to spank Margo as he was. He would definitely be doing a little more digging to find out who had started it and why, but he also was not about to let Margo get away with playing the victim, when by her own admission, she'd been a willing participant.

"Did you or did you not throw the crayons?"

Margo side-eyed him. "I told you I did."

"Did you throw anything else?"

Margo shrugged.

"Answer me, little girl. Refusing to answer doesn't keep you out of trouble. It just means I'll have to spank you to get

to the bottom of things and then again, depending on what I find out.”

“Fine. Okay. Yes, I participated. I threw lots of stuff at lots of people. Are you happy now?”

Knox sighed. He’d barely gotten started sorting out this ordeal and he was already exhausted. “No, Margo. I’m not happy. I’m not happy that you were naughty. I’m not happy that the play area is trashed, and I’m not happy about the attitude you are giving me. Now, if it was an ambush as you claim, trust me when I say I will get to the bottom of that and act accordingly, but the fact is you participated. You could have stepped away and called me and let me know what was happening, but you decided to pick up a pile of crayons and throw them back and then throw other things while you were at it.”

“Snitches get stitches,” Margo growled, using an old street adage.

Knox chuckled and shook his head. “Maybe out on the streets, but you’re not there anymore. You’re here in Utopia, and here in Utopia, snitches do not get stitches and non-snitches get switches.”

Margo’s eyes widened. “Switches? You’re gonna switch us?”

“I’m gonna switch you,” Knox told her. “The others... it will depend on what I find out.”

Margo gulped. “I don’t wanna be switched.”

“Should have thought about that. We’re going to have a chat while I warm you up with my hand first. C’mon, get on over my knee and take what you have coming.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Margo

She let Knox take her hand and guide her over his lap, lowering her leggings and diaper, but that was all she would give him. She vowed to take her spanking, even the switching part stoically. She wouldn't cry or wiggle or beg for it to be over. And she would not let this happen again.

Of course, it was easier said than done and as soon as she was over his knee with his muscular thighs pressing into her abdomen and his large hands covering her bottom in hard punishing deliberate swats, inhaling his masculine scent, she wondered why she'd been so stubborn and determined to stay out of trouble up until this point. Still, she pushed the thoughts about how good a Daddy Knox would be out of her head and mentally coached herself to stay angry and still.

It worked until Knox started to lecture. She'd expected a lecture, but one about the usual stuff. How naughty they'd been, how big of a mess they'd made, how ungrateful it was to treat the things Baze had gotten for them so badly. That stuff would have been easy to ignore because it truly hadn't been her fault. Knox didn't say any of that. His first question knocked the wind out of her.

"Do you remember when we danced at the reception?" He paused his assault on her bottom and spoke softly.

There was a tenderness in his voice that made her insides feel funny. She wanted to ignore him and not answer at all, but

she wasn't stupid. Doing so would not be good for her backside.

"I remember," she whispered, thickly. She closed her eyes and thought about the sweet moment. Just like now, she'd been spitting mad, and just like now, Knox had somehow managed to calm her down.

"You said this would be good because it would be like a trial run, but it hasn't been, has it?"

Margo shrugged. Knox kept going.

"You've been stressing yourself out trying to be perfect, and basically avoiding me at all costs. Doesn't really give me a chance to show off my Daddy skills for you, does it?"

"You've been showing them off just fine to the other girls!" Margo blurted, immediately wincing at how jealous and petty she sounded.

"I've shown them my discipline skills, not my Daddy skills. Those two things are not the same."

The suggestive tone in his voice recalled the moments she'd seen that side of him. The time he'd bent her over in the lobby and bared her bottom for his inspection and the time he'd built her a timeout chair with a hole in the seat for Christmas. Margo had feigned innocence, but she was pretty sure she knew exactly what the hole was for. The other girls had never seen that side of him. She knew that for a fact. She'd interrogated them after every spanking.

"I gave you a chance to show off to me, and you turned me down cold," Margo sputtered, clenching her bottom as Knox lay down a new round of swats across her sit spots. His unexpected lecture was making it hard for her to remain stoic. She tended to cry when she was angry or guilty and he was managing to make her feel both. But it wasn't her fault, it was his, and she wasn't backing down.

"You gave me a chance to spank you? Oh, you mean when you cornered me by the elevators and pressured me into walking back the terms of our agreement so that you could get what you wanted while I got nothing in return?"

Damn. When he put it that way, her resolve wavered. To Margo, at the time, it had felt like a dare and seemed like a perfect solution. But what Knox was saying made sense.

“Little one,” he said, resting a massive hand across the center of her bottom, “I didn’t refuse to spank you. I refused to spank you for that one thing only until such time that I become your Daddy as per our original agreement. I told you I’d be more than happy to spank you if you did something else to warrant it. You chose not to.”

“So!” Margo hollered. “I don’t hafta be naughty if I don’t want to.”

“You certainly don’t. If you were being good for the sake of it, with a soft heart, that would be one thing. But that’s not what you’re doing is it?”

“I-I don’t know what you mean...” Margo’s voice lowered from a yell to a whisper as she turned over his words in her mind.

“Don’t you? Well, let me enlighten you. You got angry at me and tried to control the situation. When I didn’t let you, you twisted my refusal into a rejection. When your friends agreed to let me punish them rather than wait ten days and let everything pile up, you used it to solidify your anger and interrogate your friends about every single detail of every punishment they received until they were sick of it and you were upset.”

“I didn’t do that,” Margo whispered. She didn’t even believe herself.

“I think you know that you did. You weren’t being good to be helpful and prove to me what a good girl you could be. You were doing it out of spite, to push me away. And you were isolating yourself from your friends in the process.”

“I didn’t mean to,” Margo whispered. Tears pricked the corners of her eyelids and guilt squeezed her gut and heart.

Knox was a good Daddy. He had the instincts. She’d known that already, but he proved it when he picked up on her

emotional break and used it to his advantage, refusing to let her freeze up again.

“You didn’t mean to, but you did. You like to be in control, even about not being in control. You already had the upper hand in our relationship, but it wasn’t enough for you. You wanted to have your cake and eat it too, so you tried to goad me into letting you top from the bottom, and when it didn’t work, you punished not only me but everyone else around you.”

Knox kept up a steady stream of punishing swats as he spoke, heating her bottom with his hand, crumbling her resolve and pushing her emotions to the surface.

And if that wasn’t enough, he sealed the deal with his next sentences.

“I want to be your Daddy. Despite my inexperience, I know I’m ready. And I’m willing to do everything I can to prove it to you every chance I get. But I can’t do that if you’re pushing me away.”

“Yes, Sir.” Margo broke, sobbing when he said he still wanted her, and reiterated the same things he’d said after the wedding. Until now, Baze was the only man Margo had met who was willing to do the work to prove himself. Everyone else had always decided she wasn’t worth the trouble and walked away.

“You said you would look at this time as a trial run,” Knox continued, ignoring her cries, “and I’m more than happy to do that with you, but you’d have to let me in and stop pushing me away.”

“Okay,” Margo sobbed. It wasn’t that she didn’t mean it. It was just that at this point she’d say anything to get him to stop talking.

But Knox didn’t stop, as hard as she’d been pushing him away, he pushed back. “That doesn’t just mean stop with the perfect angel act and let me be your disciplinarian for the week, either, little one. It means you let me all the way in. You move in here with me, you follow a set of rules we agree to.

We negotiate limits ahead of time, and you let me be your Daddy for an agreed upon amount of time. You let me show you that I'm up to the task. You let me spoil, spank and do all the things a Daddy does, and you get a true taste of what it would be like to be my Little girl."

Margo was blubbing through his speech and by the time he stopped, she did feel lighter. Her heart hurt at how accurately he'd called her on her crap, but she also felt safer because he'd done so. Baze was the only one who ever had, and Baze was an excellent Daddy, but he was Luna's.

Here Knox was, offering to be hers, wanting it with his whole heart, and willing to do the work to prove it, and she'd been stubborn and turned him into the enemy. But he still wanted her. A trial run sounded so nice. No strings and she'd get a chance to let her guard down and see if Knox was all talk or if he could truly put his money where his mouth was.

"Okay," she sobbed her agreement through her tears.

Knox stopped spanking.

"Okay? Okay what? Okay you'll agree to a true trial run? You'll let me be your Daddy until Baze and Luna get back?"

Margo could hear the excited hopefulness in his voice, and it warmed her heart.

"Yes, Daddy!" she cried, using the title that had been on her heart since the lecture started.

Immediately Knox let her up and pulled her into his arms, wiping her tears and hugging her tightly.

"Little one," he whispered in her ear, "You have no idea how happy you've made me."

Margo nodded, her sobs subsiding. She felt safe in his arms. She was scared, but she was determined to let the trial run its course and give her full self to it, give it her all. If she got hurt, then she'd know better than to trust anyone again.

Truthfully, she couldn't wait to see what letting him be her Daddy would entail. She knew she'd test and push. It was who

she was. But if this afternoon was any indicator, Knox was up to the challenge.

Drawing a ragged breath, she put forth her first test. “Daddy?” she asked in her sweetest voice, looking up at him with wide eyes and batting her eyelashes. “I’ve learned my lesson. I won’t get in fights with my friends, and I won’t push people away, and I’ll stop trying so hard to be perfect. But since I took my spanking like a good girl, and learned my lesson, and it wasn’t my fault anyway, I think we can skip the switching, don’t you?”

Knox

He had to smile at how smoothly she’d worked that in, but Knox wasn’t born yesterday. He knew a test when he saw one, and he was determined not to fail.

He stood, righting her Pull-up and leggings, and looked down at her with amusement. “The first thing you need to learn about me as a Daddy, little girl, is that once I say something, I won’t go back on my word. I told you you were going to feel a switch on your bottom, and you are.”

Margo sighed, furrowed her brow, and looked around the room. “Do you have a switch in here?”

“No, missy. I do not. We’re gonna go cut one.” He patted his pocket where his trusty Swiss Army knife always was.

Margo gasped. “Little girls shouldn’t play with knives!” She spoke in an accusatory tone as if she was already keeping a tally of pros and cons and this was a mark against him.

Knox kept his expression flat and his tone even. “First of all, cutting under supervision is not the same as playing. If it were, y’all wouldn’t be having kitchen duty every day. I know you use knives just fine in the kitchen.”

He waited a beat and decided a negative mark on her mental tally straight out of the gate wasn’t the way to go. “But regardless of that all being true, you’ll do the choosing, and I’ll do the cutting.”

“Yes, Daddy,” Margo responded with a resigned sigh that let him know he’d won that round.

“C’mon, little one.” He held out his hand and took hers. “Let’s get this over with. I need to look in on your friends first, make sure they’re napping like they should be, then we’ll go down to the courtyard. There’s a tree there that should have plenty of nice switches to choose from.”

“I’m pretty sure ‘nice switches’ is an oxymoron,” Margo informed him with a groan.

But she followed him as he peeked in each of the rooms and confirmed that all the girls were sleeping soundly. He looked at Margo’s tear-streaked face and red-rimmed eyes. She needed a nap too.

They got on the elevator and rode it down to the ground level. There was a small courtyard between the casino and the convention center with benches, trees, and a small garden. He didn’t know what Baze’s plans for it were in the future but making a switching garden for naughty Littles had his vote. That was exactly how he planned to use it today.

He guided Margo out the garden doors to the center of the courtyard where a large birch tree stood in the center, surrounded by flowers, even though it was late December. Knox shook his head. That was Vegas for you.

“This is the tree, little one. Pick your switch.”

Margo looked up at the branches and shook her head. “I don’t wanna.”

“I’m sure you don’t, but you’re gonna do it anyway, because if I have to do it for you, you’re gonna get twice as many.”

“Crap on a cracker!” Margo exclaimed. “Oh okay, fine!” She marched around the tree, examining all the branches, before stopping and pointing. “That one.”

Knox trained himself to keep a blank expression as he surveyed her choice. It was thinner than one he would have picked, and, therefore, much more stingy and painful. He

could tell by Margo's triumphant expression that she wasn't privy to that bothersome little fact.

"That'll work," he said, taking his knife from his pocket and cutting it down. He cut a few extras too, and leaned them against the tree, holding on to the one she had picked.

Margo eyed them suspiciously. "What are those for?"

"Those are for just in case."

"Just in case what?"

"Just in case the one you picked breaks, and in case I need to use a switch on any of your friends later."

Margo didn't seem to like that answer as she crossed her arms over her chest and glowered at him. "Listen..." She stopped short after just one word and sighed. "I don't want you to think I'm topping from the bottom cause I'm not trying to, and it has nothing to do with me. I'll submit to your punishment."

"Okay... where's the but? I'm listening, little one." He focused his attention on plucking the leaves from Margo's switch and whittling it smooth so there were no poky knobs sticking out.

"You can't use a switch on Mariah. Her parents used to and I'm pretty sure she'd freak out. She's said before it would be a hard limit, but I don't know if it's on any of Baze's notes because he isn't a switch kinda guy and it probably hasn't come up."

Knox nodded. "Understood. Thank you for letting me know. What about using a switch on someone in front of Mariah? Would that trigger her also?"

Margo frowned, shrugged her shoulders and shook her head all at once. "Personally, I wouldn't risk it."

"Got it. Anything else I should know?"

"Jilly. She's fragile. You have to be careful with her. You can't be as harsh as you would be with the others. I'm honestly shocked she consented to let you punish her at all. I thought she only trusted Baze."

“I’m aware of Jilly’s past, and her fragility. I’m sure you’re aware that while she has earned punishments since I’ve been here, and she has consented to being spanked if the situation warrants it, I’ve been opting for the non-physical kind of punishments. I haven’t laid a hand on her.”

“Is that still going to be true after tonight, though?” Margo asked pointedly.

“I’m not sure,” Knox answered honestly. “Probably not.” He pursed his lips and made a snap decision. “I won’t use a switch on her either. Anyone else you want to stick up for?”

“No, Sir. That’s everyone.”

“And you’ve agreed to accept the punishment I’ve chosen?”

She hesitated for just a moment and he could tell she was nervous, but she squared her shoulders and looked him in the eyes. “Yes, Sir.”

“All right then. Very good. Pull down your leggings and diaper and bend over and touch your toes.”

Margo went slack-jawed, gaping at him. “Ou-out here?” she stuttered.

“No better place,” he confirmed. “No danger of waking up your friends, and nobody’s going to happen along. Do as you’re told.”

Margo

What was it with this man and making her bare her bottom in public places? Okay, the hotel was currently under construction and closed to the public so they weren’t actually public places per se, but they weren’t behind the privacy of closed doors either.

It also wasn’t the first time he’d pulled this. The first time he’d punished her he’d met her in the casino after a spanking from Baze and made her pull down her diaper and pajamas and bend over to let him examine her bottom so he could ensure Baze had spanked her thoroughly before making her

stand bare-assed in the corner of the casino where Baze or any of her friends could have happened by.

Now Baze was in Jamaica, and all of her friends were asleep, and the wedding guests were all gone, so the chance of anyone seeing them was basically zero, but it was still humiliating. Apparently her Daddy had an exhibitionist streak with a side of humiliation kink.

Still, she did as she was told, pulling her leggings and Pull-up to her feet, she bent at the waist and grabbed her ankles, painfully aware that the position gave him a clear view of all her most private places. The blood rushed to her head and her heart pounded in her chest.

“You’re getting six,” he told her. It seemed like a really low number, almost like he’d be better off not spanking her at all for all the effect it would have.

He took his position an arm’s length behind her, and she heard a strange whizzing noise as the switch flailed through the air on its way to her bottom.

When it hit, it took a moment for her to feel anything, and then sudden and intense pain seemed to slice through her, nearly knocking her off balance.

She jumped out of position and reached behind her, grabbing her bottom with both hands. She whirled on him. “What in the name of all that is holy was that?” she shrieked, bouncing in place as if the cold air would somehow lessen the pain she was feeling.

“That is a switch, chosen by an inexperienced Little who thought she was going to best her Daddy, not knowing that the thinnest switches are the most wicked,” Knox answered with a grin.

Margo glared at him. “Why didn’t you warn me?”

“That doesn’t really fall within the parameters of my job description. How was I supposed to know you didn’t do that on purpose? After all, spanking is your love language.”

“Well, I didn’t do it on purpose! I didn’t know! Let me choose a different one.” She sidled up to the tree and looked

up into the branches, but all she saw were more super skinny and way too thick ones. Apparently Knox had already chosen all the good switches. She pointed to his collection at the base of the tree. “Let’s use one of those instead.”

Knox shook his head. “No dice, little one.”

“But it hurrtrsss!” Margo cried, glaring both at him and the switch he held in his hand.

“It’s supposed to. I chose a lower number because of the switch you picked. If I used a different one, it wouldn’t be that big a difference and you’d still get twice as many.”

“Twice as many?” Margo whined. “That’s not fair.”

“Maybe. It’s also irrelevant because it’s not on the table. Now get back in position or I’m starting over.”

She thought about arguing and whining some more to try to get him to change his mind but remembered what he’d said earlier about keeping his word and thought better of it. She was weeping as she bent over in front of him.

“Five more,” Knox told her. “Try to stay in position this time, or I will start over,” he repeated his earlier threat.

The second one hurt as much as the first and for a moment she forgot to breathe. She hated this. Switches were not her love language. Margo kept a tight hold on her ankles, forcing herself to not move as she braced herself for the next.

The third and fourth fell in quick succession, one right below the other, raising identical lines of fire across her backside. Hot tears soaked her face, blurring her vision. She didn’t dare let go of her ankles to wipe them away.

“Last one,” Knox promised. She heard it slice through the air and winced at the sound it made. When it hit, she shrieked, and as soon as it was over, she jumped up and grabbed her bottom.

Knox opened his arms and she stumbled into them. “Not a fan of the switch, huh, little one?”

“It’s stupid!” Margo cried into the soft flannel of his work shirt. “So, so stupid. I don’t want you to use it ever again!”

“How about I make you a deal? I’ll only use it if you do something very naughty like lie to your Daddy or try to push me away. How does that sound?”

Margo sniffled. It sounded truly awful because she was sure she’d end up doing both of those things at some point, but it also sounded very Daddy-like. Luna hated Baze’s belt, and he only used it on her and only for the most egregious offenses.

She wiped her eyes on his shirt and looked up at him. “If I agree to that, will you promise to keep it just between us?”

“Keep what between us? What do you mean, little girl?”

“I mean like... if it’s only for really bad things... can it just be for you and me? Can you not switch the other girls?”

Knox looked a bit stunned by her ask, but he paused to consider and slowly nodded his agreement. “I think we can do that. It will be good for us to have something like that, just for us. Of course, we will hopefully have many of those things, after we’ve talked tonight.” There was a whisper of lust and a hint of suggestion in his voice and when he winked at her, Margo blushed and gulped. She knew exactly what he meant.

“I’m sorry, Daddy,” she said again, burying her face in his chest once more.

“And you’re forgiven, little one. Now, let’s pull up your pants, and head upstairs. Daddy will put you to bed. It’s time for your nap.”

She thought about arguing and telling him that she’d barely woken up from a nap, but she was still sleepy. Fighting and crying had worn her out. She picked up her diaper and pants from around her ankles and pulled them over her throbbing bottom. “Am I going to take a nap in my room, Daddy?”

Prior to her spanking, and then talking, she would have fought to do so, but now she really hoped the answer was no.

“No, little one.” Knox took her hand and led her from the courtyard. “From now on, you sleep in Daddy’s bed where you belong.”

His answer made the prospect of a second nap totally worth it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Knox

Once they were back in the penthouse, he changed Margo's diaper, and put a salve on her bottom before dressing her in fresh jammies. It was the middle of the day, but they wouldn't be going anywhere.

Margo was surprisingly sweet and compliant through the whole thing, allowing him to change, clean and dress her without argument. He carried her to bed, and laid her under the covers, tucking them tightly around her.

“Daddy, I don't have Mico,” Margo cried.

“Mico?”

“Mico is my squishy owl. He always goes to bed with me, and I can't sleep without him.”

“He's in your room?”

Margo nodded and Knox grunted. From what he knew of Jilly's past, the last thing she needed was to wake up and find him rummaging in their room looking for a damned stuffed owl.

“I'll tell you what,” he said, taking off his jeans and flannel shirt and climbing into bed beside her. “How about for this nap, I'll be your squishy owl, and after dinner tonight we'll go in your room and get Mico, and anything else you'll need to stay with Daddy until Baze and Luna get back. Will that work?”

Margo looked dubious, but she cuddled against his chest. "I also don't have my binky," she grumbled.

"Now, that I can actually do something about," Knox announced. Shifting his body slightly, he opened the nightstand drawer and produced a brand-new pink pacifier still in the packaging.

"Yay!" Margo cried. Then she sobered. "If it's in Baze's drawer then it's supposed to be for Luna. Maybe I shouldn't use it."

"It's not been used, and I'll replace it," Knox promised. "And besides, Baze would understand it was an emergency." He ripped open the packaging and handed the binky to Margo who popped it in her mouth, cuddled close to his chest, and started sucking away happily.

She winced when Knox reached down and wrapped his arms around her bottom, surely making it ache, but after the initial gasp of pain and surprise, she sighed happily, her eyes glazed over, and she snuggled in closer.

Knox held her until she was asleep, enjoying the way it felt to have her finally in his arms, until he started to hear movement in the other rooms and the common areas. Carefully moving from the bed so as not to disturb Margo, he pulled his clothes back on and padded out to the living room where all five girls were picking up crayons and markers and doll clothes.

"Not gonna wait for Margo to join you?" he asked.

Jilly shrugged and wouldn't meet his eyes. "We don't really need her help," she whispered at the same time Mariah said, "She can help later."

Their agreeable attitudes and the fact that their answers didn't quite match tipped him off. He was pretty sure there was something to Margo's set-up theory.

He stood in the center of the room and tapped his chin. "Girls..." he began in a warning tone. "I appreciate you starting to clean up without having to be told and trust me

when I say that's how you'll be spending all day every day until it's done, but right now, I want to see your journals."

The girls all froze, stopping what they were doing, and looked at each other with wide eyes. His gut knotted. "Now," he commanded loudly.

They jumped to their feet and ran to their respective rooms, each returning clutching a leather-bound journal to their chest.

Knox took a seat at the dining table and waited as each girl dropped off theirs in front of him and rushed off to continue cleaning.

He grunted and opened the first one. It was Jade's. He didn't expect to get a full story from any one entry but hoped that the combination of all the stories would give him a clear picture of what had happened and some insight into why Margo was so insistent that it had been an ambush.

Thirty minutes later, Knox was seething as he closed the last book. Each girl had given a piece of a full picture, but as he'd expected, Jilly had gone into the most detail. After reading all the stories, one thing was abundantly clear: Margo was right. It had been an ambush. An ambush with the best of intentions, but still an ambush. From what he'd read, a perfectly angelic Margo was too far from the norm. It had put everyone on edge. They were tired of tiptoeing around her, they were tired of her pouting face, and they were tired of being interrogated each time one of them got in trouble from Knox.

He'd expected as much but hadn't realized the resentment would go this far. Beyond the annoyance, there was sadness that Margo had pushed him away, frustration that she'd had what she wanted and given it up, and a genuine desire to see Knox win Margo over.

Knox had to give credit where it was due. They'd done what they'd set out to do. He'd gotten his in, and once he had, he'd used it to his full advantage just as they'd hoped he would. But their methods were dubious. On paper, the fight

sounded like it had been way worse than he'd been able to get out of Margo. It had gotten mean and even physical.

He shook his head. He had no idea how Baze would handle a situation like this, and he was tempted to leave it for him, but there were a number of reasons he wouldn't be able to do that. First and foremost, his own anger. He wasn't so angry that he couldn't safely and fairly hand out punishments, but he was angry enough that if he didn't do something to have his say and put this in the past, it would fester, and he wouldn't do as good a job taking care of them as he should. The second reason was Margo. As hard-assed as she liked to pretend that she was, she was also fiercely loyal and protective of her friends. He knew of many previous instances where she'd thrown herself to the wolves, so to speak, to save her friends or to help them in the way they'd helped her. The difference was her friends were usually in on the plan. Margo hadn't been, and even though it had worked out in the long run, she'd been hurt, and she was owed an apology.

And the last reason was for the sake of the girls themselves. They hadn't wanted to wait for punishments for minor things like skipping chores or being late to bed because they'd said it would stress them out too much. Waiting to be punished for something like this would pretty much kill them.

He folded his hands on the table as he gathered his thoughts and glanced over to see them all watching him. When they knew they'd been caught, they looked away and continued what they were doing: attempting the impossible feat of sorting puzzle pieces.

He decided not to do or say anything until Margo was up. He didn't have to wait long. Twenty minutes later, she shuffled into the room, rubbing sleep from her eyes, and sidled up to him.

“Hi, Daddy.”

“Well, hello there, Miss Marguerite Mae,” he said, turning his chair and opening his arms. She stepped into them and he pulled her into his lap. Cue the chorus of delighted giggles from the peanut gallery.

Their stifled giggles caught Margo's attention, and she looked guiltily up at him. "I guess I should probably go help, huh, Daddy?"

It felt un-Daddy-like telling her not to, but he held her tight on his lap and gave a slight shake on his head. "Let's just wait on that for a minute."

She gave him a quizzical look, but stayed put, and he whistled loudly, getting the attention of the room at large.

"Girls, come and line up, please," he directed, holding back a smirk when they rushed to obey.

When they were lined up in front of him, side by side, he regarded them sternly.

"After reading your journal entries about today's events, I know two things. You love Margo dearly and you owe her an apology."

Margo looked at her friends and then at him with questions in her eyes and Knox continued, "It seems to me like the fair thing to do at this point would be to let Margo read everything that I read. Then I'll decide how to handle it."

Five wide-eyed Little girls gasped, casting their gazes to the floor and hanging their heads in shame.

Margo looked from them to Knox, her eyes also wide as she realized what he was saying. "I was right, wasn't I? I told you so! It was an ambush!"

"Just read, little one." He pushed the pile of journals toward her and didn't dismiss the others, preferring to let them squirm.

Margo dived into the pile, reading in the same order he had, starting with Mariah and ending with Jilly. When she finished, she closed the last book with a little too much force and frowned.

"How do you feel, little one?"

"A little sad and a little mad, and mostly glad."

“I feel the same,” he admitted. “You know what’s bothering me, though?”

“What’s that, Daddy?”

“It’s bothering me that you’ve been punished, and your friends haven’t.”

“Oh.” She twisted her lips into a frown. “That’s not bothering me.”

“It’s not?” He wasn’t the only one in the room surprised by her admission. All of the other girls were watching her with shocked expressions.

Margo shook her head. “Not really. They did it because they love me. And they could see what was best for me even when I couldn’t.”

“True. But the way they went about it was very naughty.” He spoke more for their benefit than Margo’s, but he was talking to Margo more than to them. “And you were punished first because I thought for sure you were to blame. Not a single person piped up to correct that assumption either,” he said pointedly.

“It’s okay.”

“It’s really not. Not in the least. Not in any way, shape or form. We all owe you an apology, starting with me.”

“You?” Margo repeated dumbly.

“Yes. I was quick to blame without getting the full story, and I jumped to conclusions. It’s unfair that you were the first one punished while your friends went down for a nap, getting off practically scot-free, so I’m sorry.”

Margo turned to face him and placed a hand on each of his cheeks. “Wow,” she said. “You’re really going hard for that Daddy of the year award aren’t you?”

“I beg your pardon?”

Margo giggled. “I appreciate the apology. So, so much. But don’t rewrite the story to expand your own guilt. I did participate, and I did refuse to tell you what I knew. If I had,

you'd have gotten a pretty clear picture of what went down. You did the best you could with what you had, and when you got more information, you apologized. You get an A plus on the Daddy report card."

He chuckled and saw the other Littles nodding their heads vigorously in agreement.

"We're sorry too, Margo," Mariah piped up. "Well, we're sorry we set you up and threw you under the bus. We're not sorry about the end result." Jade, Jilly, Tessa and Ellie echoed the sentiment.

"You're all still getting spankings tonight," Knox informed them.

A collective sigh rumbled through the group. "Yes, Mister Knox."

"All right. Go back to cleaning while I fix dinner. We got caught up in naughties and skipped lunch, so we'll eat early tonight. Margo, it's not your night for kitchen duty, but I think your friends need to handle this mess on their own for a while. So you can help me make spaghetti while your friends try to sort out game and puzzle pieces."

"Yay, s'getti!" Margo cheered from her spot on his lap.

Knox laughed at her antics, feeling much better about everything. The girls would pay the price for their actions, Margo wasn't harboring any hard feelings, and he finally had a Little girl of his own, at least for the next seven days. The trick was going to be convincing her to extend seven days into forever.

"Daddy?" Margo asked, wrinkling her nose in distaste. "Do we hafta have vegetables with our s'getti?"

"Vegetables are good for you," Knox answered rotely even though he wasn't big on vegetables himself. He was much more a meat and potatoes guy.

"Vegetables are yucky."

"I don't disagree but we're going to have one anyway and you're all gonna eat them. You have a choice between carrots,

green beans, and corn. Pick one.”

“Corn,” Margo decided with a resigned sigh. “You hafta eat it too, Daddy.” That was said gleefully as if she were delighted by the idea of Daddy not wanting to eat his veggies and having to set a good example anyway.

“I’ll suffer with the rest of you,” Knox agreed jovially. “Come on now, let’s get started. I like to make my spaghetti sauce from scratch.”

“Daddy, you can cook?” Margo sounded as shocked by this small revelation as if he’d just told her he was actually an alien from outer space.

“I do okay.” He set her on her feet in front of him and stood, stepping over a pile of monopoly money on his way to the kitchen. Normally, he’d use the big kitchen downstairs to cook, but he didn’t exactly trust the girls by themselves right now.

Besides, keeping himself in their line of vision would serve as an ever-present reminder of the trouble they had coming. Sometimes the lead up to a spanking was just as important as the spanking itself.

CHAPTER NINE

Knox

After dinner had been eaten and the kitchen cleaned up and the table cleared, Knox dragged a chair into the center of the common room, in the only spot where there weren't piles of mess all over the floor still. "Sit here," he told Margo.

She looked at him with confusion written all over her face, but she obeyed. He grabbed another chair and pulled it across from the first one and sat down facing her.

Now, Margo wasn't the only one looking confused. The other girls all wore similar expressions.

"Now that I've spoken to all of you, read all your journal entries and learned about your histories and triggers, I've realized that Margo has a major trigger with trust and sharing. That's why she was interrogating all of you."

Looks of understanding dawned on Jilly's face and Mariah's. Tessa, Ellie, and Jade didn't seem to get it yet. Maybe they didn't know as much about Margo's past as the other girls did. That made sense.

"As you probably know, today Margo and I came to an agreement that I would be her Daddy and she would be my Little girl for the next seven days. A trial run of sorts. As her Daddy, I want her to learn to work through certain issues, but I also want to make sure she feels safe and secure with me. For Margo, not knowing what was happening behind closed doors gave her trust issues and led to some uncomfortable confrontations and hurt feelings, which ultimately led to the

events of today.” He cleared his throat. “You’ve all already apologized to Margo, and that’s all you really owe her, so I want you to understand that you can say no to this, but I hope you won’t.”

He stopped and looked out at all of them, meeting their eyes one at a time down the line. “Due to today’s events, and the fact that it was an orchestrated ambush of sorts with the explicit goal of getting Margo in trouble, I’m opting for public spankings tonight rather than private ones. I know it won’t be the first time you’ve seen each other be spanked, but it will be the first time with me. My goal is to expedite the process, but also so that Margo can see for herself how I conduct myself when I am spanking someone who isn’t her.”

Margo

Knox’s transparency warmed her from the inside out, but she wasn’t sure how her friends were going to feel about it. With Baze, spankings weren’t always done in private. Their accommodations had not always allowed for it to be so. So far with Knox they had been.

She snuck a glance at her friends and saw them nodding. “I think that’s probably a good idea,” Mariah offered.

“Then she can stop interrogating us,” Tessa agreed with a giggle.

Heat rose up Margo’s cheeks, the blush covering her face. “I’m sorry about that,” she said to her friends. “I don’t know what came over me. I guess I just felt insecure.”

“No need for insecurity, but it happens, and will probably continue to happen from time to time,” Knox told her. “You just need to remind yourself that I’m your Daddy for as long as you’ll have me, be it a week, a month or forever.”

The mention of forever was a double-edged sword, filling her with pride and warmth and happiness all while also making her want to vomit. She took a deep breath and smiled anyway. “Yes, Daddy.”

“All right. We still need to do baths and jammies and bedtime stories after this, so let’s get started. Who’s first?”

Margo expected Mariah to volunteer, but instead Jilly did.

“I’ll go first. I hate waiting and I want to get it over with.”

“All right, Jilly. Come here then and place yourself over my lap.” Knox patted his massive thighs, and Jilly stood, tiptoed over, and placed herself across them.

He wasted no time, baring her bottom, quickly flipping up her skirt and pulling down her diaper. The first thing Margo noticed was that he didn’t pull it down to her knees like he did when he spanked her. Instead, he let it rest barely below her bottom, affording her a modicum of modesty while still giving himself the access he needed.

He lectured before he started spanking, instead of waiting until he was halfway through the warm-up. That was another difference.

With his hand resting on Jilly’s lower back, not her bottom like he would have done with Margo, he spoke, making both his reasoning and his intentions crystal clear.

“You all participated in this fight on some level. Trashing the play area was bad enough to warrant a spanking, but also you chose to fight with words as well as physical actions, all for the sake of getting your friend in trouble. So you’re all getting a warm-up with my hand, and then a paddling. The severity of the paddling will be determined by the scope of your actions today.” He paused for a moment, hesitating, and plowed forward.

“I also want you to know that for her own part in things, Margo was taken out to the courtyard and switched, and it was my intention to do the same to all of you. I even pre-picked some extra switches.”

There was a loud gasp and Margo jerked her attention from Knox to Mariah, who had gone as white as a sheet and was trembling. She cleared her throat, drawing Knox’s to her to make sure he noticed, and he rushed to continue.

“However, Margo knew that some of you in particular would not be okay with that, and loudly and clearly made me aware of that fact, stepping in to make sure I would not do that. I wanted you to know just in case any of you had forgotten how good of a friend she was and how much she loves all of you.”

Mariah met Margo’s gaze and mouthed “thank you”. The others looked on with wide eyes, having not been switched before and not knowing exactly what they’d been spared from. Margo shifted in her seat. “The switch sucks big hairy monkey balls,” she announced.

Her friends giggled and Knox shot Margo a stern glance, his brow quirked. “Is that how good little girls talk?”

Margo shrugged. “It’s how I talk. You shouldn’t worry about it. Get on with what you’re doing. We haven’t got all night, remember?”

“That’s right. We don’t. Especially since you and I still have to talk about rules and respect,” he said with a sharp warning in his tone.

Margo got the message and clamped her lips together, turning her attention to Jilly.

Knox cleared his throat and did the same. “Jilly, just like Margo, you were not the instigator, but you actively participated.”

“Yes, Mister Knox,” Jilly squeaked. “I’m sorry.”

“Well, you’re about to be sore and sorry.”

While Margo and the others looked on, he conducted a very thorough warm up, using his huge hand to redden every inch of her bottom. Jilly was already softly weeping by the time he finished with his hand and picked up the paddle.

“You’re getting twenty,” he announced.

“Yes, Mister Knox, I’m sorry,” she whimpered, apologizing again.

Margo held her breath as he raised the paddle over the center of Jilly’s pinkened bottom and brought it down with a

loud smack that echoed through the room. Jilly wailed, already seemingly regretting her actions, but she stayed in place, and braced herself for the next. Knox didn't draw it out, laying the first ten swats one after another, each in a different spot than the one before. Margo watched as the skin flattened, and then bounced back up redder than before.

“Your actions today while well intentioned, were ungrateful and disrespectful. I expect all of you to sit on hot bottoms after your spanking and write a letter of apology to Baze.”

“Yes, Sir.” His words made Jilly's soft cries turn to loud sobs.

Margo reached forward and grabbed her hand to comfort her. She met Knox's gaze and he nodded, letting her know that it was okay. Jilly's breath hitched and she squeezed Margo's hand hard.

“Last ten,” Knox announced. He lowered his aim for these ones, catching Jilly's sit spots and the tops of her thighs.

Margo noticed he didn't seem to be spanking quite as hard on the second set, and she knew he was thinking about what she'd told him in the courtyard. She sighed happily. He really was a good Daddy.

He finished up Jilly's spanking, and immediately pulled up her Pull-up and flipped down her skirt before helping her to her feet and wrapping her in a tight hug. She squeezed back, then hopped over to Margo and hugged her before obediently sitting down at the table to write a letter of apology to Baze.

Knox looked out at the remaining girls. “All right, who's next? You pick or I will.”

CHAPTER TEN

Knox

By the time he'd finished doling out spankings, proofreading apology letters, overseeing bedtime routines and tucking everyone into bed, Knox was exhausted, but there was still one very important Little who needed his attention and he couldn't wait to give it to her.

After she'd washed her face and brushed her teeth, he'd sent her into her room to grab some of her things, including Mico, and told her to wait for him in his room. When he entered, she was sitting cross-legged in the middle of Baze's bed, chattering away at Mico, her favorite Squishmallow.

"Mico, I think Knox will make a really good Daddy, but I'm not sure I'm ready to be a really good Little. What if I mess it up again? What if I get scared and panic and ruin everything?"

She was so intent on her one-sided conversation that she didn't notice Knox until he came and sat on the end of the bed. When she saw him, she immediately stopped talking to the stuffed owl and clamped her lips shut, giving him the side eye.

"Whatcha doing?" he asked gently.

"I was just..." she trailed off and didn't answer.

"It sounded like you were just telling Mico about some of your worries and fears."

Margo gave a soft gasp. "You heard that?"

“Some of it.” He scooted closer and patted the owl on the head. “I bet Mico’s a pretty good listener.”

“Sometimes.”

“You know, I’m also a pretty good listener.”

Margo looked at him so intently he felt like she was reading his innermost thoughts. Then she sighed, and flopped over on the bed, laying her head in his lap. “I know.”

“Do you want to talk to me about some of the things you were talking to Mico about?”

“Not really. You already heard.” Margo popped her thumb in her mouth, a tell that let Knox know she was feeling Little and insecure.

Knox ran his fingers through her soft, bouncy curls and rested his hand on her shoulder. “Well, is it okay if I talk? We promised we would go over rules and expectations tonight. Do you remember that?”

Margo nodded and looked up at him with eyes that were wide and full of questions.

“Can I tell you what rules I would like for us to have?”

She nodded again, so he continued.

“Well, the first and most important rule is that you talk to me, always. If something I do bothers you, or you have questions, or you feel insecure, you need to come to me so we can work through it together. If you get scared and feel like you want to push me away and run, that’s when you need to talk to me the most.”

She looked panicked at that, and reared up, popping her thumb out of her mouth. “I don’t... I don’t know if I can do that. That last part.”

“I know it will be hard. It goes against your very instincts, but it’s the most important thing.”

“But what if... what if you’re a bad Daddy? And you hurt me? How does it help me to come to you instead of running away?”

Knox recoiled, feeling like a jerk. He hadn't thought about it like that. Of course he wouldn't. He knew he wasn't a bad Daddy, and he had no intentions of hurting her. But he answered anyway because this was important to Margo's well-being. "Okay, well, that's different. I think we both know that I'm not a bad Daddy, and I won't hurt you aside from spanking you when you're naughty, but if that should ever happen, then you tell Baze. Baze will take care of you, and probably kick my butt."

Knox knew he could flatten the other man in a fight without even trying, but again it was irrelevant and didn't matter because there would be no fight. He'd never hurt Margo and if he did, he'd happily let Baze pummel him.

Margo giggled at his answer, and he chuckled her chin with his crooked fingers, holding her gaze. "Does that answer your question and make you feel better, little one?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Do you understand that aside from that, I need you to talk to me? If you're upset at me or panicky or in your head?"

"I understand, Daddy, but it's gonna be a hard rule to follow. And how will you even know if I break it?"

"I'll know because you'll tell me. That's the second rule. Anytime you are naughty and break a rule, whether it's one of mine, or one of Baze's, and I don't know about it, I expect you to come to me and tell me."

Margo wrinkled her nose. "That's hard too. It means I can't get away with nuffin." Her brows furrowed, and she cocked her head to one side. "But I guess it's good. Although if I freak out or panic, you'll probably already know."

"Probably," Knox agreed. "If it gets to that point."

"Daddy? Do I get in trouble if I get scared and panic? For having feelings?"

"No, sweetie. You don't get in trouble for having feelings. You might get in trouble for keeping them from me and pushing me away instead of coming to me so we can work through it together. Does that make sense?"

“Yeah. I guess.” Margo sighed. “If I panic and push you away and don’t talk to you, what kind of trouble will I be in? Is it big trouble?”

“Well, first, I’d sit you down and we’d talk about those feelings and why you were acting the way you were, and I’d try to help you work through it. And then depending on how you acted when you were having feelings, if you shut me out when coming to me would have solved the problem or if you were naughty or disrespectful, if we both agreed, then yes, there would have to be a punishment.”

“A spanking?”

“More than likely.”

Margo sighed deeply, causing her whole body to heave, and traced a pattern on the bedspread, refusing to look at him.

“What is it, little one?”

“I need to say this, but I know I’m probably gonna live to regret it.”

“Oh yeah?” Knox chuckled. “Do tell.”

“If I do that... really bad again... you should probably switch me.” She groaned as soon as the words left her mouth. “I really hate the switch. But I don’t want to mess this up. It could probably be really good. So if I do something that hurts us, that’s when you should use the switch, Daddy. Knowing that’s what will happen will help me remember to talk to you even when I don’t want to.”

Knox swelled with pride. He grabbed Margo’s hand and looked deep in her eyes. “I agree with you, little one. And I’m very proud of you for coming to that conclusion on your own. I know that wasn’t easy to say.”

“It really wasn’t. What’s the next rule?”

“The next rule is no lying to Daddy. I can’t do my job and take care of you if I don’t have all the information I need.”

Margo gulped, and he knew she was thinking of the spanking that still hung between them. She proved him right with her next question.

“Now that you’re kinda my Daddy, does that mean you’re gonna spank me for lying all those times?”

Knox shook his head. “Not tonight, little one.”

“Tomorrow.”

“I don’t think it will be tomorrow, either. I want to wait until you know you want this to be more than just a trial run.”

Margo hesitated, looking pained and uncertain. Knox frowned and waited for her to speak.

Finally she did, her voice so soft he had to strain to hear. “I think... I think I know that now.” She reached up and patted his cheek. “You’re a good Daddy, Daddy.”

Before he could even respond, she stood, lowered her pajama bottoms and diaper, and placed herself facedown across his lap.

Surprised, he threw his hands up into the air and laughed. “What are you doing, silly little girl?”

Margo remained in position, twisting her head to look at him over her shoulder. “I’m sticking to our agreement. You said when I was ready for you to be my Daddy, I had to be ready to submit to a spanking for lying to you.”

“So I did. And so you will. But not tonight. We have things to talk about and we’re in the middle of a conversation.” He pulled up the diaper and pajama bottoms she’d lowered and pulled her into his lap, hugging her tightly and planting little kisses all over her head and face.

“I’m so happy you want me to be your Daddy, little one. Are you sure though? I want you to be sure. I can wait. It’s okay. I don’t mind proving myself.”

Margo laid her head on his chest. “You already proved yourself, today. Over and over and over again.”

“That’s nice to hear, but I still don’t mind waiting. In fact, I’d prefer it. Today was an emotional day, and I don’t want you to jump into something you’re not ready for. Do you understand, little one? The question isn’t if you think I’ll make

a good Daddy, or even if you want me to be your Daddy; the question is are you ready? For that and all it entails?"

"I ammmm," Margo whined, squirming in his arms.

"You haven't even heard my rules and expectations yet. Can we get through that conversation and then a trial run like we agreed on this afternoon? There's no need to rush. We've got the rest of our lives."

"You say that like you know it's gonna work."

"That's because I do. I was meant to be your Daddy and you were meant to be my Little girl, and we can both be patient, and make it through this week before we make it official. Because when it's official, little girl, you're mine forever."

Margo sighed. "Okay, Daddy. I'll be patient."

"Good girl. Now, can we make it through this conversation so we both can go to bed?"

"Yes, Daddy."

Margo

Patience was not a virtue she possessed. When Margo wanted something, she wanted it right now. Currently, she wanted Knox as her Daddy and the spanking she knew she eventually had coming. But she knew he was right. The unknown was one of the things that tended to get her all up in her feelings and insecurities. So she shouldn't jump into having Knox as her Daddy before she had all the information as well as a solid taste of what kind of Daddy he would be.

She'd gotten a taste today. He'd handled a hard and complicated situation with grace and love and justice, doing the best he could for everyone involved. Margo nearly teared up when she thought about the way he'd apologized to her for jumping to conclusions. Nobody had ever done that before. Then there was the care with which he'd handled Jilly and the way he'd listened when she'd warned him about Mariah and switches. The way he'd realized that letting her see him punish

the other girls would not only give her a sense of justice being served but also would go a long way in easing her insecurities. She even got emotional when she thought about how he'd switched her in the garden and how he'd promised it would be something just between them and only for things that were the worst of the worst.

However good a Daddy he was gonna be, and however badly she wanted it, she still needed to make sure she was really ready. And that meant finding out what his rules were, and what kind of punishments were on the table.

“Okay, Daddy, what’s the next rule?”

“The next rule is respect. It’s always okay to disagree or question me as long as you do so respectfully. And when I give you an order, or a punishment, you should always respond respectfully.”

“I should say ‘yes, Daddy’?”

“That’s right.”

“Okay. What else?”

“Most of the rest of my rules are pretty basic. We’ll use Baze’s rules for now and if we need to adjust them at a later date, we can. There’s just one little thing I’d like to add.”

“What’s that?”

“You’ll find that I’m a little stricter than Baze when it comes to how Little girls should speak.”

Margo gasped. That didn’t sound good. “You are? What... what does that mean?”

“It means that I don’t want my Little girl saying things like ‘that sucks big hairy monkey balls’.”

“Oh.” Margo hesitated. “What about donkey dicks?”

If she got in trouble it would be worth it just for the expression of shock on Knox’s face.

He sputtered for a moment before recovering. “Definitely not that either.”

“Dang it,” Margo grumbled. Her colorful expressions had saved her butt so many times when Baze had declared that good Little girls didn’t say naughty curse words. This was gonna be a hard rule to follow, even harder if.... “Oh no!” she gasped.

“What’s wrong?”

“Can I still say crap on a cracker? If not, I don’t think I’ll ever sit again!” she wailed mournfully.

Knox regarded her with a bemused side-eye. “Replace crap with crud and you have yourself a deal.”

Margo sighed. “What if I forget?”

“Then I’ll have to show you what happens to foul-mouthed Little girls, and hopefully, you’ll remember better after that?”

“What happens?”

Knox looked like he wasn’t gonna answer.

Margo pouted. “You said we were gonna discuss rules and punishments. If that’s the last rule, then it’s time to discuss punishments.”

“I said we were going to discuss limits and boundaries. It’s not quite the same thing.”

“It kinda is,” Margo argued.

“I’m not going to get into specifics of what kind of trouble every rule will get you into because there’s fluidity based on the severity of the offense. I will, however, go over punishments I would expect to use and see if there’s anything we need to negotiate or hard limit.”

“Okay, fine,” Margo agreed with a pout.

“Let’s start. Spankings. Any implements that are a hard no? Any you’re afraid of?”

“Not really. I didn’t like the switch but if you keep your promise and only use it for really big naughties, then it will be okay.”

“I promise to only use the switch for naughties that threaten to harm our relationship, like lying or not communicating.”

Margo blinked, then gasped. “But... I’m already in trouble for lying! Are you gonna switch me?” She didn’t think that was fair, and mentally coached herself to be respectful when disagreeing, whatever that meant.

“No, not this time. That wasn’t the agreement we made and that’s not what I’m planning to do when the time comes.”

“Oh. Good.” Margo nodded. “That wouldn’t be fair.”

“I agree. Moving on to the next thing. Timeout, corner time, essay writing, lines.”

“I already get all those.”

“Okay. Now come some that are a little less conventional. Butt plugs, nipple clamps, forced baby time, soap.”

“Soap?” Margo screeched. “Soap where?” She was picturing all manner of odd things and was thoroughly confused.

“In your mouth,” Knox answered patiently.

“Ooohhh... if I say a naughty word?” Margo winced. Soap in her mouth did not sound pleasant and that rule was one she was sure she would break before the week was over.

“Yes, little one. If you say a naughty word Daddy will spank your bottom and wash your mouth out with soap.” He paused. “If you agree to that.”

Margo stuck her tongue out and made gagging noises. “That sounds really yucky.”

“Yes, well, it’s not supposed to be pleasant. And it will surely help you remember what Daddy expects from his Little girl, won’t it?”

She heaved a resigned sigh and agreed. “Fine, and yes, I’m okay with all the other stuff you mentioned. I’m pretty much okay with mostly everything, and if I’m not, I promise to tell you. Respectfully,” she added as an afterthought.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves. When I’m your Daddy for real and for always, I’ll want you to be mine, mind body and soul. So that brings us to sexual limits. I think anything sexual should be off the table until we are official.”

Margo shifted uncomfortably. Her pussy was already soaked just from this conversation and thinking about all the things Daddy would do to her if she was naughty. Not to mention she’d been in a perpetual state of sexual frustration since Knox had arrived at Utopia six weeks ago. “Respectfully disagree,” she said.

“Oh?” Knox raised his eyebrows, but he looked intrigued rather than upset so Margo pushed forward.

“You’ve already seen everything. You touched me when you changed my diaper, and you see me naked when you change me. You don’t do that with the other girls. So in that regard I’m already letting you take care of me and touch me the way a Daddy would.”

“But sex between a Daddy and his girl is special. I think we should wait until you know you’re ready.”

“I’m ready for that,” Margo huffed.

Knox shifted and she saw him stifle a groan. She knew he wanted it just as much as she did. She wasn’t blind or stupid.

“A trial run should be a trial run of all the parts or how will I know I’m ready?” she stated.

“When you put it that way, it’s hard to argue.”

“So don’t. We both know you don’t want to.” Feeling brave, she climbed onto his lap and straddled his legs, facing him. She enjoyed feeling his erection straining through his jeans, pressing against her aching pussy.

He moaned and gripped her hips. “You really are a naughty Little girl, aren’t you?”

“Yes, Daddy. The question is what are you gonna do about it?”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Knox

Oh dear God. This wasn't how he'd expected tonight to go. He'd thought they'd have a simple straightforward chat about rules and punishments and then both agree that sex was currently off the table. Then he'd tuck her into bed, and they'd cuddle until they both drifted off to sleep.

Instead, Margo had declared that it was indeed on the table and climbed on his cock to prove her point. A stronger man would have nipped that in the bud, reminded her that she was not in charge, and proceeded to show her who was in charge, but after the day he'd had, Knox wasn't feeling very strong.

Dipping his head, he covered her lips with his and kissed her, softly at first, and then deeply, claiming her with his mouth. She tasted like mint and sweetness and gyrated her hips against his.

"Little girl, you don't know what you're doing," he growled.

She paused the kiss. "I'm pretty sure I do," she sassed with her lips still pressed against his.

That was all it took for him to flip her over and upend her across his lap, where she belonged. Unceremoniously, he peeled off her pajamas and diaper, leaving her naked and at his mercy.

"Daddy!" she gasped. "What are you doing?"

He traced a thin red line left by the switch he'd used on her earlier. "Just a little bottom inspection, darling."

Her response was a slight shudder. "Does it look bad?"

"Bad? No... I love seeing you bear marks from my correction." Knox trailed his fingers across the width of her bottom and her sit spots.

Margo whimpered and spread her legs.

"You're wet, little girl," he growled. "Does it make you hot thinking about my marks on your naughty little bottom?"

"Everything you do makes me hot, Daddy."

Her response was a breathy whisper that hardened his cock and heated his core. His gaze swept from her sweet little toes to the top of her head. She was perfect, curvy in all the right places, alabaster skin that turned a lovely shade of pink when he spanked her and a light dusting of freckles all over her body. And she was all his.

"Daddy wants you, naughty girl." He slipped his fingers between her legs and played with her pussy lips before finding her clit and teasing it with his fingertips.

She moaned and squirmed, writhing in his lap. It just made him want her more.

"Daddy," she moaned.

"What is it, little one?"

"I want you... I want... your cock. Please."

He shook his head, chuckling at her wanton pleas. "Not yet, little one. Daddy wants to see and play with all of you first." Removing his hand from between her legs, he parted her cheeks, exposing her tight puckered hole, and pressed his thumb against her entrance.

"Have you ever had a man here?"

"Mmm mmm," she moaned and clenched her bottom.

"Does it scare you? Is it a limit?"

Margo's voice sounded strained and far away when she answered. "For now it is, but I want you to have all of me, eventually. Even there."

"Maybe we'll start with a plug. Get you ready and used to the idea of taking Daddy's cock back there someday."

"Mmmm," she arched her back, pushing her bottom toward him. He pressed harder against her entrance, past her barrier and she relaxed her clenched cheeks, letting his finger inside her.

"Maybe tomorrow we'll start training your bottom for Daddy's cock. How does that sound?"

"Okay, Daddy." She sounded like she was in a state of bliss, ready to agree to anything he said, a fact that both pleased and worried him. He licked his lips and withdrew his finger, lifting her off his lap and laying her on her back on the bed.

Her eyes widened, full of lust as she stared up at him, obviously wondering what he would do next. Standing, he chucked his clothing, pants first and then shirt, and finally his boxers. His erection sprang free, and Margo jerked her head up as she gazed at it with wide eyes.

"Daddy, you're so big! I'm scared!"

"Nothing to be scared of, little one. We're gonna go slow." He moved until his cock was poised in front of her mouth. "Open up. Give it a kiss."

She did exactly as she was told, parting her lips and softly kissing the tip. She did it again and then opened her mouth, taking him in. First just the head and then his length, all the way into her mouth until she gagged. "Oops. Sorry, Daddy."

"It's okay, little one. Relax your throat and try again."

She nodded and licked her lips and grabbed the length of his cock with both hands, guiding it into her mouth. This time she didn't gag, licking and sucking until he tossed his head back and moaned.

"That's it, little one. Just like that."

He slipped his hand between her legs. “Suck Daddy’s cock while he plays with your pretty pussy.”

She continued stroking and sucking but arched her hips to allow him better access.

He strummed her soft folds, loving the way her body seemed to welcome him.

“I want to stick my cock in your sweet little pussy,” he told her, leaning down to whisper in her ear.

“Mmm, yes, please, Daddy,” she mumbled with her mouth still full of cock.

He pulled out of her mouth and held his cock in one hand while finger fucking her with the other. When her body tensed and her back arched and she looked like she was close to the edge, he extracted his fingers and climbed onto the bed, lying on his belly between her legs.

“Daddy! What are you doing?”

“Just... tasting the goods,” he hummed before burying his face between her legs and licking her.

“Oh god,” she moaned as he began to feast, swirling his tongue inside her. “Please... stop. Please... oh... god... don’t stop.”

He ignored both of her contradicting pleas and continued to make her writhe and gasp as he ate her pussy. Just when she was about to come, he stopped, pulled himself up on his knees, retrieved a condom from the nightstand, and after rolling it on, buried his cock inside her with one swift thrust.

Once he was in her, Margo turned into a wild woman. Where before she’d lain gasping and writhing, content to lie back and enjoy him eating her pussy or fucking her face, now she was fully engaged.

Her hands gripped his hips, guiding him as he thrust in and out. When he lowered himself to balance on his forearms, and covered her lips with his, she kissed him deeply, like he was her air and she was dying without him. Her hands roamed over his bald head, down his shoulders and back and dug into the

fleshy skin of his butt. She screamed and cried his name as he fucked her, arching her body to take every inch of him like the good girl she was. Oh hell. She turned him on. As sweet and innocent as she was during the day, Margo turned into a wildcat underneath him.

“Daddy!” she moaned his name with every thrust.

“That’s it. Daddy’s good girl. Take my cock like the good girl you are.”

“I will, Daddy.” Her eyes were wide and glazed with lust. She licked her lips. “I want it. I want all of you. I want you to take me everywhere and use me however you see fit.” Her cheeks flushed as if she were embarrassed by the words that left her mouth. “It’s never... I’ve never felt like this! I’ve never had a man take me so completely and still leave me wanting more. I just want to please you, Daddy.”

“Oh you do, baby, you do. You please Daddy so much. Daddy... is... so... so...pleased!” Each word came out in a grunt as his pleasure built and he spiraled toward orgasm at lightning speed. He wasn’t coherent enough to put it into words, but he’d never felt like this either. Going through the actions at first, it had felt like a fuck. Like any fuck he could have had with any chick he met at any bar or club in his past, but the second he tasted her, making her pleasure his own, and heard her call him Daddy in the throes of passion, it had become so much more. He realized that with him and Margo there was a level of intimacy he wasn’t used to, especially for a first experience with someone. It could only grow from here.

Even as the blood in his veins felt like it was reaching a boiling point, and his whole body seemed to swell with passion, he wasn’t just thinking of his own pleasure. He was still more worried about hers. He forced himself to slow down and kissed her again, first her lips and then her neck, trailing kisses down her collarbone to her breast.

Reaching for her hands, he interlocked their fingers and held them in his. “Come with me, babygirl,” he whispered, looking into her eyes. “Come for Daddy.”

Their gazes locked and they stared deep into each other's eyes. Somehow it made every touch feel even better, every nerve ending more alive.

"Come for Daddy," he whispered again, thrusting his cock deep inside her. Her eyes widened, her pupils dilating to show her arousal and she bobbed her head almost frantically.

"Yes, Daddy, I will. I am. I'm... gonna... come!" Each word burst from her lips louder than the one before, the last one leaving as a primal scream as her body tensed and her orgasm rushed to the surface. Knox let go of what little control he'd been managing to maintain, and they came together, each of them screaming out their release, faces flushed, chests heaving.

When he finished, Knox all but collapsed on top of her, panting and spent. "Oh, babygirl," he murmured, tucking her messy locks behind her ears and kissing her reddened face. "Oh, babygirl. That was... that was perfect. So amazing."

Margo's eyes were closed as she lay there catching her breath, but they fluttered when he praised her and then she smiled cheekily. "Was it worth it, Daddy? Do you forgive me for not being able to wait?"

"Yes, babygirl. So much. Do you forgive me for not being able to control myself and give you the sweet lovin' you deserve?" The sentiment behind his words was genuine but his delivery was saucy as he drawled out the word loving and tacked on a wink at the end.

Margo just shook her head from side to side on the pillow. "Silly Daddy, there's nothing to forgive. If you'd given me any more loving I wouldn't be able to move."

Knox thought of all the things he could do and wanted to do and would do given the chance. "Challenge accepted," he replied.

Margo sat up like a spring, her eyes bulged to the size of saucers on her face. "I... what?"

"Not tonight," Knox reassured her with a chuckle and a kiss. "Just a promise for next time."

She smiled, her body relaxed, and she lie back down. “Daddy,” she whispered as her eyes dropped close.

“What is it, babygirl?”

“I’m sleepy. I need a new diaper and my jammies and Mico... and you.”

“Okay, little one. Let’s get you ready for bed.”

She was asleep before he finished fastening the tabs on her diaper, so he skipped the jammies, grabbed Mico from where he sat, and carried her to the bed, curling his body around hers.

CHAPTER TWELVE

December 30th

Margo

She woke up hot and sweaty with someone holding her tightly and started to panic before she remembered Knox.

Despite all her freakouts and self-sabotage, she had a Daddy of her very own. At least for a little while. And even though looking for problems was her go-to MO, in the early light of the morning, with memories of the day before running through her head, all she felt was peace and happiness.

Rolling over, she wrapped her arms around Knox's waist and burrowed into his chest.

Knox roused, opening his eyes and looking down at her. With a sleepy smile, he kissed the top of her head and hugged her tightly. "Good morning, my sweet little girl. How are you feeling today? Any regrets?"

"Regrets?" Margo echoed, not sure what he meant.

"About the day, about how things went with your friends, about agreeing to a trial run? About the things we did last night?"

"Oh." Margo blushed as she remembered the dirty words that had come out of her mouth as he'd fucked her and the feeling of his cock in her mouth, his lips on her pussy. She felt embarrassed in the light of day, but she wasn't sorry it had happened. As for the rest of it... the day had been hard, but she wasn't sorry it had happened either. She was much happier

now than she had been in ages. Her friends' methods had been questionable, but their hearts had been in the right place. "No regrets," she whispered.

"Good." Knox blinked the sleep from his eyes. "It's probably time to get up and start breakfast. Who's on kitchen duty today?"

"I think I am," Margo groaned. She absolutely hated kitchen duty. She'd rather clean bathrooms or fold a hundred loads of laundry than wash a single dish or cook a meal.

Knox however was smiling.

"Why is that good, Daddy? Why are you smiling?" Margo pouted.

"I'm smiling because whoever is on kitchen duty works with me and I'm happy that it's going to be you. If it wasn't, I don't think I'd be able to drag myself out of bed and down to the kitchen."

Margo wasn't appeased. She didn't want to leave the warm bed or Knox's embrace. Especially not when the only thing waiting for her was kitchen duty.

"We could just tell everyone to make themselves cereal," Margo pleaded. "Make it a YOYO morning..."

"A YOYO morning? What's that?"

"You know... YOYO... you're on your own. Everyone fend for themselves."

"There were no YOYO mornings on Baze's plan. And that gets you out of your chore for the day, but nobody else gets out of theirs. I don't think that's very fair. I don't want the others to think you're getting special treatment right out of the gate."

Margo squirmed. "They won't think that! They love cereal for breakfast and Baze hardly ever lets us have it! Please!"

Knox raised his eyebrows and angled his head down, looking into her eyes. "So... a cereal morning would be like a special treat?"

“Yes!” Margo agreed. “A special treat! Everyone would be too happy to have hard feelings.”

“Oh, I see. Well, that settles it.” Knox let go of her and hopped out of bed, pulling his clothes on while she stared at him wondering what had just happened.

“I... why are you getting dressed, Daddy? I thought we just decided on a cereal morning.”

Knox cocked a brow at her. “We most certainly did not agree on that. You said it would be a special treat and I said well, that settles it, because it does. Not a single one of you, and especially not your friends, deserves a special treat today. Not while the common area still looks the way it does.”

“Oh.” Margo’s stomach sank as she remembered the mess. They’d worked on it for hours and barely made a dent.

“In fact,” Knox said sternly, “I’m gonna go ahead and say no treats until every last puzzle and game piece is sorted out and the play area sparkles like new.”

Margo sighed. “That’s gonna take forever. We’re never gonna have treats again.” She sat up in bed but didn’t move to get dressed like she normally would. If Knox truly wanted to be her Daddy and all that it entailed, he was supposed to do that for her. That’s what they had decided on last night.

She watched as Knox put on his socks and slid his feet into leather house slippers. Her heart pounded in her chest, and she was all too aware that she was already falling into old habits and testing him. Or maybe she wasn’t. Maybe she just felt like she was. In reality, if they’d agreed he was responsible for dressing and changing her, then she was doing exactly what she was supposed to do. Nothing.

She held her breath as Knox stood and turned his attention to her. She waited for him to say something, to tell her to get a move on or to scold her for still being in bed. But Knox didn’t say a word. He simply came around to her side of the bed and scooped her into his arms, cradling her like a baby.

“You’re very wet,” he told her as he laid her on top of the changing table Baze kept for Luna. “You fell asleep last night

while I was diapering you.”

“I was very tired,” Margo said with a giggle. “It was an eventful day. Is that why I don’t have any jammies on?”

“Indeed it is. Although, I have to admit, I like you sleeping next to me in nothing but a diaper. I might have to make it a rule.”

“That’s a silly rule,” Margo said, but she was smiling on the inside. She’d much rather sleep naked. The only reason she didn’t was because she always had roommates.

Margo breathed a deep sigh of relief as Knox went into full Daddy mode, releasing the tabs on her wet diaper and discarding it before lifting her legs to slip a fresh one under her bottom. While she lay there in awe, he used a wipe to thoroughly and carefully clean her pussy, inner thighs and bottom until she was clean and dry. He grabbed a bottle of baby powder and shook it liberally over her private parts, coating her in the sweet-smelling powder before pulling in the sides of the diaper and tightly fastening the tabs.

“Stay here while Daddy picks out your outfit for today,” he told her before turning away to rummage in the suitcase they’d packed some of her clothing and other belongings in the night before.

Margo turned her head to the side and watched him pull out each item and fold it into neat piles. Her insides were all gooey as he carefully considered each item. It made no sense, but him picking out her clothing for the day felt more intimate than him changing her diaper or giving her a bath or spanking her or even sex.

Margo couldn’t remember the last time she hadn’t picked out her own clothes. Not since she’d been old enough to dress herself. Baze picked out and bought her clothes a few times, but he never went so far as to instruct her on what to wear that day, aside from the few times they’d all worn matching items and he’d told them as a group what to wear to a fancy dinner or for a Christmas picture.

Knox took special care in selecting each item and finally came back with blue and pink striped leggings, a blue tutu, and a pink top with a blue owl on it. “Will this work?” he asked, holding the outfit up for her approval.

He could have chosen a burlap sack for her to wear, and she’d have been touched that he chose it for her, but the outfit he had picked was actually one of her favorites, making the touching gesture even sweeter and more meaningful.

Margo nodded. “That’s perfect Daddy. That’s my favorite shirt.”

“Because it reminds you of Mico?”

Margo gasped. “How did you know?”

Knox chuckled. “Lucky guess.” He carefully and slowly put the leggings on, rolling the fabric up her legs and over her diapered bottom and then pulled the tutu up over the top of it. He helped her sit up and pulled the top over her head, helping her work her arms through the arm holes before pulling it down over her chest and torso and tucking the hem into her tutu.

She clung to him when he finished and he lifted her down from the changing table, setting her on her feet before looking at his watch.

“It’s ten till eight,” he informed her. “I need to go make sure the girls are up and getting ready for the day. Then we’ll head down to the kitchen and start breakfast.”

“What are we gonna make?” Margo asked with a sigh.

“Something with eggs. Y’all are gonna need protein for energy and brain power to get that mess cleaned up today.”

She started to ask another question, but he held up a finger for her to wait and left the room to check on her friends. Margo’s stomach was in knots as she waited for him to return. At this late hour anyone who wasn’t up would probably end up in trouble. They wouldn’t have enough time to get up and ready before the 8 o’clock deadline and it didn’t matter that Knox was late to check on them. They all were responsible for

their own alarms and schedules. They knew what the rules were.

Knox returned a few minutes later and Margo pelted him with questions. Ones that she'd thought of while he was gone and the one she'd been about to ask before he left. "Was everybody up? Is anybody in trouble? If they aren't up, are you going to spank them, or just give them lines or something? What if we don't get all the mess cleaned up today?"

"One question at a time, little one," he said, before taking a deep breath and answering them all in the order they'd been asked. "Jade wasn't up yet. Yes, she's going to be in trouble. Normally, I'd probably just make her write lines, but if she had lines to write today, that would just mean she'd have less time to help with the playroom clean up, and that wouldn't be fair to you or the others, so yes, she will be getting a spanking tonight. And to answer your last question, I'd fall off my chair in shock if y'all managed to get the entire mess sorted out and cleaned up in a day. I don't really expect that or even think it's possible, so no, you won't be in trouble if it's not done as long as I can tell you worked on it and made a good amount of progress. However, there will be no treats or free time until it is finished, even if that takes several days."

Margo sighed. She wasn't happy with his answers, even if they were fair and just and made perfect sense. She still hated the idea of him spanking anyone but her and no free time sucked hairy monkey balls.

The thought of the no-longer-allowed phrase made her giggle.

"What are you laughing at, little one?" He held out his hand and took hers before she could come up with an answer that wouldn't actually involve saying the words and getting herself in trouble. "Tell me on the way down to the kitchen. It's time for us to get breakfast started." he said as they stepped into the elevator.

Margo shook her head. She wasn't about to get in trouble on purpose for something she knew she'd screw up on

accident soon enough. "I'm just thinking things I'm not allowed to say, Daddy."

"Oh. Well, as long as they stay in your head, and don't come out of your mouth."

"Yes, Daddy," Margo answered with a resigned sigh. The truth was her mouth was a ticking time bomb just waiting to happen. Knox might not know it, but she did.

Knox

Margo might hate kitchen duty with the passion of a thousand flaming suns or whatever the cliché was, but he was glad it was her day. Before yesterday, she'd avoided him like the plague and he missed her, so he was happy for the excuse to spend some extra time with her and happier still that it would be as Daddy and Little girl.

"So, what should we make for breakfast?" he asked, tying a frilly apron around her waist.

"Anything that doesn't require cooking. Or cutting. Or dishes."

"That's not a thing. How do you feel about cracking eggs?"

Margo shrugged. "It's okay I guess. Is that what we are having? Just eggs?"

"I was thinking I could whip up some omelets."

Margo turned to face him, her nose crinkled. "Omelets? Isn't that one of those things Daddies make just so they have an excuse to force us to eat vegetables? Vegetables are not a breakfast food."

"Certain vegetables are very good breakfast foods and amazing in omelets," he countered, "but I was thinking we could keep it simple and whip up some ham and cheese omelets."

"I guess that would be okay. What would I hafta do?"

Margo continued to look like she was about to be paraded in front of a firing squad rather than just being asked to help her Daddy cook breakfast. It was humorous and endearing.

“You can crack and whisk eggs, and maybe grate cheese? I’ll chop the ham and do the actual cooking. Little girls shouldn’t play with knives or use hot stoves.” He used the same line on her he had on Mariah with drastically different results. Mariah had argued and been resentful, but Margo looked like he’d just thrown her a life raft right before she drowned.

“Really?” She asked excitedly. “Does that mean if I was your Little girl, I wouldn’t hafta cook?”

“Well, I might ask you to help me in the kitchen every once in a while just so we could have the extra time together, but you’re correct. I don’t want my Little girl using knives or touching hot pans. You’d only be allowed to do things like measure ingredients or crack eggs, grate cheese, things like that. You’d be my Little assistant, but you would not be allowed to cook.”

Margo looked elated. “I could deal with that.”

“Glad to hear it.” Knox beamed at her. “Now get a bowl and crack a dozen eggs into it please.”

He watched as she did so, praising her efforts when she didn’t get any eggshells in the bowl. When she was done, he took the bowl from her, adding salt and pepper and a little bit of milk and whisking the mixture together.

While the pan was heating, he put the eggs back in the fridge and took out cheese and ham. He gave the cheese to Margo and chopped the ham himself.

Margo, whose demeanor was a lot more pleasant now that she knew she didn’t have tons of kitchen duty in her future, got out the grater and quickly shredded the cheese into a bowl. She was taking her job very seriously and concentrating very hard, but she was going too fast.

“Slow down a bit, it’s not a race,” he warned, but it was too late.

“Ouch!” Margo exclaimed. “Cr-”

Knox’s eyebrows shot up. He knew what was coming.

“—ravioli on a criminey bucket.”

Knox burst out laughing. “What? That didn’t even make any sense!”

“I know!” Margo wailed, holding her injured hand. “But I didn’t say anything naughty so I don’t hafta get my mouth washed out with soap.”

“Indeed you don’t. Very good save.” He stepped toward her and took her hand, inspecting it. She’d managed to scrape a tiny bit of skin off the knuckle of her middle finger, but thankfully there was no blood. He said as much.

“But it hurrts,” Margo whined. “There’s skin missing.”

“It’s probably in the grater.” He kissed her knuckle and handed her the offending item. “Go put this in the sink and then sit on that stool over there. You can sit and watch while I finish up.”

Margo looked relieved, then skeptical. “If I sit and watch will I get in trouble for not finishing my chore?”

“No, you’re hurt. And besides, your part was pretty much done anyway. Now go sit down and be good so I can get everyone fed. We have lots of cleaning to do today.”

Margo hobbled over to the stool and sat on it. “I don’t know if I can help clean up. I’m hurt,” she said with a pout.

“Nice try, but I think you’ll survive.”

“Cr-criminey crickets!” Margo’s eyes bugged. “Whew! That was a close one.”

Knox shook his head, hiding a smile as he mixed the cheese and ham together and carried the bowl to the stove.

“You are really having a hard time with that rule, aren’t you?” He spoke nonchalantly as he worked on assembling the first omelet.

“It’s hard. I say those things a lot. If it’s not a real cuss word, Baze doesn’t have a problem with it.”

“Ah, I see. Unluckily for you, you chose a Daddy who believes Little girls should be a bit more ladylike with their language.”

“I know. What was I thinking?” she exhaled dramatically. Then she giggled. “I’m just kidding. You’re a really good Daddy, Knox, even if that rule sucks... eggs.” She grinned. “It’s not too hard. It’s getting easier.”

“I also don’t think good Little girls should say sucks though,” Knox informed her, cutting the first omelet in half and loading it onto two plates before starting the next one.

Margo’s mouth dropped open at his news. “What? That’s... that... really...” Her pupils shifted from side to side as she searched the recesses of her brain for a word that would get her point across without getting her in trouble.

“Bites and blows are not acceptable either,” Knox warned before she could finish.

“Ughhhh. This really... is... very... cruddy.” She inhaled and exhaled like she’d just finished running a marathon and was trying to catch her breath. “Was that okay, Daddy? I didn’t use any unladylike words.”

“That was perfectly fine, little one. I can see that you are trying very hard to follow this new rule, and I appreciate it. I’m sure it’s not easy.” He finished the second omelet and plated it onto two plates, the same as the first.

“It’s impossible. I’m gonna mess up, and soon.” She hesitated. “What if I say a naughty word when you’re not around? Do I still have to tell you?”

“You do. That’s one of the most important rules. Honesty and transparency between a Daddy and his Little girl is one of the most important things.”

“I figured you were gonna say that.” She wrinkled her nose. “I’m not looking forward to tasting soap but it’s pretty much inevitable.”

“Well, the idea is that the memory of the consequence makes it easier to remember to follow the rule going forward.”

“Still... it’s yucky.” Margo blushed and he knew she’d almost used one of the forbidden words.

“It is pretty yucky,” Knox agreed. “And when it happens, I’m sure you’ll hate it, and you probably won’t like me very much, but you’ll remember to do better, and it will get easier with time.”

“If you say so.”

“I do.” He finished plating the last of the omelets and walked over and kissed her nose.

“Thank you for putting up with my strict, old-fashioned ways, little one.”

Before she could say anything else, Mariah and the rest of the Littles entered, dressed for the day.

“Ugh! No fair! You got out of chores just cuz he’s your Daddy now?” Jade fussed accusingly when she saw Margo sitting on the stool.

Before Margo had a chance to get defensive or before any kind of argument could break out, Knox shut it down.

“Margo did not get out of anything. She helped. She cracked eggs and grated cheese and grated a bit of her finger as well. After that she got put on the bench cause I figured we didn’t want any blood or body parts in our omelets.”

“Omelets,” Ellie whined. “What is it with bossy types and always trying to sneak vegetables into every meal?”

The other girls chorused their agreement, and Knox laughed. “It’s ham and cheese. No veggies. So grab a plate and head to the table and eat up. The sooner you finish breakfast the sooner you can get started cleaning up the mess you made yesterday.”

As expected, his reminder was met with a chorus of moans and groans as they headed into the abandoned restaurant to eat their breakfast. Knox wasn’t dissuaded by their grumbling. Until every last toy and game piece was picked up and the

play area was spotless, this was their life now. He only hoped they could get it done by tomorrow night. New Year's Eve. He'd been planning something fun for the new year, and he wouldn't feel right about rewarding them if the playroom was still a mess. If they used teamwork and focused, they might just pull it off.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

December 31st

Margo

“So... how is it having a Daddy of your own?” Jilly asked after breakfast the next day as they sat on the floor trying to sort game pieces. The art supplies and doll house had been organized and sorted the day before, and today they had moved on to the games and puzzles. There were three empty boxes in front of them and they were separating pieces from *Trouble*, *Clue* and *Sorry*.

Margo rolled her eyes. “It’s been like... two days. And it’s temporary,” she reminded her friend.

“Temporary shemporary.” Jilly did not look convinced. “How is it?”

“It’s okay.” She blushed as she thought about their activities their first night together. Those had been way more than just okay. But that was not a conversation she wanted to have with her friends. She pushed the memories aside to revisit later and took her answer in a different direction. “He’s stricter than Baze.”

“How?” Jilly asked.

“He doesn’t think Little girls should cook or chop for one thing. He only let me grate and crack.”

“But that’s good! You hate cooking!”

“I do. And yeah, it’s not a bad thing exactly, just kinda weird.” She crinkled her nose. “The next thing is bad though.

Really bad.”

“It is?” Jilly whispered, her voice full of awe and curiosity. “What is it?”

“He’s really particular about what language I use.” Margo was choosing her words carefully so she wouldn’t say the forbidden words while trying to explain that she wasn’t allowed to say them.

“Language? What language does he want you to speak? Do you even know another language? Does he?”

Jilly’s obvious confusion made Margo laugh. “Not a language like Spanish or French!” she exclaimed. “I mean like... he thinks certain words are unladylike and doesn’t want me to say them. He says if I do, he’ll spank my bottom and wash my mouth out with soap!”

“Soap?” Jilly echoed, her eyes wide. “Oh no! What words are they?”

“I can’t say them cause I’d have to say them to tell you what they are, and there’s a lot of them. Let’s just say, I won’t be able to use my catch phrase anymore.”

“Your catch phrase?” Jilly leaned in to whisper in Margo’s ear. “You mean crap on a cracker?”

Margo pulled away to look at her friend and nodded. “Exactly.”

Jilly stared at her with her mouth open and her eyes wide. “Oh no... you’re so screwed!”

“Tell me about it,” Margo lamented. “I’ve already almost messed up so many times!”

“Crap on a cracker!” Jilly responded.

Margo

“Catfish on a cracker!”

“Cake on a cracker!”

“Cauliflower on a cracker!”

“Candy on a cracker!”

The other girls had been apprised of Margo’s current dilemma and were now helping her to come up with a new catch phrase.

“Crap on Cauliflower!” Ellie yelled, excitedly.

Margo whipped her head to look at her friend. “Ellie! I can say cracker! It’s the other word I need to replace!” Margo laughed incredulously at her friend’s gaffe.

“Oh. Oh yeah. Right. Duh.”

“It definitely should not be candy or cake!” Tessa piped up, turning attention away from her ditzy sister.

“Cake and candy are good!” Mariah argued as Margo looked on in confusion. What the heck were they even arguing about, anyway?

“Exactly!” Tessa shouted. “Crap... is not good. So we need to replace it with something that’s also not good.”

“Oh. Yeah. That makes sense. Crap on a cracker!” Ellie exclaimed.

Jilly and Mariah clapped their hands over their mouths at the exact same time.

“You said cra-ap!” Jade sing-songed.

Tessa elbowed her. “Dummy! We’re allowed to say it. It’s just Margo who can’t.”

“Yeah,” Ellie interjected. “We can say it all day long.” She gasped and clapped her hand over her mouth. “We can say it all day long,” she repeated in a hushed whisper, pointing at each of them. “We can all say it! ALL. DAY. LONG.”

“Are you...” Mariah trailed off. “If you’re saying what I think you’re saying, then I’m impressed. That’s like... some Margo- or Luna-level shenanigans right there.”

Ellie leapt to her feet. “Thank you,” she said, bending at the waist to take a series of small bows.

“What’s that phrase that means... when you do exactly as you’re told but in like a mean way?” Mariah asked.

“Militia... Melishiss... Malicious... Compliance,” Jade supplied.

“Malicious compliance,” Mariah repeated. “That’s what we’re gonna do. You can’t say it, Margo, but we all can and we’re gonna every chance we get.”

Margo grinned. The plan was so brilliant she was mad she hadn’t been the one to come up with it. “You guys are the best. But... what if he gets mad?”

“When Knox asks us to stop, we will. But until he does, we’re gonna have some fun,” Jade answered. “Crap on a cracker, sorting puzzle pieces is boring.”

“Crap on a cracker. This is gonna take us all week.” Ellie snorted when she giggled.

“Crap on a cracker!” Mariah yelled.

“Crap on a cracker!” Tessa shouted gleefully.

Even Jilly chimed in. “Crap on a cracker, you guys are troublemakers,” she grumbled.

“Crustaceans on a cracker!” Margo yelled, closing the *Trouble* box. “I think this one is done.”

Beside her, Jilly closed the lid on *Clue* and set it on top of *Trouble*. “This one is done too.”

Mariah walked over and stacked *Candyland* on top of their pile. “This one is done.”

They worked in silence for several minutes, slowly adding more games to the pile. Occasionally, someone would yell “crap on a cracker!” and they would all burst into wild giggles.

“I almost can’t wait for lunch,” Mariah confided. “I want to see the look on Knox’s face.”

“The look on my face when?” Knox boomed, entering the room behind them.

Margo rocked back on her heels and waited as she watched to see how this would unfold.

“When you see how much we’ve already gotten done,” Mariah answered innocently, gesturing toward the stack of games as Jilly added the last one to the pile. “Look, all the games are done!”

“That’s great. Good progress. After lunch you can start on the puzzle pieces.”

Mariah’s eyes met Margo’s for only a fraction of a second, but Margo knew what was coming.

“Crap on a cracker!” Mariah said. “That’s gonna suck!”

Margo gasped. She hadn’t even told the other girls that Knox also didn’t like the word suck. She hadn’t been able to come up with a way to tell them without saying the word and it hadn’t seemed important. She turned her head to gauge Knox’s reaction.

There was none. Not really. His eyebrows rose a smidge and the corners of his mouth turned into a slight frown, but other than that he didn’t react, and if Margo had blinked she wouldn’t have seen it.

“It won’t be easy,” Knox agreed. “But it would be easier than explaining to Baze that you’ve destroyed all the nice puzzles he bought you.”

“Yeah, that’s true,” Mariah agreed. “Crap on a cracker.”

Ignoring her addition, Knox turned to Margo. “Come on, little one. It’s time to make lunch. No hot stoves or sharp knives involved today, so I’ll be needing lots of help.”

“What are we making?” Margo asked as she pushed to her feet.

“Peanut butter and jelly with grapes.” He winked. “No vegetables for this meal either. But you know what that means, don’t you?”

“No. What?”

“You’re gonna have to have lots of them with dinner.” He took Margo’s hand and led her out of the room.

“Crap on a cracker,” Tessa whispered from behind them as they left the room hand in hand.

On the elevator, Knox turned to her. “Have you been a good little girl since I saw you last? Have you minded your manners and watched your mouth?”

“Yes, Daddy.” Margo held her breath, waiting for him to say more, or bring up her friends’ antics but he didn’t say a word about it.

Knox

Malicious Compliance. In the hands of workers dealing with an asshole boss, it could be a fun and useful tool. Knox had even used it himself a time or two in his younger days. But in the hands of Littles to a bossy type with a boundary, it was getting old fast.

Knox couldn’t even count the number of times he’d heard someone say crap on a cracker during lunch. When Mariah spilled her water. When Tessa dropped a grape. When a big squirt of jelly fell out of Jilly’s sandwich and onto her shirt. When the conversation turned to how to best sort out puzzle pieces. When Knox reminded them that they had no free time until clean-up was finished, no matter how long it took. And so on and so forth. He’d done his best to ignore it the first dozen times but now it was clear that it was no coincidence, and instead, another one of their shenanigans.

He’d managed so far to bite his tongue as they weren’t his Littles and they didn’t have that rule, but it had become very obvious that they knew that Margo did and were saying it simply because she couldn’t. She was the only one who hadn’t used the forbidden phrase as of yet.

He tried to change the subject, hoping that a new conversation topic would give them something other to focus on.

“It might be easier if you sort the puzzle pieces by size first. Figure out how many wooden puzzles you have, then do the ones with the bigger cardboard pieces, and then the ones with really small pieces last,” he offered.

Six pairs of eyes stared at him.

“Crap on a cracker!” Mariah exclaimed. “Why didn’t we think of that?”

Drawing in a deep breath, Knox tossed his napkin on the table. “Okay, that’s enough. I know exactly what you are doing, and I’ve had enough. I get it. You think it’s dumb that there are certain non-curse words and phrases that I don’t want Margo to use. You don’t have that rule, so now you’ve decided to use those phrases in excess. It was cute and funny at first, and slightly amusing, but it’s gotten less so.” He looked at Mariah first, then around the table at each of them.

“I suggest you stop, unless you want to be subjected to the same punishment Margo has been threatened with.”

Jade gaped at him, narrowing her eyes. “You aren’t the boss of us. You can’t make us have new rules!”

“I’m not making a rule. I’m setting a boundary. I don’t like to be around Little girls who talk like that. Since you aren’t mine, and I don’t make your rules, I can overlook these things when they are happening on occasion and by accident. But that is clearly no longer the case. Is it?”

They all looked down at the tabletop, their expressions guilty. “No, Mister Knox.”

“Do you understand the difference between a rule and a boundary?” he asked.

“Yes, sir,” they answered in unison.

“Okay, good. I am drawing a boundary. I’ve hit my limit for that phrase for the day. If I hear it again, whoever says it will get a spanking and get their mouth washed out with soap. Do you understand?”

Six little heads bobbed up and down.

“Use your words. I need to hear that you understand and that we are on the same page.”

“Yes, Mister Knox,” they sing-songed.

“Good girls. Thank you.” He stood and stretched. “I’m going to go inventory my supplies and make a list of what I’ll need to finish the room renovations on the west tower. Jade, you’re on cleanup. Clear the table and load the dishwasher. The rest of you get started on the puzzles. I’ll be back in a couple hours to start dinner. After dinner, if you have any naughties to report, you do it then. Naughties will be dealt with, then baths and jammies and brushing your teeth and bed. No movies or free time tonight unless it’s done.” The words felt bitter on his tongue, seeing as it was a holiday, and he knew he planned to let them have ice cream and a movie after dinner, but he was really hoping the mess would be cleaned up by then so it would be a non-issue.

His announcement was met with the expected groans and sighs of resignation, but nobody argued or questioned him. They really were, for the most part, good Little girls.

“See you later. Behave yourselves while I’m gone!” he called over his shoulder as he left.

Margo

As soon as Knox was out of earshot, she and her friends dissolved into the giggles they’d been holding back all through lunch.

“I feel bad that we actually upset him,” Jilly said, “but that was so fun and funny while it lasted.”

“Agreed,” Mariah replied. “I had no idea Knox was so strict. I’m a little worried for the safety of Margo’s bottom. I don’t know how she’s gonna survive with such a strict Daddy.”

“I’ll be fine!” Margo insisted, rolling her eyes. “Having a strict Daddy with weird rules is better than having no Daddy at all... isn’t it?” She’d had no Daddy for a long time and that

had not been great. She'd only had Knox for two days, so while it felt better than having no Daddy, she really couldn't be sure.

Her friends didn't seem so sure either. They tossed their hands in the air and shrugged.

Margo didn't want to make them feel bad because she sort of had a Daddy and they kinda didn't, so she turned her attention to the wooden Hello Kitty puzzle in front of her.

"Done!" She exclaimed, laying the last piece. She handed the finished puzzle to Jilly who carried it over to the shelf and grabbed the next frame. Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Mariah took a Disney Princess one, and Jade worked on a dinosaur puzzle while Ellie and Tessa sorted pieces.

Mariah and Jade finished their puzzles within minutes, but Margo was missing a piece.

"It'll turn up," Jilly said. "Set it aside, and work on the next puzzle."

She did, breezing through a Spider-Man puzzle, another Hello Kitty puzzle and a Sofia the First puzzle in record time. They reached the end of the wooden puzzles, and a piece was still missing.

"Crap on a cracker!" Margo yelled. She immediately clapped her hand over her mouth as if she could take it back while her friends stared at her with wide eyes. "Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no!" she chanted, tears filling her eyes. It wasn't just about the impending punishment, but the idea that Knox would be upset. She hadn't even managed to last two days! What if he gave up and decided she wasn't worth the trouble just as she decided he was?

"Oh no," she wailed, a tear falling down her cheek. Her friends looked worried and Margo knew why. She wasn't usually quick to tears or upset when a rule was broken.

Jilly came up behind her and rubbed her back while Mariah scootched close and wiped her tears. "I was just kidding about the soap sucking. It's not so bad."

Margo scowled. "Don't lie to me."

“Okay fine. It’s gonna be awful. But then it will be over, and you’ll still have a wonderful Daddy who loves you.”

“Yeah, maybe,” Margo scoffed.

Jilly furrowed her brows. “Knox isn’t here to hear it. Do you have to tell him?”

“Jilly!” Mariah exclaimed. “I’m surprised at you!”

Jilly rolled her eyes. “Knox said he didn’t like to hear Little girls use that kind of language. He’s not here. He didn’t hear it. He didn’t say anything about if he wasn’t around to hear it.”

“Yeah he did. To me he did. Telling him is gonna suck and being punished is gonna suck, but not telling him would be even worse.” Realizing what she’d just said, she leapt to her feet. “Crap on a-uggghhh!” Before she could say another word, Margo ran from the room, managing not to burst into tears until she got on the elevator. She rode it down to the lobby, crossed the casino floor over to the west tower, and rode those elevators up to the third floor where Knox had said he’d be working.

She saw him, or rather his tools, stacked outside an open door at the end of the hallway. Running toward them, she stopped when she was about two doors down and wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. Her heart was pounding. It had already been bad enough that she’d said the one phrase one time, but then she’d said suck twice and finished it off with another crap. Even if she hadn’t finished the entire phrase, it was the first word that counted as a naughtie. It had all been a complete snowball of an accident, but would Knox ever believe that? And even if he did, would he even still want her when he realized how unladylike she was?

Turning to lean against the wall, she slid down the surface until her butt was on the floor and her knees were bent. Then she laid her head in her hands and cried. She’d known she’d mess up everything. She’d tried to tell him, but he’d kept pushing and now look; she was going to get her heart broken for sure.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Margo

Margo wasn't sure how long she sat there crying. She kept telling herself to save herself the pain and just leave. There was no need to tell Knox. She'd run away before he had a chance to tell her to go.

But she never got up, and before she knew it, Knox was kneeling in front of her, touching her knee to get her attention. "Margo? Baby? What's wrong? What is it? Are you okay?" He sat next to her on the wall and pulled her into his lap cradling her in his arms, pressing soft kisses against her cheeks, nose and forehead.

Margo breathed in his sweet scent and tried to commit it to memory in case she never got that close again.

"Margo, baby," he repeated when she clung to him and sobbed. "What's wrong? Are you okay? Is everyone okay? Tell Daddy what's happened."

She covered her face with her hands, and he gently pried them away. "Margo, talk to Daddy. Now please. I'm starting to get really worried."

She drew a shuddering breath and looked deeply in his eyes, trying to find the courage to say the words out loud. "I messed up," she finally managed to choke out. "It was an accident, I swear!"

"Messed up? Like broke a rule? All this fuss for a broken rule? That doesn't sound like the Margo I know. What's going on?"

His confusion was tangible in his concerned frown and furled brows. His lips pursed as he stared at her, waiting for an explanation.

She drew a deep breath. She could explain. She owed him that much at least. She resolved to do that. The resolve lasted until she opened her mouth.

“I’m a bad girl!” she cried. “I wasn’t trying to be. Please don’t get rid of me! I’ll do better! Just give me another chance.”

“Margo!” His voice was hard as he grabbed her face between his hands and held it. “First of all, you were naughty, not bad. We don’t use that word, except in the bedroom. Second of all, I’m not going to get rid of you over a broken rule. No matter which one it is. That’s not how this works.”

“I broke it four times!” Margo cried. “It really was an accident.”

“Margo,” Knox sighed. “Did you say something unladylike?”

Still crying, Margo bobbed her head.

“Well, that was bound to happen, sweetie. I already told you that. And you’ll be punished to help you remember the rule in the future. We went over that. I really don’t understand what all the fuss is about. Tell me what you said, and we’ll deal with it.”

Clinging to him and his promises, Margo wiped her eyes. “We lost a puzzle piece and I said the c-word. Then I said that telling you was gonna suck and being punished was gonna suck and then I realized what I’d said, and I got flustered and said the c-word again!”

“The c-word being crap?” Knox questioned.

“Yeah. I’m really sorry. Please don’t give up on me.”

“I promise you that’s not gonna happen.” Knox managed to pull himself to his feet with her still in his arms and started down the hallway to the elevator.

“Where are we going?” Margo cried. “You still have to work. I still have to clean. I just came up here to tell you because I thought if I had to wait I might lose my nerve.”

Knox didn't answer her until the elevator doors closed behind them.

“We are going back to our room where we are going to have a talk and deal with your naughties. Normally I'd make you wait, just like I would the others, but you're practically having a panic attack over it. I can't send you back to clean like this and leave you all by yourself.”

“But... I don't want special treatment,” Margo sniffled. “It's not fair to my friends that they always have to wait and I don't.”

The elevator stopped and they stepped out, back into Baze and Luna's room where they were currently staying.

“It's not special treatment,” Baze countered, setting her on her feet. “I promise you, if any of your friends ever had a massive freak-out over an impending punishment, I'd stop whatever I was doing to talk them through it and deal with it as soon as possible, just like I'm gonna do for you. And if anyone has a problem with it, or thinks it's unfair, they can take it up with me and I'll set them straight. Understand?”

Margo nodded. She was already feeling a little bit better. The fits of tears weren't as violent, and the panicked thoughts weren't pounding through her brain at a mile a minute. Her chest ached and her heart was still pounding, but the immediate threat of him deciding to ditch her had vanished.

Knox sat on the bed and called her over to him. She stood between his knees, and he took her hands in his.

“Margo, naughties are going to happen. Especially with new rules you aren't used to. I'm not angry, and I have no intention of throwing in the towel over a few unladylike words.”

“But... at lunch you said it was a boundary. Mister Daddy says it's important to respect boundaries.”

“For your friends... in that moment, it was a boundary because they were abusing their freedom for no other reason than to bother me because they could. For you, it’s a rule. We knew it was gonna be hard and it was gonna get broken easily. We talked about that, remember?”

“Yeah.” Margo sniffled and Knox grabbed a tissue from a box on the nightstand and held it up to her nose.

“Blow.”

She blew, filling the tissue with snot. Knox wadded it up and discarded it to throw away later. “There. Are you feeling any better, little one?”

“Yeah. I guess so.” Margo looked at the floor and then back up at Knox. “Do I really gotta get punished? It was an accident.”

“I’m afraid so, little one. I punish for accidents so they don’t become habits.”

“It won’t!” Margo crumpled. She knew she was fighting a losing battle. “I don’t wanna have soap.”

“I know you don’t, but you were very naughty. This will help you remember to do better next time.”

“Okay, Daddy.” Margo was too exhausted to argue. Crying so much already had taken all the fight out of her. “Are you gonna spank me first?” She figured he was, they were already basically in position. In two quick moves he could have her over his knee with her pants down around her ankles.

“No. I’m going to wash out your mouth first. You’ll be able to still taste the remnants of soap while I’m spanking you. It will help drive the point home.”

Margo sighed. Why did bossy types have to be so sadistically creative? It wasn’t enough that he planned to wash out her mouth with soap. He wanted her to continue to taste it throughout her spanking. Of course he did.

Knox took her hands, and stood , leading her into Baze’s master bath. She sat down on the edge of the tub and watched

as he rummaged through drawers, eventually producing a fresh bar of hotel soap still in the wrapper.

Margo chewed on her lower lip and grimaced as she watched him slowly unwrap it and then run it under the tap, getting it wet and producing a lather. At least it wasn't a full-sized bar, she told herself. Thank goodness for small favors.

"Margo." Knox spoke softly but firmly and with authority. "Come here please."

Whimpering, Margo pulled herself to her feet and shuffled toward him. When she reached him, he cupped her chin, forcing her to meet his eyes.

"This is going to be yucky, and you won't like it. But it will be over quickly enough, and you'll get your spanking and be all forgiven."

"Yes, Daddy." A lone tear fell down her cheek. She was nervous, but not scared.

"Open wide," Knox instructed, holding the soap near her lips.

She forced herself to obey, and as soon as she had, Knox slipped the bar of soap between her lips, holding it with one hand and her chin with the other.

He was very thorough, scraping the small bar of soap against her tongue and the roof and sides of her mouth. She gagged, and he withdrew it and patiently waited for her to recover.

When she did, he replaced it, and proceeded to thoroughly wash her mouth, lingering a little longer than she felt was necessary. Soap bubbled on her tongue, and snot and tears ran down her face, but she kept her mouth open wide, determined to take her punishment like a good girl, and show her Daddy that she really was sorry.

Finally, Knox removed the bar of soap. "That was a little longer than it would usually go since you said so many naughty words."

"Yes, Daddy. I'm really sorry."

Knox set a washcloth in the sink and used it to gently wipe the soap and tears from her face, then handed her a small glass of water. “Swish and spit. Don’t drink unless you want the soap to go into your esophagus. One rinse is all you get until after your spanking.”

Margo filled her mouth with water and swished it all around. At first, she wasn’t sure if it helped diminish the soap taste or just spread it around more, but once she spit, she could feel the difference. The sour taste was still there but it was no longer coating every surface. She handed the glass back to Knox and he set it down. Taking her hand, he lead her back to the bedroom.

“Sit on the bed,” he instructed her.

Margo did as she was told and watched as Knox walked to the closet and dug around in his luggage. He returned holding the box she had given him for Christmas and set it on the bed beside her. Margo peered at the contents even though she knew them by heart. Cheeseboard, spoon, butt plug. Her stomach knotted as she wondered what he would pick. She didn’t have to wonder for long as he picked up the spoon, and handed it to her, before picking up the box and returning it to the closet. When he came back, he was smiling.

“You have no idea how badly I want to plug that naughty little bottom of yours,” he told her.

God help her, she kind of wanted it too. “You could,” she told him. “You are the Daddy.”

“I could, but that wasn’t the threat. A good Daddy does what he says. Nothing more, nothing less.”

His threat had been based on her saying one forbidden word, not four, but she didn’t bother pointing that out. He was in charge, and she liked that he stuck to his word, even when he had a reasonable excuse not to.

Knox sat on the bed beside her and grabbed her hands, hoisting her across his knees. She was still holding the spoon and he plucked it from her grasp.

“Okay, little girl. It’s time for part two of your punishment. Daddy is always gonna spank your bare bottom, so the pants and diaper are going down, and the tutu is going up.”

As always, he did exactly as he said, baring her bottom. She shuddered when the air in the room hit her skin.

Knox rubbed her bottom absentmindedly as he spoke. “You never need to be afraid that I’ll give up on you just because you messed up, but you need to know that I’ll always follow through on a threat. If I say you’ll be punished, you’ll be punished, and if I say how, then what I say goes. You’ll know what to expect with me. And today, you’re going to learn that I’m a strict Daddy who doesn’t like unladylike talk on Little girls lips. And you’re going to learn exactly what will happen when you break that rule. Understand?”

Margo’s breath hitched in her throat. The kind but threatening, firm but unyielding way that he spoke was already threatening to make her cry again. She didn’t know how she’d ended up so lucky to have found a Daddy like Knox, but she was so thankful she had, even if he was a fuddy-duddy about certain things.

The rule sucked, but this was her life now, and she’d adjust somehow, some way. She wanted to, for him.

“I’m going to start your spanking now so we can get it over with. You need to know you’re forgiven, and we both need to get back to work.”

“Yes, Daddy.” Margo felt bad already for having a breakdown and making him stop work to deal with her. No matter how bad the spanking was she wasn’t going to fight it.

He started with his hand. The first hard swat made her gasp for air, and when she did, she tasted the soap all over again. “Uggh gross,” she muttered.

“Tasting the consequences of your actions?” Knox asked with a chuckle as he continued to pepper her bottom with hard swats.

“Yes, Daddy. I’m really sorry.”

“I know you are, sweetie. And you’ll be sorrier before we are finished. Remember this the next time you feel like you want to say yucky words.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said again, determined to say nothing else.

He continued to spank, covering every inch of her bottom in hard swats with his hand, until she was sure it was red and hot to the touch all over.

Then, finally he stopped and picked up the spoon. “Every time you say naughty words, I’m going to spank your bottom with this spoon,” he told her, holding it just above her cheeks.

She sucked in a breath and braced herself. Margo knew spoons were awful, and the one she’d bought him was much sturdier and thicker than the one Baze sometimes used.

Still, nothing prepared her for the sharp and instant sting and deep pain when he brought it down across the center of her backside.

Her body went rigid, and her resolve to be good and stoic flew out the window.

“Ow, ow ow!” she cried, throwing her hands back to cover herself.

Knox didn’t scold her or tell her to move them. He simply took them and pinned them to the center of her back, holding them in place with one of his.

“Are you going to be good, or do I need to pin your legs as well?”

“I don’t know,” Margo answered honestly. “I’ll try to be good, but it really hurts.”

“It’s supposed to. You’re being punished. And it’s supposed to serve as a reminder to do better in the future.” He folded one of his legs over hers, pinning her in place. “You said four naughty words, so this will be the worst of it little one. I’m gonna make sure you don’t make that mistake again.”

Margo whimpered. That did not sound good. She concentrated on the way Knox’s thighs felt under her belly, on

the way her pussy dampened when he spoke, and on the promise that all would be over soon and she'd be forgiven.

Knox picked up the spoon and started again. This time Margo stayed in place. She had no choice. The spoon bounced off her backside again and again. Knox never spanked the same place twice, and Margo knew he was carefully covering every inch of her bottom—the spankable parts anyway. It felt like it would never stop. The sting was unbearable, and when it passed, the pain settled into an ache deep in the tissue of her bottom. Spoons were the worst. She vowed to stay strong and take her spanking without crying, but that didn't last. She felt terribly weepy and helpless and soon her eyes began to leak. When Knox moved his aim to the tender crease between her bottom and thighs, silent tears gave way to long mournful wails. When he brought the spoon down across the tops of her thighs and began to lecture again, she knew he was almost done. Her wails turned to sobs as she fell limp across his knees. Finally, he stopped, setting the spoon on the bed beside her.

He unwrapped his legs from around hers and let go of her hands, pulling her into his lap. The scratchy denim of his work jeans irritated her bottom, but she was too relieved to care. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she clung to him, burying her face in his chest.

"I'm sorry, Daddy. So, so sorry. I want to be a good Little girl for you. I want to behave so you'll want to keep me."

"Margo!" Knox spoke urgently, pulling her away from his chest, and taking her face in his hands. "Stop with that nonsense. I want to keep you. That's never been a question. I want you. It doesn't matter what mistakes you make or how many times you make them, I'm not going anywhere."

"But... but... you said this was a trial run." Margo wiped her eyes with the hem of his shirt.

"I did say that. But that was about you. It was for *your* benefit, to give you time to adjust, to give you time to trust me and to see what being my Little girl might be like. So you could see if it was something you wanted."

“Oh.” Margo sniffled. “I know it hasn’t been very long, but so far, it’s been really nice. You’re a good Daddy, and I kinda like being your Little girl.”

“I’m glad to hear that, but you don’t have to rush to make a decision. There’s time. You might decide I’m too big of a fuddy-duddy or too strict.”

Margo shook her head. “It’s a hard rule. I’m sure this won’t be the only time I get in trouble for breaking it. But... I don’t care if you don’t. If it’s important to you, I’ll do my best. I want to make you happy and be a good girl for you.”

“I am happy, and you are a good girl. I already know you’re mine, little one. I’m just waiting for you to know it.”

Margo’s heart pounded in her chest. She could feel the usual panic and fear threatening to engulf her, but she pushed it out of the way, like she should have done the night of Baze and Luna’s wedding. “I do know it. I don’t need to wait. I want to be yours now.”

Knox smiled widely, then looked at her with concern. “Are you sure? I don’t want to rush you.”

She shook her head and took his hands in hers. “I’m ready. And I’m sure. I don’t want to wait. I can’t wait. Like... the longer we wait to make it official, the more I’ll probably panic and freak out every time I’m naughty, like I did today. And I can’t do that. It’s too much. It’s hard on me and on you. I want you to know I trust you. I want you to know I know you’re a good Daddy and I’m safe with you, and I know you’re not gonna hurt me or give up on me. And the only way I know to show you that for sure, and to make myself stop panicking, is to jump in with both feet, the way I should have done a week ago.”

Knox nodded and kissed her lips softly. He pulled away until they were forehead to forehead, their lips not touching, but close enough that they could feel each other’s breath. “I’ll jump with you,” he promised. “And I’ll never let go.”

Margo’s heart skipped a beat and she flushed with happiness. Tears pooled in the corners of her eyes. Since when

was she so weepy that she cried even when she was happy? “That’s it then? We’re official? You’re my Daddy and I’m your Little girl?”

“It’s official!” Knox shouted. Grabbing her around the waist, he leapt to his feet and spun her around in a circle. Her pants and diaper fell from around her ankles and hit the floor.

When he set her on her feet, Margo was dizzy with happiness. “It’s official!” she cried, echoing him. “What do we do now?”

“Now, I get you dressed and put a fresh diaper on you, and we go together to tell your friends. And since I’m feeling generous, I’ll help you all finish the clean-up and then because it’s a holiday, and I have lots to celebrate, and a wonderful start to the New Year already, we’ll have pizza for dinner, and ice cream sundaes for desert, and watch a movie with our friends. And tonight, after they all go to bed, I’ll show you just how happy I am that you are finally mine.”

A shiver ran down Margo’s spine at the delicious promise in his words. “I can’t wait,” she said, and she meant it. For the first time in longer than she could ever remember, Margo was at peace, and all was right in her world. She was her Daddy’s and he was hers. And that was a promise she could take to the bank.

Knox

When they were both dressed in jammies, Margo was wearing a fresh diaper, and pizzas had been ordered via an app on his phone, Knox took her hand and led her to the common area where the girls were still on the floor sorting puzzle pieces.

They looked up when he entered. Their gazes went first to Margo, making sure she was okay, and then back to him.

“Why do you have jammies on?” Mariah asked. “We haven’t even had dinner yet.”

“New plans,” Knox announced as he sat beside Mariah and Jade on the floor and began to sort puzzle pieces.

The girls stopped what they were doing and gaped at him. “Wh-what are you doing?” Jilly asked as Margo plopped down beside her, wincing when her bottom hit the floor.

Ellie looked at the clock. “Don’t we need to make dinner soon? It’s my job today to be a kitchen helper.”

“Chores are canceled,” Knox announced glibly.

“No fair! I already did mine!” Mariah pouted.

“Me too,” Tessa agreed.

“I did too, but I’m not so much worried about that,” Jade mused. “I’m more concerned about why Knox is helping us and what we are having for dinner if there’s no one on kitchen duty.”

Knox just smiled and continued sorting. It looked like they were down to the last three puzzles. Of course, they were the hard ones with smaller pieces, but he was determined.

“Come on girls. Let’s get this cleaned up. I’m gonna help you for the next hour. Let’s see if we can get it done by then.”

That lit a fire under them, and for a while they all worked in silence, making great progress.

Finally, Mariah piped up again, apparently unable to take the suspense. “What are the plans?” she asked impatiently. “You said new plans, but you didn’t tell us what they were! And why are you wearing jammies?”

Knox tossed the puzzle piece he was holding into the correct box and rocked back on his heels. “Get your pajamas on,” he told them without further explanation.

They stared at him but didn’t move. He clapped his hands. “Go on, git. Be good Little girls and do what you’re told.”

Margo giggled and they finally sprang into action.

When they were all in their rooms with the doors closed, Margo looked at him and shook her head.

“Are we gonna tell them?”

“Tell them what?”

“You know... about us... about the plans? About... celebrating?”

“Soon enough,” he answered, putting the lid on a finished puzzle. The pile of pieces to be sorted was now dwindled to almost nothing, a fact that filled him with pride. The girls had worked hard for days; they deserved a celebration, and though Margo had already committed to being his, he was eager to prove to her that he could be as good at spoiling as he was at spanking.

Margo, as impatient as her friends, scowled, but Knox just kept sorting.

“There!” he proclaimed as he put the last piece in the corresponding box and added the lids to both boxes before walking over to add them to the shelf. He’d just finished, when the girls filed out of their rooms, each of them dressed in their favorite jammies.

They gasped when they saw the clean floor, but they weren’t as excited as he’d expected them to be.

Mariah was instantly suspicious. “Why are we in our jammies? Before dinner even?” Her face fell. “Oh no! Are you sending us to bed early, without dinner?”

The girls all followed her lead, their faces falling as they stared at the floor with their lips puffed into adorable pouts.

“To bed without dinner?” he repeated, sounding mockingly aghast. They looked up at him, and he broke into a huge grin. “On New Year’s Eve? When we have so much to celebrate? Perish the thought.” He waited a beat then decided to put them out of their misery. “We are having a pajama party. The pizza is on its way. You all get your blankies and pillows and stuffies.”

“Yay!” Mariah cheered. “Can we get our binkies too?”

“I mean... you can, but how are you gonna eat pizza or ice cream if you’re busy sucking on a binkie?”

“Ice cream too?” Mariah gasped. “This is the best night ever!” She rushed from the room and came back with the required items in tow. Her friends quickly followed.

Knox looked at Margo. “Do you happen to know where Baze keeps extra sheets? And thumbtacks?”

“There’s extra sheets in the linen closet and thumbtacks... in his office maybe?” she answered, her expression quizzical. “Why?”

“Well, I’m going to need them to build a fort for us to eat our pizza and watch cartoons in, of course!”

“A fort!” Ellie pumped her fist in the air, dropped her stuffie and bedding on the couch and ran from the room, returning a few minutes later with a pile of clean sheets and a small box of pink thumbtacks. “Those are mine. For my posters,” she explained, popping her thumb in her mouth.

“That’s perfect, Ellie. Thank you.” Knox took them and went to work, constructing a three-sided fort between the couch and tv. When it was up, he encouraged the girls to pile in with their blankets, pillows and stuffies, and get settled.

While they did that, he grabbed napkins, paper plates and put juice into their sippy cups, passing everything out before he ran downstairs to meet the pizza delivery.

It was such a little thing, really, but their enthusiasm made it fun. He’d had so much chaos and angst to deal with in the beginning, he hadn’t gotten to focus on any of the fun parts of being a House Daddy—and he hadn’t gotten to show Margo that as strict as he was, he still knew how to have fun.

With the pizzas in hand, he rode up the elevator to the penthouse with a smile on his face. “Pizzazz Piesss,” he cried out as he entered, “get em while they’re hot!”

He carried the boxes to the fort where the girls were snuggled up with their comfort items, cuddled against each other, with Margo saving a space for him. Sitting on his butt beside her, he threw the boxes open and passed out pizza slices—pepperoni and cheese.

“Where’s the remote?” Jilly asked. “I thought we were gonna watch cartoons!”

“We will,” he promised. “But first, a toast.” Raising his slice of pizza in the air, he waited for them to do the same.

There was a smattering of joyous giggles as they matched their actions to his.

“What are we toasting, Mister Knox?” Jade asked.

“We are toasting many, many things. Friends who became family, fresh starts, a brand-new year, and Margo finally agreeing to be my Little girl.” He touched the tip of his pizza to the tips of theirs, and raised it to his mouth, taking a huge bite. The girls stayed frozen, looking from Margo to him and back again.

Jilly reacted first, smashing Margo into a hug, pizza still in hand. “Oh my gosh! Really?” she cried. “That’s wonderful news!”

Mariah, Jade, Tessa and Ellie all nodded their stunned agreement before lining up to hug both him and Margo.

“Well, you weren’t kidding when you said you had lots to celebrate,” Mariah quipped. She hesitated, a sneaky smile playing on her lips. Knox braced himself.

“Since it’s New Years, and you’re in such a good mood... does that mean we get to stay up late? Like ‘till midnight?’”

Knox looked around the room at their already weary and tired faces. His Margo looked especially exhausted, probably from all the crying and panicking she’d done. But even she leaned forward, hopefully waiting for his answer.

“Sure, why not?” he agreed cheerfully, knowing full well not a single one of them would make it that long.

And if they did, why not indeed? They, after all, had lots to celebrate.

EPILOGUE

January 4th

Margo

Margo was bouncing on the balls of her feet as she waited outside the casino entrance with Knox and her friends. Baze and Luna were finally coming home!

They'd only been gone ten days, but it felt like a lifetime with how much had happened.

"Lift up!" Jade hissed, from the other end of the large hand-painted banner they'd made. "You're dragging it on the ground."

"Nuh-uh," Margo argued. "You're holding it too high! My arms aren't as long as yours. We can't all be giants!"

"Who are you calling a giant, short stuff?"

"Girls," Knox warned from the other side of Margo. "That is quite enough. I know you don't want to miss Baze and Luna's homecoming because you're standing in timeout. Or do you?"

"No, sir," Jade answered with an exaggerated sweetness.

"No, Daddy! That would s-be awful!" Margo exclaimed, catching herself before she used one of the forbidden words. There'd been some majorly close calls over the past several days, but so far the memory of soap and the spoon he'd used had been enough to keep her in check. Her mouth anyway.

She'd been sitting on a perpetually sore bottom since then, thanks to her habit of testing her heart out. She may have managed to watch her mouth, but she'd broken almost every other rule she had. She couldn't help herself. It was a trauma and anxiety response. So far, Knox had passed every single test with flying colors.

Beside her, her Daddy squeezed her hand. "Good catch," he whispered.

Margo grinned. "Does that mean I'm gonna get a reward tonight?" she asked, wagging her eyebrows. Knox had started her on a reward system and even though spankings were still her love language, the rewards were even better.

"We'll see." Knox's answer was noncommittal, but Margo didn't even have to look to know he'd be sporting a semi under his thick work jeans. That seemed to be as perpetual as her sore bottom was.

"There's a limo! I see them! I see them! They're almost here!" Ellie exclaimed, jumping up and down and pointing.

Margo rolled her eyes because a limo was a normal occurrence, even this far down the strip, but her tummy still squeezed in excitement.

"Is it really them, Daddy?" she whispered, soft enough so that only he could hear her.

Knox took a step forward, peered down the strip and nodded. "I think so, babygirl."

"Yayyy!" Margo jumped with such exuberance she dropped her end of the banner.

Before Jade could say a word, Knox scooped it up and held it high, shaking his head when she tried to take it from him. "I got this. You greet your friend. Here they come."

Sure enough, the limo pulled into the loading strip at the front of the casino and rolled to a stop in front of them.

Before the limo driver could step out, and come around to open the door, the girls rushed it, yanking the door open and all but climbing into the backseat with Baze and Luna.

In their excitement for them to get out, they blocked them in, each of them jabbering at a million miles a minute, with Luna matching their speed.

Baze tried to get their attention more than once, but they always seemed to cut him off, not allowing him to get a word in edgewise.

Finally, an ear-piercing shrieking sound cut through their noise, and Margo looked over to see Baze sitting there with his fingers in his mouth, about to whistle again.

Jumping away from the limo, she ran back over to where Knox and Jade were standing, holding the sign.

The rest of the girls followed her, looking sheepish as they resumed their places on the sidewalk.

Finally, the driver came around to the trunk and took out their bags, Baze's large black one and Luna's two smaller hot-pink plastic ones. Then, even though they'd left it standing open, he grabbed the door handle and held it, gesturing for Baze and Luna to make their exit.

Baze got out first and held out his hand for his new bride. They were both much tanner. That was the first thing Margo noticed as they stepped from the dark limo into the sunlight.

Luna dropped Baze's hand and rushed at her friends. "Hi, Hi!" she exclaimed, hugging them each individually and then again as a group.

"Hi yourself," Margo answered. "Did you have fun?"

"Oh. Em. Gee. So. Much. Fun. Jamaica is beautiful, and I brought back presents for everyone. I can't wait for you to see them. Margo, I got you something special for Knox to use." Luna winked and Margo groaned.

"Whatever it is, he doesn't need it," Margo retorted, but she couldn't help but smile.

"Whatever. And B.T.W. I want to hear everything that happened while I was gone. Especially with Knox. I want deets." She lowered her voice an octave and addressed Margo directly. "I'm so sorry about what Baze did, by the way. It

really wasn't cool. I tried to tell him that, but you know Daddies... when they think they're acting in your best interests, there's no convincing them otherwise, even if you do know better than they do."

"Who knows better?" Baze asked, coming up behind them. Mariah gasped, widening her eyes and Luna just smiled sweetly.

"You do of course, Daddy. Always," she said, batting her eyelashes.

It was obvious that everyone, but especially Baze, knew she was mocking him.

Before he could respond, Margo ran from their little circle and back over to Knox, grabbing his hand, simply for the statement it made. Before Luna could ask more questions, or Baze could scold her, Margo wanted to make it very clear where she stood.

It worked. Both of them turned to stare and a slow, wide smile spread across Baze's face as he made his way over to them.

"Well... well, well. Could it be? Did my plan work? Are the two of you official?"

Knox looked at Margo and she took a step forward, dropping Knox's hand to hug Baze tightly around the waist. After a few seconds, she pulled back to look up at him. "I was mad at you when you left. Like really, really mad, but now... I'm just grateful. I know you were doing what you thought was best, and what you always do. You saved me from myself and forced me to keep my word."

"I'm glad it worked out. I second-guessed myself a lot," Baze admitted. "So... does that mean the ongoing saga of Knox and Margo taking it slow is over and done with?"

Margo shifted her gaze to look at her Daddy and let go of Baze's waist.

"Yes... and no," Knox answered, coming up behind her and wrapping his arms around her as he spoke to Baze over the top of her head. "In the way of being Daddy and Little girl

and having our own rules, we are on a fast track, thank you very much,” he quipped. “You’re a very good matchmaker. Derek better watch out or Utopia will end up giving Rawhide a run for their money in the matchmaking department.”

Baze just chuckled. “I don’t know about that. I didn’t do much aside from make Margo keep her word and give you both a nudge onto the track.”

There was a moment of understanding silence between the three of them before Baze spoke again. “So... what does yes and no mean, exactly?”

“It means...” Margo got stuck in her explanation and looked at her Daddy for help.

“It means, Margo knows she is mine, and she will follow my rules, which match yours for the most part with a few extras. But, we are taking time to get used to that, and too much time all at once scares her.” He grinned. “So, since I don’t have my room set up for a Little yet, and her family she has made with you and Luna and the others is so important to her, she’s going to continue to stay in the penthouse for the time being, and sometimes spend the night with me. That is, if that’s all right with you?”

“Of course it is,” Baze answered quickly. “And this is what you want Margo? To keep taking it slow?”

Margo nodded, relieved that he was on board with their plan. “I’ve learned that too much change at once makes me super anxious,” she admitted. “Besides that, it took me a long time to find my chosen family, and I’m not ready to let them go yet.” She scrunched her nose, not quite sure how to articulate the last part. “Some people... sometimes... it’s important that we all move at our own pace,” she finally said, “and I think mine is slow... until it isn’t. For now... I’m not ready to move out of the penthouse full time, or to get engaged or have a wedding. Just because it worked so well for you and Luna, doesn’t mean it’s gonna work for me.”

Baze looked genuinely thrilled with her answer. “You’re absolutely right, Margo. Everyone’s situation is different, and you have to do what works for you just like Luna and I did

what works for us.” He paused and looked at Knox. “How do you feel about this plan?”

“I think it’s perfect, boss. At the moment, my room is barely set up for me, let alone another person. I can work on it, but... I’ve been a little busy with these brats.” He said the word brats affectionately and shook his head. “I don’t know how you do it.”

“It’s not easy, but it’s rewarding,” Baze answered with a grin. “Now, about the space situation... I might have a solution. Why don’t we move your focus to the east tower and work on renovating the suites directly below ours. I’ll call in the decorating team I met recently.”

“Boss... the stuff you are having me do in these suites... it’s like handyman stuff. You could get most of it done a lot cheaper than what you are paying me.”

Baze shrugged off Knox’s statement as if it were of no consequence to him because it probably wasn’t. “I don’t want a handyman. I want you. I’d like you to become my full-time foreman.”

Knox’s jaw dropped open. “That’s incredibly generous, sir... but I—”

“Don’t worry about Derek. I’ll speak to him. I’m sure he’ll understand under the circumstances,” Baze said with a wink at Margo.

Margo breathed a sigh of relief. She’d forgotten about the continuing work on Rawhide Ridge, but she knew she wouldn’t be good at the long-distance thing, even temporarily.

Knox took a deep breath and reached for Margo, pulling her into his arms, with her legs wrapped around his waist. “I’ll have to get used to the idea of making Vegas my home base,” he conceded. “I’m not used to the climate. It felt weird to have sunshine for the holidays.” He leaned forward and kissed Margo on the nose. “But heck, I can’t say no to an offer like that. What do you think, little one? Shall I stay here permanently and move into a suite?”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” She squealed in his arms and covered his face in kisses. Stopping abruptly, she pulled back, and looked at him with growing concern. “But... if you have a permanent job, and a suite... does that mean we can’t still take it slow?” She loved having Knox as her Daddy, but suite or not, she wasn’t ready to move out of the penthouse permanently.

“It’s going to take a while to get the suite renovated, and set up, little one. When it’s done, we’ll see where we are and reevaluate, but there’s no rush. Suite or no, we can still move at exactly our own pace. And when you are with me, you’ll have your own room and your own things. And you can still have sleepovers with your friends too. You’ll be the luckiest Little girl ever. You’ll get the best of both worlds no matter where you are staying full time.”

Margo sighed happily and placed a wet juicy kiss right on his lips. “Silly Daddy. I’m already the luckiest Little girl in the whole world. I have my chosen family, and I have you. What could be luckier than that?”

“What, indeed?” Knox agreed. “And on that note, I think it’s time for us to move this homecoming celebration indoors. It may be sunshiney, but there’s still a chill and none of you girls are wearing coats.”

“That’s because you didn’t tell us to,” Margo said with a giggle. “Bad Daddy. You were naughty!”

“I was naughty, was I? Good thing punishments are just for Little girls.”

“Nope!” Margo squealed gleefully. “Your punishment is that you have to give me a reward tonight!”

Knox raised his eyebrows, a knowing smirk playing on his face. “Well, I can get behind that idea, but you’re wrong about one thing, my dear.”

“What’s that?” Margo asked.

“Rewarding you isn’t a punishment for me at all. In fact, it’s my very favorite thing. Can you live with that?”

Margo heaved an exaggerated sigh and pretended like she was mad. “Well,” she huffed. “Guess I’m gonna have to.

Cause I'm not giving up my reward just cause you made a mistake!"

Knox chuckled and kissed her on the forehead. "I can live with that." With his lips still pressed against her skin, he whispered, "This is perfect, little one. I love making a life with you, and I love doing it at our own pace with our own rules. I love you, Miss Marguerite Mae."

"Me too, Daddy. Me too."

THE END

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ABOUT BAYLEIGH RAE

Bayleigh Rae is the sassy alter ego of a USA Today Bestselling Dirty Daddies Author.

She loves travelling, spoiling those she loves, and working hard to make her dreams come true.

Don't ask her who she is, because she won't tell you. Okay, she might... if you ask nicely. She's really bad at secrets.

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